



# OBSERVER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY'S STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN



Malkie Krieger and Kira Joel in intimate conversation with Virginia Bayer Hirt during the Women of Vision kickoff event.

Mati Engel

## Women of Vision

**BY MALKIE KRIEGER** On February 22, TAC hosted the kickoff event for Women of Vision, a program that seeks to spotlight Orthodox women making meaningful contributions to their communities. The evening's speaker was Mrs. Virginia Bayer Hirt, president of The Jewish Center on the Upper West Side. Primarily, she spoke about the role that she plays as one of the few women presidents, nationwide, of a Modern Orthodox synagogue (UWS Jewish Center).

In addition to her role on the UWS, Bayer Hirt shared the story of how she and her husband founded SAFE, Securing America's Future Energy, an organization dedicated to reducing America's dependence on oil. Attendees were impressed by Bayer Hirt's articulate presentation of the challenges faced by community leaders moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – but specifically by her motivation to constantly innovate community practices to keep up with differences in Jewish identity today.

Kira Joel, SCW '13, pointed

out, "Mrs. Bayer Hirt is part of a generation of people who are hesitant to embrace change – yet she seemed so interested in involving the voices of the younger generation in communal leadership, which was amazing." Through her stories, students could sense the energy and commitment she has brought to her community, the charisma and creativity which pushed her to begin SAFE in reaction to 9/11. Since then, SAFE has accomplished serious feats on Capitol Hill, including spearheading and authoring the first energy reform bill to have passed into law in 30 years.

Bayer Hirt is the the first of an impressive string of speakers that TAC plans to bring in for the Women of Vision series. This semester's Women of Vision initiative intends to present empowering women, who can serve as role models of what it means to be a female Jewish leader, on a fairly frequent basis. TAC "wish[es] to attract women who are advancing their careers on a professional level,

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## Make Cake, Not War: Cake Wars for Sharsheret 2012

**BY ATARA CLARK** The Cake Wars event, which took place on February 29, topped off the YU student body's observance of the third annual Sharsheret Pink Day, Sharsheret's Breast Cancer Awareness day. On this day, Jewish students in 84 schools across the nation and in Israel dressed in pink and learned about breast cancer. This ailment strikes about 12% of women in the United States alone.

The event began with words from Faygel Beren, co-president of the Sharsheret Club, and Caroline Gutman, co-vice president, setting the tone and elucidating the greater purpose that the event was geared towards – to support women in the Jewish community who are fighting breast cancer. Finally, Shera Dubitsky, a clinical supervisor at Sharsheret, shared her personal connection to the Sharsheret cause.

The teams then approached their respective stations – Let the games begin.

Each team was equipped with a full white sheet cake, a chocolate half sheet cake, toppings of every variety,



*A little messy, a little crazy, a whole lot of good. Yeshiva students raised \$2,400 for Sharsheret.*

Elisheva Aeder

and frosting.

The teams let their imagination run wild to translate the theme of "overcoming obstacles with the help of friends" onto their cakes. Every team did an incredible job with their decorations while maintaining the Sharsheret cause at the forefront of their designs.

"We had fun making the cake,"

explained Tehilla Brander, SCW '14. "We made ours with different layers to show different layers of support that help someone reach the top – it was kind of a metaphor for the struggle and support that a BC patient experiences." Brander was a member of the Best Bakers/Brander team and although they didn't win, she and her fellow Brander teammates enjoyed having fun for a cause – spreading awareness and learning about Sharsheret.

Jo Jo Freundel, YC '13, a judge at the competition commented "the creativity shown by each of the contestants was inspiring – and the way they incorporated the color pink really distracted from the cardboard taste of the bought-in-bulk matzah cake." While it is debatable if Freundel even tasted the cakes, his impression of the competition was spot on – contestants used their own individual creativity to raise awareness for an important cause.

The winning cake was a Pac Man themed cake designed by team Princess Sophia. They took something that everyone loves – Pac Man! – and transformed it into a breast cancer *continued on page 7*



Julia Siegel

Winner, Team Princess Sophia: (l-r) Gina Hotz, Lindsay Wess, Sarah Yitzhaky, Talia Saghian, and Tehila Shaverick.

## The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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Like the most literal understanding of *Megillat Esther*, the outer pages of this newspaper tell only half the story. When he wrote the *megillah*, Mordechai portrayed the events that transpire in it – leading to the Jews' escape from destruction – causally. G-d's name is not written once in the entire *megillah*, but traditional teachings learn from this

*megillah* how G-d works in quiet, hidden miracles. Scratch the veneer of the world's appearance and you'll find G-d there, orchestrating all.

*The Bird Watcher* is our veneer. Beneath its surface, as you've discovered, the Purim Observer 5772 contains more than "news" of the satirical variety and obligatory engagement jokes. We have

prepared in addition a full array of material for your enjoyment this Purim, including the fascinating history of the Schottenstein Cultural Center, an argument for the importance of Computer Science education, a review of *The Unforgivables* at the New Museum, and much more.

## Hidden

## News That Matters to You

**BY RENEE KESTENBAUM** Erica Hasten explains that due to a series of miscommunications and lack of information many students were confused about the status of the Off Campus Dining Program at the beginning of the spring semester. Students who expected to receive another \$250 toward eating in local restaurants were taken aback to receive only \$100. The real situation, including Food Services's evaluation of the pilot program and its budget compromise, was never widely known, leaving students in the dark and paying the price.

This situation is far from ideal, but it's also far from unique. A similar

misunderstanding occurred when \$250 was initially allotted from student caf cards to the restaurant Omni Bucket funds before students had been informed about the program. Those who noticed the shrunken balance on their caf cards were shocked. Even more troubling, student workers in various departments went for months without pay this year, and did not know where to turn for help in navigating a complicated system.

A survey taken by the Student Life Committee last semester found that just 2% of SCW students get their information from sstud: approximately 20 students out of the entire Beren Campus.

The administration is aware that the lines of communication are flawed, and plans have been proposed to streamline responsibilities. SLC has proposed a completely new, official communication platform to replace the sstud and word-of-mouth system currently in place. Clearly this is needed and perhaps overdue.

In the meantime, you, student, ought to make your own efforts in staying an informed citizen of the SCW world instead of relying on that one friend who always knows what's going on. Guarantee yourself a spot for Race Your Face Off or a site visit to your dream job. Open your sstud! Or

at least glance through the headlines before clicking "Trash."

More intensive attention is necessary in order to begin addressing the communications breakdown at all different levels of this university. The breakdown that most concerns you, student, can start mending by your being aware of the information you are presented with.

The next step, of course, is to write for *The Observer*. Our news reporters have access to all strata of the administration. You get to be informed while helping to inform others. It won't fix everything, but it will definitely make a difference.

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## Where Did Our Restaurant Money Go?

**BY ERICA HASTEN** On February 7 Elana Raskas, Liaison for Food Services of the Student Life Committee, sent an sstud reminding the student body that in the spring semester we would have \$100 set aside from our caf card money to spend in the Off Campus Dining Program. Many responded to this issue with satisfaction, while others were legitimately confused as to why our restaurant money did not renew to the full \$250 amount that we had last semester. Each semester, students living on campus put \$1,500 on their caf cards in order to purchase caf food and other items in the convenience stores. If we had all of our "regular" caf money to spend, then why didn't our "restaurant" money restore to the same amount as last semester? Furthermore, why didn't anyone make it clear that the amount would not be the same for the restaurant money this semester?

The Food Services department at Stern announced last September via email that they were initiating a new program that would enable us to use our caf cards at three midtown locations, Tiberius, Eden Wok, and Mendy's as well as three uptown locations, Lake Como Pizza, Golan Heights, and Chop Chop. The email indicated that all students would be able to use \$250 total from their caf card money in these locations. This money was taken from each student's account and put into a separate fund called an "Omni Bucket." It was also explicitly stated, "This new program will be initiated on a trial basis and will be reviewed throughout the Fall Semester."

What the email failed to indicate was who exactly would "review" this new program "throughout the Fall semester." Would the Food Services Department evaluate the program's success? Or,

possibly the student body could say that they were pro-restaurant-money? Maybe the student leaders could form an opinion as well?

Sarah Lazaros SCW '13 "reviewed" the new restaurant plan quite positively. Said Lazaros, "This plan was a wonderful addition to the caf card system. It was particularly useful when the caf food was not to my liking, or when the caf happened to be closed on Saturday and Thursday evenings." Lazaros even stated, "This program was the best innovation in the history of the YU caf."

Leah Meadvin SCW '13 also shared her positive feedback. Meadvin works on Tuesdays and Thursdays and often returns after the caf has closed for the evening. With the new program, she was able to use her restaurant money to buy dinner. Meadvin pointed out, "The program enabled me to take my visiting friends from other universities out for a nice meal in a restaurant, instead of eating in the actual caf." She also pointed out that, "Midtown is our campus, and by enabling us to expand our meal plans to the restaurants it extended our campus life significantly." Raskas indicated that many more students shared this positive outlook about the new program.

With all of this positive feedback, it came as a shock to many that there was a decision to allot \$100 into each person's account instead of \$250 like last semester. Marcy Reiz, Project Manager at Yeshiva University, commented on the issue. "As this is a pilot program," said Reiz, "\$100 is all that could be allocated based on available funds for this semester." This response indicates that while the Food Services department may want to adhere to the students' requests, it seems that based on financial issues it would significantly burden the

department and they recently decided they did not have the funds to continue it at all.

However, according to Raskas, the plan had never been to renew the students' restaurant money. The \$250 was intended to last everyone for an entire year. The original email sent out never explicitly informed the student body about this plan, which caused students to use up their restaurant money with the expectation that it would be renewed the following semester. The Food Services Department compromised and agreed to allow the students to receive \$100 into their Omni Bucket accounts.

It seems that this issue and confusion stemmed from a lack of communication between the faculty and the student body. Eli Gancz, YC '15, commented on the fact that he was unaware that he would not receive \$250 for his restaurant money this semester. He blamed his lack of knowledge on this lack of communication. Gancz suggested, "Maybe it would be beneficial to do more than just one ystud to our YU email accounts, especially if the issue is regarding our money and how we are able to spend it." It almost appears that by not properly informing the students about the upcoming changes in the meal programs, there may be something to hide. Likewise, this lack of communication leads to misinformation; most information for this article was obtained through the grapevine or the Student Life Committee.

Maayan Hachen, chairperson of the SLC, did mention the Food Service's generally responsive attitude toward the student's wants. "They're pretty responsive to food requests," said Hachen. "You see, for example, last week students asked for more varieties of drinks, and this week they brought

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# Rav Ariel: Mending Rifts in an Age of Conflict

**BY TALI AUSUBEL** On February 13 Rav Yaakov Ariel, the Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan and one of the leading rabbis of the religious Zionist movement, delivered an empowering speech to the women of SCW, entitled "Politics in the Public Sphere: The Intersection Between Faith and Policy in Israel." The lecture and subsequent Q&A session were moderated by Rabbi Yosef Blau, SCW's Senior Mashgiach Ruchani. Ariel addressed an array of issues facing the current Israeli political spectrum at the moment, ranging from *dati leumilharedi* relations, women's role in religion and in the state, and the importance of *aliyah*.

Though the event was "coordinated and advertised rather last minute, the turnout exceeded our expectations," said Rachel Benaim, SCW '13, the co-president of TAC's Torah Scholarship Lecture Series (TSLs), which helped bring Ariel to SCW. "The fact that it was in Hebrew didn't even deter people from coming," she noted.

Ariel did, in fact, address the crowd in Hebrew; however, for those less confident in their linguistic skills, Natalie Taylor, director of the CJF's Women's Leadership Initiative sat at the computer and manually transcribed and translated Ariel's lecture onto a projector screen. "I was excited about the presentation being in Hebrew," commented Estie Hirt, SCW '13. "It gave me confidence that I am able to understand complex, current issues in the language most relevant."

Rav Yaakov Ariel is as hard-core

Israeli as they come – he was born and raised in Jerusalem, and spent time studying in Mercaz Harav as a prevalent student of Rav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook. Ariel later served as Rosh Yeshiva in the abandoned Israeli settlement of Yamit, in the Sinai Desert, until 1982. He is currently the Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan, just outside Tel Aviv, and the head of Rabbanei Tzohar, an organization that according to its website addresses the "desperate need to unify Israel's fragmented society." While there is controversy surrounding Tzohar, its programs, stances, and activism deserve recognition. Therefore, Rav Yaakov Ariel addressed them briefly at the end of his lecture.

Ariel explained some of the key events and outreach programs run by Tzohar. For example, every Shavuot night, thousands of non-Orthodox and Orthodox join together to learn Torah all night. Tzohar wants to expand this program to more cities throughout Israel. On Yom Kippur, they set up *minyanim* for the non-religious in many kibbutzim and areas where there is little connection to *halakha*. There are Tzohar Rabbis who help explain to different people in the Knesset what *halakha* says about various issues. They train Rabbis, to whom non-Orthodox individuals can relate, to perform marriage ceremonies.

One of the most pertinent issues Rav Ariel discussed was the place of women in the right-wing Orthodox Jewish sphere. In light of the recent protests about women being asked

to sit on the back of certain buses in Israel and the incident with Naama Margolese, the young girl in Bet Shemesh who was spit at because of her supposed immodest dress, the topic was timely and sensitive. "His speech made me value the precious role women play in Israeli society," commented Tova Joseph, SCW '13, who left the speech feeling "invigorated and uplifted."

Not all students, however, felt that Rav Ariel presented the issues effectively. Penina Cohen, SCW '14, who attended the speech, said, "While Rav Ariel spoke about many great ideals it is important for women to have, the line between the practical and the ideal remained confusing. I would have appreciated if he spent more time addressing how the ideal he presented plays out in the practical roles of women in the Orthodox world today."

"Rav Ariel made very good and important points," said Elana Raskas, SCW '13, "but I felt that he was preaching to the choir. He was telling over the benefits of Modern Orthodoxy and women's involvement to a group of proud, Modern Orthodox women." While it is always good to have one's convictions re-affirmed, Raskas felt Rav Ariel's speech was lacking fresh, dynamic content – a new perspective.

While his comments about the place of Orthodox women in today's society were greeted by mixed reviews, his strong message about making *aliyah* left students excited and optimistic. Yehudit Goldberg recounted



RACHEL BENAIM  
MARGANIT RAUCH  
NEWS@YUOBSERVER.COM

enthusiastically, "It was amazing to see someone who is so aware of all the issues in Israel, and who is in fact intimately involved with all these issues, still coming and encouraging all of us to make *aliyah*. For those of us who have felt concerned after reading recent headlines, it gave the dream new energy." "I was having doubts about making *aliyah*, but Rav Ariel's speech helped to reaffirm that goal for me," said Benaim.

While Rav Ariel acknowledged that it is far easier to make a living in America, he emphatically referred to living in Israel as "the real thing." In Israel, he maintained, a Jew is building up his own land. Additionally, he argued, nearly everything found in America can be found in Israel today (down to the very cereal brands). He also cited benefits in childhood Jewish education. Raising children in Israel eliminates the need for translation from Hebrew to English, enabling children to read and relate directly to the ancient texts, without any barriers. Students seemed to deeply

identify with this last argument, recalling the many grueling and often seemingly futile hours spent in Hebrew classes.

Ariel's focal message, though, was the ability to be an observant Jew while still living in the modern world. His points mirrored many of Yeshiva's core principles. While many view Judaism as an archaic practice, Ariel passionately presented the relevance of our tradition in a modern world. Rather than shy away from problems and differences, Ariel encourages dialogue and cooperation. His actions speak for him, as he works tirelessly to bridge the gaps and mend the rifts that threaten to tear the Jewish community apart. Modernity's interaction with tradition, and the necessity to re-infuse the Jewish world with love, unity, understanding, and respect, stand as unequivocal messages of importance and tenor.

## Cake Wars for Sharsheret 2012

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awareness campaign. It was colorful, artful, delicious, and educational all at once. After the event, Margot Reinstein, Zahava Rothschild, and Miriam Barth, all SCW '13, brought 8 cakes back to Stern and donated them to the local homeless shelter. Upon delivery, Miriam Barth met a woman who was personally affected by breast cancer. Barth explained that the woman was "extremely touched" by the event. Barth reflected that in addition to "raising awareness, the event also, to an extent, displays solidarity and support to those who have breast cancer, survived breast cancer, or have loved ones affected by it. It reminds them that they are not alone and we all care." Pink Day 2012 was a success in everything we accomplished. See you next year?

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as well as their involvement in the greater community," said TAC president Leora Niderberg, "while maintaining a strong connection to both their female and Jewish identities." The program was inspired by a "dearth of inspiring women professionals in our midst. With this program, TAC is looking to create a 'revolving door' of women figures who will be able to inspire and connect with students across their wide and diverse spectrum of interests."

The meetings will take place intimately, informally, for about an hour and a half each, rather than a formal lecture presentation – bringing students to engage in close discussion with women who are prime examples of what they can be accomplishing either now or within a few years.

Though the program is open to all students, TAC is structuring the guest speakers with diverse professional and communal involvement, so that each week will attract a small, warm, and diverse crowd. Rather than fill a lecture hall with students, this particular program aims to attract a smaller group of students directly interested in the career and lifestyle choices made by each guest. "This will contribute to a more personal interaction by everyone attending, with more time for networking and socializing on an individual basis with

## Women of Vision

our presenter," Niderberg said.

The current list of invited speakers includes women involved in new models of female clerical leadership, Torah scholarship/education, fashion, politics, art, literature, science, medicine, journalism, law, non-profit, and more. "Our goal is to give those Stern women interested in pursuing any career a chance to connect with someone who has made a real contribution to her respective professional niche," said Niderberg, "while also maintaining an active membership and role in the Jewish community."

The first Women of Vision event set the bar high for the rest of the semester, and TAC looks forward to connecting women who *have* achieved great things with those *about* to achieve great things – SCW women. Their culminating dinner and discussion event will be held on May 1, and will feature prominent female Orthodox lawyers, educators, artists, and scientists.

The glass ceiling in every area of public life is cracked, but not yet broken. As young women who are bright, talented, and committed to the Jewish future, it is our responsibility to learn all that we can from those empowering female Orthodox leaders among us and be prepared to carry the torch to the finish line.

# Your article here.

What are you **waiting for?**



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to get started

# FEATURES

TALI ADLER  
HANNAH DREYFUS  
FEATURES@YUOBSERVER.COM



## E-Books: The New Way to Read

**BY SHOSHANA GERTLER** In 1971, when the first computer was sold to the public, nobody knew – no one could have known – the phenomenon that would someday sweep the nation and, later, the world. But in the early morning hours of November 19, 2007 there it was. For centuries, books had been printed on paper, bound into pages. Before that there were scrolls, and even those can be traced all the way back to the ancient Egyptian papyrus. Today, the average reader can avail himself of countless books simultaneously, all retrievable on one little 8-inch-by-5-inch screen. No paper or ink or binding, just a series of zeros and ones in a handheld computer.

Yes, enter the Kindle, a device that has changed the written word in ways readers never could have anticipated. Oh, sure, we all saw the ads, flashing on our laptop screens in an increasingly virtual era. But in the four years that have passed since that morning, a myriad of others have jumped on the e-reading bandwagon. Barnes and Noble with its Nook, Condor Technology with the eGriver, and Sony with the Reader. Ever-present in this whirl of technology is the weighty question: do the benefits of the e-reader outweigh the costs? What is lost when the paper bound book becomes a mere relic of times gone past?

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**BY ANN LEVENSON** As the cast takes its final bow and the house lights come up, the Stern College Dramatics Society (SCDS) closes its production of the *Madwoman of Chaillot*, and bids farewell to the Schottenstein Cultural Center (SCC), its home for the past 13 years. This stage has been home to productions from *Little Women* to *The Odd Couple* to *Hamlet*, but the SCC's history stretches back long before YU acquired the building.

On July 16, 1963, Walter Reade- Sterling, one of New York's largest independent film companies, opened a new 410 seat art house theatre on 34<sup>th</sup> St. in a converted power sub-station. The first picture shown was a British import entitled *This Sporting Life*. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival to tremendous reviews and earned its stars Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts a Nation Film Critics' Award and nomination respectively, as well as Academy Award nominations. The company leased and remodeled the former power substation for upwards of \$1 million and moved their offices to the top floors of the four-story structure. Saul J. Turell, then president of Walter Reade-Sterling, and Walter Reade, chairman of the board, said that with offices centralized, they intended to focus on film production, with an emphasis on American Features.

Described as "luxurious" by a 1963 *New York Daily News* article, the 34<sup>th</sup> St. E Theatre was intended to show foreign films distributed by Walter Reade Corporation's foreign distribution wing, Continental Distributing, as well as art house films and other independent pictures. One such case of the art house aspect was a three-month series beginning in January 1965. The series was "Films in Repertory" consisting of eighteen award-winning pictures such as *Point of Order*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *The Ladykillers*. In a February 1964 piece for *The New York Times* lamenting the general lack of interest in the honorable art form of the short film, Bosley Crowther, columnist for *The New York Times*, described "an enterprising theatre, the 34<sup>th</sup> Street East" which "put on an all-short program." Reception was so good that the series, originally presented on one day, would

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Reprinted from The Historical New York Times An advertisement that ran on July 14, 1963 for the opening day of the 34th St. E Theater, known these days as the Schottenstein Cultural Center.

## Street Fashion to High Fashion: Bridging the Gap?

**BY SHOSHANA BACHRACH** The fashion industry has always fostered an element of ambiguity. On the one hand, it's an artistic hobby of the elite, a pastime for those with the ability and connections to procure the most coveted items. On the other hand, it's an art of self-expression, accessible to all who feel they have something to communicate through what they wear. And, at the end of the day, it's an industry: a chance for the rich to sell the poor what they don't need and make it seem like it was their idea.

In a scene from the 2006 film, *The Devil Wears Prada*, fashion editor-in-chief, played flawlessly by Meryl Streep, suavely informs viewers of one fundamental fashion rule: trends from the catwalk end up in stores. For example, both Stella McCartney's wildly successful polka dot dresses from her Fall 2011 Ready-To-Wear show and Mary Katrantzou's entire aesthetic can be attributed to the rise of prints we see featured in stores like H&M. It's not always clear how trends will translate, or if they will – it's unlikely that the padded hips featured on the runways of more than one designer last week will end up in stores, at least in the present incarnation.

However, the recent rise of street fashion blogs has started a new trend: fashion from the bottom up. This new fashion movement has inspired a sort of mini-renaissance. In 2008-2009, the hipster movement was picking up speed and, suddenly, it became very, irreverently cool to bike around the city on a casually-retro bike, snapping pictures of all the fabulous people wandering by. The neighborhood became *Vogue*; the bedroom and tripod became the red carpet and paparazzi. It's unlikely that the Internet will ever replace magazines, there's nothing like holding a volume in your hand, the way a fashion spread can tell a story with nothing

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### TORAH

<p><b>Groggers getting thrown out of YU Seforim Sale</b> for being inappropriate. Had the person who hired them to play actually listened to any of their songs beforehand?</p> <p><b>No new Maccabeats song</b> for this Purim? Come on guys, "Raise Your Glass" is getting old.</p>	<p><b>New agunah advocacy club on campus.</b> We're always excited to see YU students engage in activism, particularly the sort that doesn't involve death threats.</p> <p><b>Second installation of the latke-hamentaschen debate.</b> It remains to be seen whether anatomy will play as big a role in this debate as it did last year.</p> <p><b>YU's screening of Footnote</b> featured a stimulating discussion with the director. Even though it didn't win an Oscar, the film is definitely a winner.</p>
<p><b>Student workers not getting paid on time.</b></p> <p><b>Life-sized cut-outs of Justin Bieber</b>, especially when they're placed on roofs. Shout out to 35th street!</p> <p><b>Death threats for writing an article?</b> Not cool, YU student body.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion of another successful Seforim Sale.</b></p> <p><b>Having YU rabbi testify in Congress</b> about religious freedom.</p> <p><b>Nathan Englander's new book</b> <i>What We Talk About When We Talk About Annie Frank</i>, which seems to signal a return to the incredible interweaving of beauty, comedy, and pathos that characterized <i>The Relief of Unbearable Urges</i>.</p> <p><b>Expansion of summer housing criteria:</b> now open to all students who will be involved in academic and professionally related pursuits over the summer.</p> <p><b>The Yeshiva University Facebook page's mini-contests.</b> Whichever presidential fellow comes up with this stuff deserves a raise.</p> <p><b>Peggy Orenstein</b>, bestselling author of <i>Cinderella Ate My Daughter</i>, gave a crowd-drawing speech at Stern about the inappropriate sexualization of young girls in popular culture. We particularly liked her suggestion to have girls dress up as Queen Esther as an appropriate alternative to these "sexy" pop culture symbols, but imagine that she may not have read the first half of the megillah.</p> <p><b>West Wing with President Joel:</b> Our only questions: who gets to choose the episodes, and can the next screening show <i>Two Cathedrals</i>?</p>

### MADDA

## 50 Years of Theater

continued from page 8

be extended for at least three weeks.

Over the years, Walter Reade-Sterling, renamed the Walter Reade Organization, had a hand in many notable films. One which they released shortly after the 34<sup>th</sup> St. E opened was entitled *The Love Goddesses*. The picture was an exploration of the portrayal of women and sex on screen from the beginning of the art form until the years leading up to its release in 1964. Another controversial release was 1964's *Black Like Me*, coproduced by Walter Reade Jr., a cinematic adaptation of John Howard Griffin's 1961 novel of the same name.

Throughout the years, the Walter Reade Organization has distributed films such as *Ulysses* (1967), based on the James Joyce novel, *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) now a considered to be a horror classic, and *War and Peace* (1968), the Academy Award-winning Russian film.

For local residents, the theatre was part of the home town scene. Marvin Levine has lived in the area since 1969. He mentioned a multiplex that was located across the street and then notes that 34<sup>th</sup> St. East was one of the only single-screen theatres in the area. Back in the '70s, he participated in a promotion the theatre was running.

"Anyone who stood in the lobby and told jokes for a minute or two minutes... would win a free ticket," says Levine. The movie was about to start, but "I told my jokes and got a free ticket."

Perel, a woman also from the neighborhood, remembers the theater as "a comfortable, relaxing, mellow theater... like a beautiful living room." In her late 20's she would come out of the 34<sup>th</sup> St. East or the Murray Hill Theater up the street, and stop into the Haagen Daas shop across the street. "There was a video parlor next door. I would come out, play a video game, and have an ice cream. I miss it," she says nostalgically.

In 1981, Columbia pictures bought the Walter Reade Organization, and Coca-Cola, Columbia's parent company, sold it to Cineplex Odeon. It was from Cineplex Odeon that Yeshiva University bought the property at 237-241 E 34<sup>th</sup> St.

"At the time, we were in the process of expanding the campus for Stern," says Jeffrey Rosengarten, Vice President of Administrative Affairs. One criticism of the college was that it consisted of only one building aside from the dormitories. The 34<sup>th</sup> St. Theatre was up for sale at a good price and Yeshiva purchased it. In a December 1997 interview with an *Observer* reporter, the doorman at the still-functioning theatre said that he thought the building had been bought by "NYU or some university like that in the area."

Renovation began after the university gained access to the building in the summer of 1998. The plan was for the building to open in January 1999 as "a 300 seat auditorium and ... state of the art lecture hall with multi-media capability." Again stressing the local importance of the theater, a worker at the construction site wanted the university "to maintain the marquis outside the building since it would continue to add to the ambience of the historical landmark."

The renovation process took far longer than was anticipated at the outset. A caved-in retaining wall at the back of the theater halted construction for over a month. Construction slowed to the point that, in May '99, a petition to hasten the project was sent to Rabbi Dr. Lamm, then president of Yeshiva, with over 400 student signatures. The theater officially opened in the spring of 2000, a full year after its originally scheduled date.

The Geraldine Schottenstein Cultural Center was named after Geraldine Schottenstein in recognition of a generous personal gift she gave to the university. Over the years many speakers, concerts, and shows have taken place in the cultural center. Acclaimed poet Maya

Anjelou was the first speaker in a Scholar-in-Residence program in November '01, and years before his release, Gilad Shalit's mother spoke to an audience so large that people stood out in the lobby for lack space. The SCC has also housed So You think Stern Can Dance, comedy nights, concerts, and speeches from many other visitors.

A large part of the SCC's function has been to serve as a synagogue for the weekly shabbatonim on the Beren Campus. Before the space was available, *davening* was spread out over multiple locations including Koch Auditorium and the *shul* (Ivry lounge) of Schottenstein Residence Hall (SRH). Rosengarten mentions that the Ivry room in SRH was even built with this function in mind; an *aron kodesh* is built into the east wall of the lounge. The ability to hold davening in one room adds greatly to shabbatonim, particularly the large ones when the theater fills with people. One such shabbaton was in March 2010 when Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks spent Shabbat on the Beren Campus with his wife Lady Sacks, and President and Dr. Joel. "Many a happy Shabbat has begun there," says Gaby Elkaim, a Junior who is also a member of SCDS.

Rahel Bayar and Tuvia Lwowski, the campus couple of the Beren Campus, lend a sense of regularity as well as their life experience, Torah, and children to the Stern community. They too have fond memories of the Cultural Center. "One of my most memorable moments was being tipped off during *Kabbalat Shabbat* that the *eruv* was down, the result of a brief, yet strong Friday snowstorm," says Lwowski. "Unfortunately for us, we had brought Maayan (two at the time) and her stroller to *shul*. The stress was perhaps only offset by the irony that this particular Shabbat happened to be Rav Moshe Feinstein's *yahrtzeit*. Rav Moshe was never a supporter of the Manhattan *Eruv*!"

Every Shabbat Tuvia has the job of coordinating davening for anywhere between 100 and 350 SCW and YC students. Those students have the added benefit of entertainment by Lwowski and Bayar's four-year-old daughter, Maayan. "I can't forget the first time that Maayan realized her Thomas Trains could travel on their own all the way to the bottom of the room when let go from the tops of the ramps on either side of the *mehitza* – a practice which has been revisited with fervor these past few weeks. I doubt that the engineers and architects who built this great structure were cognizant of this residual benefit when calculating the angle of the ramps." Lwowski adds, "The diversity of the people who have *davened* and performed in the Cultural Center gives the building its charm. Many people look around the room and see a relatively unexciting space. I see our *shul*, the center of our Shabbat community and a place that I feel privileged to have frequented these past few years."

While the SCC has five floors, most students

have only seen the ground level. As the members of the Dramatics Society know all too well from their productions, running below the auditorium is a long hallway with several rooms branching off. Most are used for storing SCDS supplies, props, and sets, one is used as a makeup room, and one corner contains spare seats and cushions for the auditorium. Many students are also familiar with the fourth floor, home to the Counseling Center. There are, however, two other floors which are not technically open to students. Originally, when Yeshiva was renovating the building, the third and fourth floors were to be converted into office space. While working on the fourth floor, Rosengarten says, they realized how expensive it would be to continue. Since no department ever identified it as an ideal space, the third floor was never renovated.

Undeterred, and admittedly without permission, this reporter decided to explore. Directly across from the elevator is an office carpeted in blue and rainbow ribbons containing a desk, boxes, and a thick layer of dust. The rooms on the floor are filled with everything from a shopping cart to office furniture to floor-polishing machines. The real payday is in the large room at the back of the building. Bed frames, mattresses, dressers, desks, and chairs are stacked nearly to the ceiling; boxes of Einstein pamphlets and wrapped mattresses sealed with *kashrut* tape sit in yet another room. When asked what would be done with all these items, Rosengarten responded, "Some things will be stored in other locations... there are plans for a storage shed next to SRH." Other things will simply be thrown out.

When it was announced that Yeshiva had purchased a theater, few were more excited than SCDS. Until that point, productions had been put on in Koch Auditorium and the young thespians had to compete with the sounds of students eating their lunches (Koch at the time was being used as an overflow cafeteria) and with the hum of the refrigerators. Students

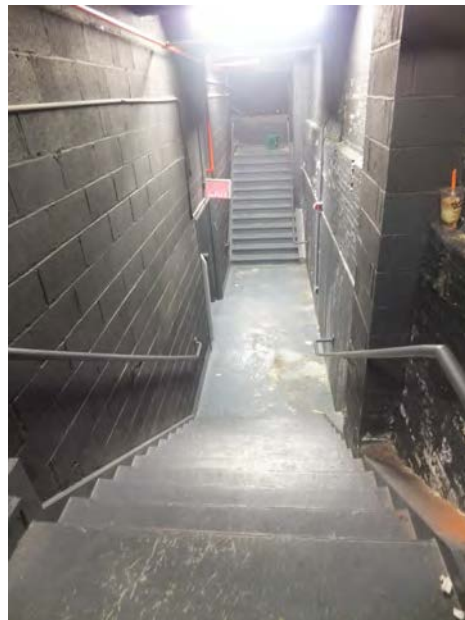
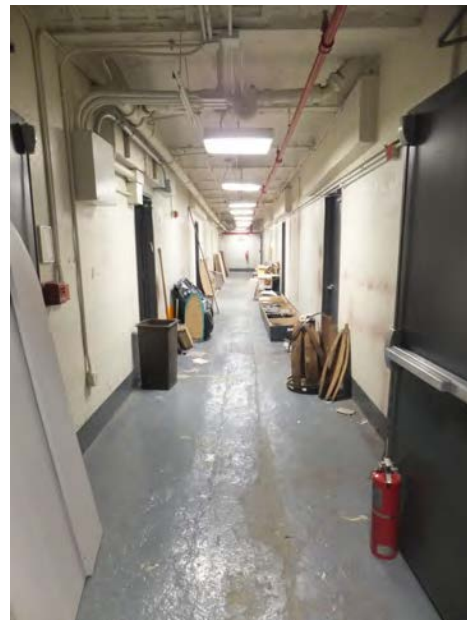
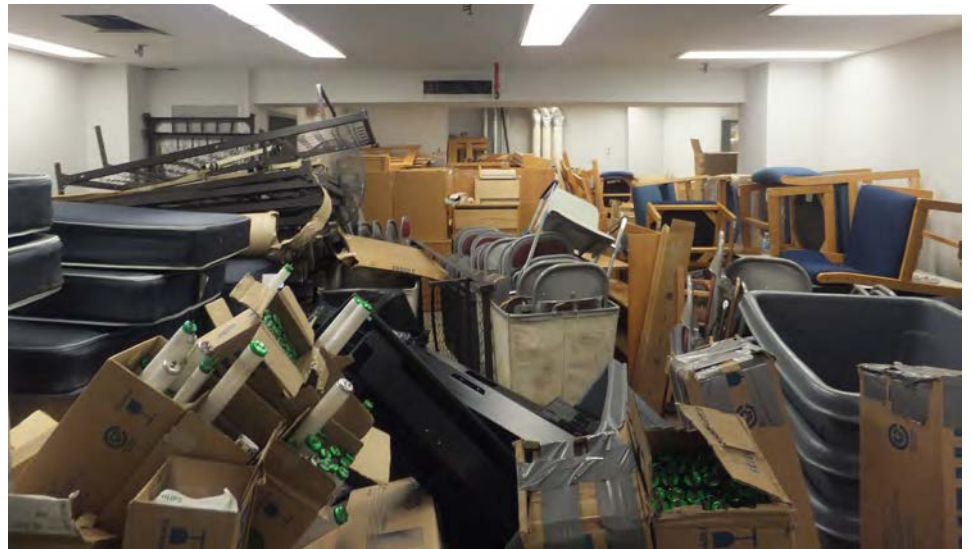
were excited at the prospect of a theater all their own, but the converted movie theater was not quite what they had imagined. SCDS at the time deemed it "The Million Dollar Mess" for its sound-absorbing walls, rented stage, and movie theater-style lighting, among other things. Another great point of contention was the conspicuous lack of dressing rooms and bathroom facilities, two features which Koch did include.

While proper theater lights have been installed, no proper backstage was ever constructed. In April, 2000, when the theater hosted its first SCDS production, Dean Bacon acknowledged the Dramatics Society's frustrations, but told the *Observer*, "We do have plans down the road to make more of what the Dramatics Society wants, such as a backstage and dressing rooms." Unfortunately, those plans never came to fruition.

"We've had to be very creative ... when situations arose that the theater just wasn't equipped for," says SCDS veteran Leah Gutstein. And anecdotes abound. One night during a performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*, a cast member needed to use the bathroom, but it would be unprofessional, the cast decided, to send a girl out in full costume and make-up in the middle of intermission. The solution? "We created a diversion," says Gutstein. "We got all the pirates together and we charged out into the lobby with our foils [swords] and we had a whole full-on fencing scene with dialogue like 'you will never win' and 'I will kill you, ah ha ha!' Everybody in the lobby was watching and cheering, and in the meantime the characters that needed to go to the bathroom slipped behind and went in... and then we went back stage after they got out ... and no one really knew."

Sonia Shafner, president of SCDS, described the creativity necessary for dealing with the abnormal stage. "There are also no curtains, which I think is not a terrible thing – it simply forced us to adapt to a different type of theater

continued on page 14



Ann Levenson/The Observer  
Top row: Misc. storage from floor to ceiling on SCC's mysterious third floor. Bottom row (l-r): SCDS used the basement corridor for their backstage, the stairs connected stage left and stage right backstage, the theater set up for Shabbat.

## E-Books: The New Way to Read

continued from page 8

As a staunch book-lover myself – and somewhat of a purist in that regard – my initial reaction to the various e-readers, understandably, was a visceral, all-encompassing no. No way would I allow this insult to the conventional book's memory to be found in my belongings. But I forced myself, for the sake of professionalism, to take an objective step back. In doing so, I found myself admitting that yes, e-readers do bring something unique to the table.

The benefits, even to me, are inarguable. The agonizing before every family vacation over which books to pack, and how many, is put to an immediate halt. All of the excessive planning – gone. Beginning to feel your shoulder strain with the weight of consecutive-bio-then-chem-must-bring-your-textbook-to-every-class schedules? Biology and chemistry textbooks – gone.

More than that, says Michelle McConnell, senior editor for an educational software publisher, e-readers make reading more accessible to people with learning disabilities, like her youngest son who has Dyslexia. Being able to hear books read to him on an e-reader allows him to connect to the literary world. “I can't imagine any other way,” she says, “that he'll make his way through Julius Caesar and the like.”

For those of us who remember many a time thinking, “I told myself to put it there so I wouldn't forget where it was – but where is ‘there’?” – or for those of us with scattered minds, the days of misplaced books are over. Comments one satisfied e-reader consumer Rivki Locker, a long-time teacher and curriculum writer. “I don't have to go searching all over the house for where I might have left my book, newspaper, or magazine.” That is quite the incentive.

As an observant Jew, depending on an e-book can present some unforeseen complications. Reading becomes unavailable every Shabbat,

the day books are relied upon most heavily for a leisurely way to pass the time.

Beyond this practical limitation, there is something about a digital book that just doesn't feel authentic. Many avid readers share similar sentiments about what makes the e-reader difficult to accept. Says Judith Schneider, “Books are a very personal thing to me, and I do miss the feel of the real thing.” In a recent online survey among the Stern student body, one published writer who wished to remain anonymous, nostalgically admits, “I'm one of those readers who appreciate the intimacy of a paperback book... The typeface and layout of e-books have a generic feel.”

While many of these arguments might be disregarded as merely emotional, the argument stands to reason: isn't that precisely how a reader views a book in his or her hand? Not simply as a means of conveying bare facts, but as a way of opening the door to a new world. This is not just in the case of fantasy – books with flying cars and superheroes, but even with autobiographies, memoirs, a reader can close his or her eyes to peer, for an fleeting moment, through the eyes of another.

Any writer, one might have thought, agrees that a real book's intimacy should not, even cannot, be sacrificed for the sake of convenience or instant gratification. Imagine my bewilderment, then, upon discovering that some authors now choose to have their books published exclusively online. One such author who made this decision is Stephen King, master of science fiction and horror.

When asked about his decision, King explained the importance of promoting a device like the Kindle. “I'm not sure that it won't [replace books],” he said, “[But] the book is not the important part. The book is the delivery system. The important thing is the story and talent.” He admits, however, that even his

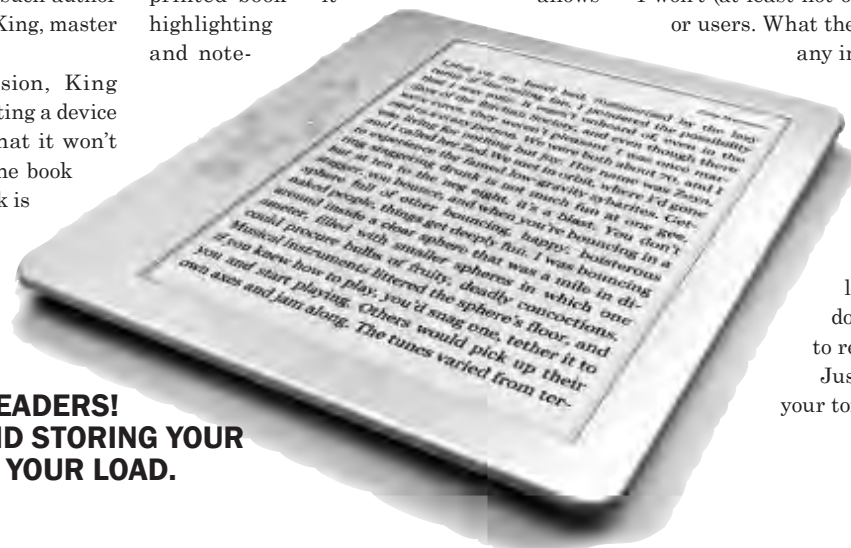
beloved e-reader has some deficiencies with which the conventional book is not afflicted. He elaborates, “If you drop a book in the toilet, you can fish it out and dry it off and read it. If you drop your Kindle in the toilet, you're done.” Yes, folks, it's true – the dangers of light bathroom reading with your Kindle are impossible to deny.

And there are other disadvantages to an e-reader, most a little less obscure. Although some may prefer to have all their books accessible in a central location, this short-sightedness allows the risk of losing every book “owned” in a single slip of irresponsibility. As with

**FOR CENTURIES, BOOKS HAD BEEN PRINTED ON PAPER, BOUND INTO PAGES. BEFORE THAT THERE WERE SCROLLS, AND EVEN THOSE CAN BE TRACED ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PAPYRUS.**

a computer screen, some models also strain eyesight (more than reading under the covers with a flashlight ever did while growing up). There has always been a push to limit screen-time of any kind, but the e-reader increases that time exponentially.

While the e-reader does attempt to replicate the benefits of hands-on interaction with a printed book – it allows highlighting and note-



taking and even doggie-ears – it falls short. These apps don't seem to measure up to a real highlighter, pencil, and margins. Also, according to one avid e-reader user, the navigation of some titles can be “less than convenient.”

A virtual library has even been created, although selection is still limited, for e-readers to “borrow” and “return.” Despite the arguments for convenience, this removes an integral part of the library experience. I still own my first library card, despite its expiration dated back to some time in the 90s. That card represents the very first time I signed something as my own. I remember the librarian, a hunched, wrinkly old woman who shuffled behind the counter and checked out my first heaping pile of books with a softened smile. Do we really want to remove the human contact associated with such a fundamental milestone? Diana Buss, a director of product management and a fervent book lover, points out that near-future generations “won't remember their first or favorite books by the way the book looked or smelled. [They] won't establish the same strong connections with literature.” One has to wonder how far we, in the present, are willing to take our virtual era.

But there is something to be said, I'll admit, for the convenience of having a plethora of reading material anytime, anywhere. I take into account the expanded accessibility, and I – grudgingly – tip my proverbial hat to the Kindle.

I won't (at least not outwardly) scorn its uses or users. What the e-reader needs, as with

any invention, is to be used in

moderation. Embrace

the new while not

disregarding the

old; realize that

the Kindle stands

upon the shoulders of

a centuries old printed

legacy. For those of you who

do own a Kindle, continue

to reap the benefits.

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your toilet.

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## Books vs. eReaders: What Really Makes the Experience?

**BY HANNAH MARMOR** Two years ago for *Hannukah*, I was asked to choose something I would like as a gift. I wracked my brain for weeks thinking about what I needed and what I wanted. Clothes? I lived in Brookdale and had no more available closet space, so that was a “no.” Shoes? Same issue. iPod? Mine was old, but it still worked just like new.

I discussed this conundrum with my sisters, and finally, the light bulb went off. My oldest sister told me she wanted a Kindle. Being the youngest in my family, I have always looked up to my two older sisters. What they want, I tend to think *must* be cool. So naturally when the idea of a Kindle came up, I pounced on it as well.

However, I don't blindly follow trends – even if they are set by my role models. Therefore, I did my own research on the Kindle before declaring it as my gift of choice. Overall, the reviews were favorable. Most people loved the device. It was a good size, a good weight, there was no glare on the screen, the battery life was good, and many books were available for purchase on the device.

Even with all of these great reviews, I still got the feeling that by purchasing a Kindle, I was somehow betraying the “book”; the good old-fashioned, always there for you, musty smelling, page-turning book.

What is a “book,” and what is it that makes

the “book” so special? Is it the physical packet of papers that holds strings of words together, which would be otherwise meaningless if not bound? Or is it the *story* that takes place inside these pages which we hold so dear? As I began to ponder this question more and more, I realized that the book is just a *medium* in which the truly valuable object is held – the story. Think about it. How many times were we told when we were little to never judge a book by its cover? After all, it's not the cover, illustrations, type size, font, or page material that should make a difference with our reading – just the story.

It was then I realized the Kindle would not

**EREADERS ARE CHANGING THE WAY STORIES ARE CONVEYED, BRINGING THEM EVEN CLOSER TO MY FINGERTIPS.**

change the face of the written word. It would only change the medium through which it travels. As humans, we are very accustomed to change. From computers, to cell phones, to smart phones, mediums of communication have been changing decade by decade. What makes communication through stories any different?

In short, I decided to choose the Kindle as my *Hannukah* present. To this day, I do not regret

my decision. As much as I love my Kindle, I do not believe eReaders will ever totally replace the printed book, just as the advent of the TV did not replace the radio.

Being the proud owner of a Kindle, I see the enormous benefits this new piece of technology possesses. I do not live very close to Stern. In fact, for me to get home I must take a five hour bus ride. Five hours is a long time to sit, listen to music, and do nothing. With my Kindle, I am able to take an entire *library* of books with me on the bus, without packing an entire library of books. If I finish the book I'm reading, I can just download the next one. The same applies when I am on a long flight. Instead of packing three heavy books, I just carry my Kindle.

Purchasing or borrowing new books has also never been easier. I just click one button, and the eBook is mine. Most of the eBooks are less expensive to buy than the same book in a bookstore. There are many free books available for download in the Kindle store. I am able to get any book which is out of copyright for free. Also, I am now able to “borrow” books from my public library via my Kindle. I am sent an email when the book becomes available and can download it. When the loan period is over, it automatically gets returned and I never have to worry about late fines.

My Kindle also has no backlit screen or glare.

When I read from it, I feel like I am reading off an actual sheet of paper. The font is also the same type you would find in any book-

**PURCHASING OR BORROWING NEW BOOKS HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER.**

unless you opt to change it (which you can). My favorite capability of the Kindle is its ability to change font size. I can personalize my reading experience without squinting uncomfortably because the type is too small or turning a page every two seconds because the type is too large. As far as the “feel” of the pages in my hand, I don't believe I am missing out. In fact, when I am wrapped up in a good book, I tend to forget what I'm reading it on. I forget that I'm holding a Kindle in my hands, just like I would get so caught up and forget I was holding a book in my hands.

I believe people are forgetting what's so special about the experience of reading. It's not the feel of the book or its smell. Rather, it's the *story* contained in the book that makes the experience so worthwhile. eReaders are changing the way these stories are conveyed, and in my opinion, bringing them even closer to my fingertips.

## Street Fashion to High Fashion: Bridging the Gap?

*continued from page 8*

but pictures. However, blogs fill a niche the fashion industry didn't seem to realize they were missing: ordinary people exploring and experimenting with the nuances of personal style.

The discoveries 'average' people were making began to influence the industry. The Sartorialist is pointed to as the blog that started it all. Scott Schuman, an already recognized industry photographer, filled the blog with beautifully shot, candid photos of everyday people starting trends. Other bloggers picked up on the trend. These bloggers may have lacked money or prestigious positions, but they had the passion and humor to simultaneously take fashion seriously, and disregard it. They had a voice that the industry had not heard for a long time – or never heard, as some would argue. The Mulleavy sisters, the designers for Rodarte, were so taken with the 13-year-old author of the Style Rookie blog, Tavi Gevinson that they invited her to collaborate with them on their Rodarte-for-Target line in 2011. Blogs not only show the industry a new, cool face, but give fashion a fresh new voice.

However, this relationship has changed over the past few years, unraveling a solution to the fashion industry's ambiguous nature. Eventually, it became clear that many street bloggers weren't really capturing "the street." For example, it became possible to recognize faces that Scott Schuman, the Sartorialist himself, was shooting. Impossible. The photo blogger lives in New York City; surely he can't be running into the same people every day. Yet, several people began to be featured again and again. Shala Monroe, a statuesque woman with a big bright smile to match her funky

and brightly colored clothes. Monroe is also an editor-at-large at magazines like Pop and Garage and one of Miuccia Prada's personal muses. Marina Larroude, a pleasant-looking woman with a shy smile that doesn't match her daring fashion choices; Larroude is the senior marketing editor of Style.com, the leading website in fashion news.

It turned out that photos on blogs like the Sartorialist were not, actually, of random women who just so happened to possess great personal style and a lot of what looked suspiciously like Prada. These women – and men – are, undoubtedly, fabulous. They have amazing, inspiring, beautiful style, and are just as fun to look at as a young student knitting with her bangs in her face and her shoes off (a favorite shot featured on the Sartorialist). However, they do not display, as Schuman claims to present, "a two-way dialogue about the world of fashion and its relationship to daily life." As editors of magazines, models, stylists, and designers, these people do not bridge the gap between high fashion and the street. They bring personal perspectives, but not the one that 'ordinary' girls – and guys – want to see on their street blogs.

It's a phenomenon seen time and time again, not just with the Sartorialist. Blogs were once the megaphone for people who wanted to share their voice and their vision, even if they didn't have access to the funds or pieces that are available to editors-at-large. Yet, every time a blog becomes successful, they seem to sell out, suddenly finding three editors holding the same Celine bag more visually stimulating than the 'ordinary' people they had previously shot.

One example: Tommy Ton. Once a young street blogger from Toronto, Tommy Ton now

shoots the street fashion of fashion week – as in, those invited to fashion week. Not those who wish they were.

Even non-photo bloggers have been influenced. Jane Aldridge, author of Sea Of Shoes, used to be admired for her keen eye for vintage and creative, whimsical style, mixing Chanel boots with a tulle skirt she scavenged from a yard sale. Ms. Aldridge has always been very wealthy; she's always featured high-end things. But her voice and photos have been dulled as her tendency to mix high and low declines: it's simply not as exciting to hear how she covets – and will probably buy – this season's it-shoe, just like everyone else.

Now more than ever, it's frustrating that the fashion industry can't seem to make up its mind, since the channels were open for a time. Like any industry, it's always searching for a new voice, a new idea. That idea was once found that in street fashion. Yet, the decline in blogs proudly featuring the 'everyman' indicates a heightened focus on couture and high fashion.

Readers have not been completely let down. Now, for example, Tommy Ton prefers to take pictures of the same couple of editors. It's still art, it's still fascinating, and the readership is still enthralled (proof being Style incorporating his candid photos from the sidewalk's before and after fashion shows into their regular Fashion Week lineup). Just because his subjects come from the elite industry doesn't mean they're slaves to trends. Examples abound – fan favorite is the flamboyant Anna Dello Russo, the fashion director of Japanese Vogue. Labeled the great ADR, she's what Lady Gaga's older, savvier, and slightly saner sister would wear. But even while the average girl can surely find inspiration in ADR's interpretation of the pinafore (thanks

to Versace), she's certainly not getting any inspiration on how to throw together a similar look from Forever21. The change in the blog-industry relationship is evident with the elite as well – since the decline of true-voice blogs, editors and the like seem to all be wearing the same thing, straight off the runway, with barely an ounce of individualism.

Ironically, it was Anna Wintour, American *Vogue* editor-in-chief, who is credited with the controversial move of mixing high-low, pairing a \$10,000 Christian Lacroix sweater with a pair of \$50 jeans on the *Vogue* cover. One could argue that she opened the channels for street-high end discussion back in 1988 – it was, after all, her first cover as editor-in-chief and, therefore, clearly a statement. Ms. Wintour and her ostentatious peers have a challenge: either be interested in the fashion contributions of a 13-year-old from Chicago, rich or not, or only be interested in someone only if they're wearing Proenza Schouler's latest genius. Blogging is one of the most innovative, game-changing trends to hit fashion in a long time. Either the industry is ready to heed the influence of the street, or it is not.

In a 2007 documentary following Valentino's lavish retirement party, his boyfriend, Giancarlo Giammetti unabashedly tells the party planners he wants the insane, seven-day affair to resemble Versailles, because Valentino is an emperor. Is fashion an expression of the people, by the people, and for the people, or a set of unattainable standards set by those residing in ivory towers? If the latter is the reality, it is worthwhile to keep in mind: subjects don't stay satisfied for long with the response, "let them eat cake."

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# OPINIONS

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OPINIONS@YUOBSERVER.COM

## Where Did Our Restaurant Money Go?

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back the Gold Peak drinks. Students should really be in touch with us if something they used to see in the caf that's no longer there."

It is commendable that Food Services listens to students' requests, however it the confusion with the restaurant money is also of concern. Clearly, the system is not perfect, but this does not mean that the people in charge – whoever they may be – aren't trying to better our experiences at Yeshiva. Raskas commented, "As

always, the Student Life Committee is working to ensure students' satisfaction. We are working closely with Food Services to best serve the students' interests. The restaurant program will continue in the fall, and we look forward to smoothing out the details." While no one may know the details of what will be in the upcoming semesters, hopefully we will be able to freely use our caf cards at Tiberius or Golan in the wee hours of the morning, long after the actual caf has closed.

**BY RIVKA HERZFELD** Of the four *mitzvot* designated for Purim, *mishloach manot* [sending gifts of food to friends] is a common favorite. You remember being a child and counting all the *mishloach manot* you had accumulated throughout Purim day and weighing the number on the "How-Cool-Are-You?" scale. For those who don't remember the scale, here's how you'd calculate: if you received over 10 *mishloach manot*, you were way popular. If you received just 10, you were average in terms of popularity, and if you only got five, or less...*nebach* [what a pity]. You really had to make some new friends.

The use of *mishloach manot* as a makeshift social barometer does not stop at the end of pre-teen and teenage adolescence but rather, extends into adulthood and family life. Instead it is not the test of how many *mishloach manot* one receives, but rather, how cute their theme is or extravagant their basket can be. I personally know of people who must think of a theme by *Rosh Chodesh Shvat*, six weeks in advance, so that they can start planning, and others who will not, *chas v'shalom* repeat a theme, and of course those who would never, ever bring themselves

to send out cards instead and save themselves time and extraneous effort.

Every year my family gets a gift basket from my father's bosses in Brooklyn, and every year it is more and more extravagant. One year, we got a small wood and velvet couch upon which chocolates and wafers laid alongside (what else) a bottle of wine. The next year, an extremely large basket with dried fruits, nuts, cakes, chocolates and the ever-present wine. When we put that on the table next to one of the baskets that we send out it's not a shock that our basket looks more than a little *nebach*, and it makes us feel that way as well!

*Mishnah Brurah* quotes Maimonides, saying that we should spend more on *matanot le'evyonim* [charity or gifts of food to the needy], another of Purim's four *mitzvot*, than on our *mishloach manot*. Purim is a holiday where we were threatened as a people, and after we triumphed we came together as a nation. So it would make sense to display our gratitude of being spared as a nation with acts of *chesed* and *tzedakah* by helping out the less fortunate among us. Nowadays we have organizations that take care of the poor with soup kitchens, Yad Eliezer, etc., so giving charity hand-to-hand is less common than it used to be, but giving to those organizations still fulfills our obligation.

My rabbi, Rabbi Laurence Rothwachs of Congregation Beth Aaron in Teaneck actually requested that his congregation spend less money on their *mishloach manot* and is himself staunch in changing his family's habit. Last year they gave out charity collection boxes with their simple food gift baskets and a poem about the importance of putting the *mitzvah* of *matanot le'evyonim* before that of *mishloach manot*.

Purim's "slogan," so to speak, is *v'nahafoch hu*, that our assumptions will manifest as their opposite. We should apply *v'nahafoch hu* to our perception on what's important about Purim and focus more on *matanot le'evyonim* than *mishloach manot* this year.



Julia Siegel

If ranking #1 in popularity comes at the expense of ignoring those in need, which will you choose?

## Why Computer Science Matters

**BY TOVIAH MOLDWIN** This past semester, SCW decided to stop offering computer science as an official major, instead allowing students who wish to pursue courses in computer science to do so within the framework of interdisciplinary shaped majors. This decision was made largely because of the paucity of students who expressed interest in the computer science major; as of Fall 2011, there were fewer than ten students at Stern with a declared major in computer science. Though the major no longer exists, Stern did hire a new instructor, Baruch Lane, a RIETS student and a graduate of Queens College, to teach computer science courses at the Beren campus.

The decision to cut the computer science major was done out of necessity; a major that attracts so few students is difficult to keep as a full-fledged program of study. This does not mean, however, that students should remain complacent about the current state of the computer science major at Stern. Computer science is a phenomenally important and relevant field in the modern world, and students, faculty, and members of the administration need to work together to ensure that the computer science department is a strong component of the academic program at SCW.

The first step in this process is to promote student interest in computer science, which should provide an incentive for the school's administration to invest more heavily in its computer science program. As a student of computer science, I would like to convey to the students of SCW why I feel so strongly about the study of this subject, and hope this article will help to spark student engagement with the fascinating world of computer science.

In my experience, one of the reasons that computer science isn't a particularly popular major, both at SCW and YC, is that people simply

don't know what computer science is. Other fields of study are self-explanatory; everyone, irrespective of prior educational background, at least has some familiarity with what math, chemistry, philosophy, history, and literature are all about. When I tell people that I'm a computer science major, though, I'm often asked, "You're a computer science major...that's interesting..."

**PROGRAMMING IS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN SOLVING A JIGSAW PUZZLE, PULLING TEETH, WRITING A STORY, AND WINNING A MARATHON.**

what exactly do you study?" People know what computers are, of course, but the notion of there being some sort of "science"

governing how computers function is usually not given much thought. To most people, computers are – quite literally – "black boxes" (or white and silver, if you're a Mac user) that have the ability to greatly simplify tasks that would otherwise be quite tedious and unpleasant.

Computer science, in very broad terms, is the study of how those mysterious black boxes actually work and how we can get them to do things that they don't already do. At the core of computer science is computer programming, or writing instructions in a computer-readable language that a computer can use to carry out a task. Programming is... well, it's like a cross between solving a jigsaw puzzle, pulling teeth, writing a story, and winning a marathon. Writing a program is an exciting, creative process, similar to painting or playing a piece of music. It is one of the most frustrating and most rewarding things a person can experience. But with all the difficulty that the programming process can entail, knowing how to write computer programs is incredibly empowering. When you know how to program, you realize that you are no longer restricted to

using software that other people have written; you can write your own programs to do whatever you want them to. The creative and practical possibilities are virtually endless.

Computer science also serves as an indispensable window into many other fields of intellectual inquiry. Students of computer science are taught to think analytically, rigorously, and precisely, as a flaw in logic when programming leads to a non-functioning (or incorrect) program. The study of algorithms teaches students to be problem solvers, to break up real-world challenges into their constituent parts and find general computational approaches that will lead to solutions. And my personal favorite subfield of computer science, artificial intelligence, deals with deep and important questions about the very nature of human intelligence and whether (and how) various aspects of human intelligence can be imitated through artificial means. Artificial intelligence is a fascinating cross between computer science, philosophy, economics, neurology, and psychology, and it is one of the most salient examples of how computer science can give us insight into ourselves and the way that we perceive our world.

**COMPUTER SCIENCE IS A PHENOMENALLY IMPORTANT AND RELEVANT FIELD IN THE MODERN WORLD**

In addition to the great educational potential of computer science, it is one of the most practically useful fields a person can study to be prepared for the contemporary job market. Computer technology is becoming increasingly essential in the modern business world; any enterprise of even moderate size requires web programmers, database experts, and a host of other programming professionals to remain competitive in a technologically advanced market. The financial industry heavily invests in programmers who can devise algorithms

to profitably trade financial instruments, and scores of tech start-up companies across the country are recruiting programmers who can help take their ideas off the ground. Various applications of computer science are becoming increasingly important in medicine, engineering, and virtually every professional field. The computer industry is also one of the most developed sectors of Israel's economy, making computer science an excellent field of study for students looking to move to Israel after their college career. In short, computer science is an excellent springboard into a diverse array of profitable and interesting careers, both in the U.S. and Israel, that have real potential for benefitting mankind in a variety of ways.

Even for students who don't want to complete a full computer science major, taking a few core computer science courses can open up a world of career opportunities. And computer science is an important field to have familiarity with even if it doesn't end up as a career choice. The world of today runs on computers, and it behooves every student, regardless of their chosen area of study, to learn a bit about how computers work and how to properly harness their abilities by learning how to program. Computer science is a foundation of the present and future of human technological progress, and students at our university, both at YC and SCW, should make an effort to ensure that it remains an important part of the Yeshiva curriculum.

*Toviah Moldwin is a third-year student at YC and the president of the YU Computer Science Club.*



## Your Undivided Attention, Please

**BY HANNAH DREYFUS** Getting to know someone in a crowd is difficult. Getting to know someone with the prospect of marriage hanging over your head like a hovercraft is supremely more difficult.

It is sstuds and ystuds such as these that especially offend the sensibilities: SHIDDUCH AND SHOW, the title reads. Subtle. Go on. “Yes, it’s true! Boy are totally allowed to come to Stern to see a SPECTACULAR performance AND *shmooze* with some fantastic women...perhaps even meet your *bashret*?” My stomach churns. Reader, I do not know what expression was on your face after reading that e-mail. I was cringing.

What attending a play has to do with marriage, I do not know. Yes, this email was most likely just a ploy for attention, a helpful PR tactic. And perhaps it worked. But the message is no less potent, no less affecting. And – dare I say it – no less true.

Extracurricular clubs, events, and teams within this University are *drenched* in expectations. No, not every date ends in marriage. But, as your tenth grade Rabbi was bound to warn, finger wagging unctuously, every marriage starts with a date, or something like a date. It is the “something like a date” category that becomes rather problematic when attending a Modern-Orthodox university seemingly bent, simultaneously, on ‘re-imagining’ (whatever that means) and procreation. Yes, Modern Orthodoxy is a difficult line to walk. And who will walk that line in the future if not the offspring of the current, dedicated Torah U’Madda patriots?

To this end, every club, team, or co-educational event seems to straddle a not-so-subtle alter-agenda: making couples happen. “Something like a date” has expanded its definition to include every co-educational club, team, and event on campus, to exhausting effects.

The reality is not only painfully obvious to insiders. Outsiders sense it as well. I need only reference the *New York Times* article written about the Seformim Sale last year. The title: benign – “Yeshiva Fair Is a Bastion for Jewish Books of the Printed Variety.” Most of the article is light, informative, harmless. The last sentence: *loaded*. “At last year’s fair, Shira Sragow, 22, who is from Teaneck and a Stern graduate, met Ari Lewis, 23, of Virginia, a Yeshiva graduate, while stacking and setting up books. Last month, they were engaged.”

Is it possible to have a book-sale that is about – selling books?

Case studies abound: The shuttle is no longer merely a utilitarian mode of transportation, gaining, rather, the colloquial title “the Shidduch Shuttle.” The Chesed club has done a rather spotty

job maintaining an altruistic front (see sstud/ystud, sent 9/6/11: “Guys, looking to meet girls? Girls, looking to meet guys? Then apply to join the YU Chesed Club Board!” The statement was oddly juxtaposed with conclusive expletive, “*Tizku Lmitzvos!*” Which mitzvah – *chesed* or *peru u’revu*? (Just a little humor in honor of the Adar issue.) Shabbaton posters foreshadow: “You *know* what they say about the Kol HaMevaser Shabbaton...” No! I do not know, nor do I want to know! Please, just allow me to enjoy my Shabbos in ignorant, single bliss.

At the Honors Program welcoming dinner at the start of the fall semester, one invited speaker, after extolling Yeshiva University’s many wonderful qualities and irreplaceable opportunities, informed the fresh-off-the-plane-from-Israel Honors students, “Look around you carefully, guys. Because, believe it or not, I actually met my wife for the first time at an Honors Dinner just like this one.” The atmosphere changed. Suddenly, students starting eyeing

each other suspiciously, wondering which unsuspecting stranger, hitherto cloaked in anonymity, was bound to become his/her one-day spouse. After that, conversation became rather stilted.

Disclaimer: I don’t espouse celibacy. Boys and girls meeting – two thumbs up. Necessary. Beautiful. Exciting. I’ll circle dance to prove it.

But what are the cons of referencing marriage, implicitly or explicitly, at every co-ed event?

It is difficult to gain the most from an experience when distracted by another agenda. Focus is a commodity; it does not function as efficiently when split. Attempting to accomplish two important tasks simultaneously usually results in neither task getting done to full satisfaction. As agendas go, marriage/dating is about as distracting as they come. Impressing someone of the opposite gender can amount to a rather time-consuming, energy-sapping task, stealing focus from the highly valuable task at hand.

Aside from redirecting focus, extracurricular activities are an investment in *yourself*. Experiences should be selected and enjoyed because they bolster who you are, not because they afford you the opportunity to meet someone else. Reframing events in relation to another not only detracts from our ability to benefit from the experience – it mitigates the value of the experience itself.

The true irony of this unhealthy tendency is that it inhibits you from being who you really are. People change in pressurized situations. With the added ‘I-could-marry-you’ mantra marching incessantly across your mind like a broken record, it becomes increasingly more difficult to just be yourself in co-ed situations. Additional pressure proves counterproductive, making any and all clandestine ends *more* difficult to achieve.

It will forever be a debate between realists and hormonal teenagers: do platonic relationships exist (the latter, amidst a torrent of giggles, arguing

persistently that they do. Right). Like with most frustratingly evasive questions, the question becomes a game of semantics and noncommittal definitions. The bottom line: platonic relationships are difficult to achieve, more difficult to maintain, and nearly impossible when set against a backdrop of marriage proposals in the Brookdale front lounge. Whether or not the thing truly exists, any chance for a functional platonic relationship is mitigated by the constant undertone of wedding-bells that surreptitiously seems to creep its way into the playlist of every coed YU event.

What to do about it? The battle to de-sexualize, if you will, everything and anything co-ed on this campus seems to be futile. And, many will no-doubt argue, it is a battle not meant to be fought. Jewish boys and Jewish girls of marriageable age should be doing just that – getting married. They need a forum to meet, do they not? So, what’s the problem?

Yes, singles do need a forum to  
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# Not Going to the Seforim Sale: Uniquely Different or Unsurprisingly Conformist?

BY RACHEL DELIA BENAIM

*Are you or a friend suffering from SSW (Seforim Sale Withdrawal)?*

*Well suffer NO MORE!*

*I have the medicine that can help you.*

*(sstud, February 26)*

Thanks, but I'll take my chances. I am currently a lower senior in SCW and I have yet to attend the Seforim Sale.

Shocked?

Me too.

I attend nearly every major Stern/YU event, and yet for some reason, I just can't stomach the Seforim Sale. Perhaps it is because I don't want to feed into the classic "gag – me" stereotypes: looking for my *bashert*, gravitating towards a social scene, or *actually* wanting to buy seforim.

Is the sheer desire to not feed into classic YU stereotypes a strong enough motivation for avoiding Belfer like the plague during the entire month of February? Maybe not. Especially

because I feed into many other SCW stereotypes. I have brown hair. I wear Ugg boots. I buy 14 water bottles a day in the caf. I own a North Face. I come to class every morning with my Pomegranate Chobani and Guy and Gallard coffee in hand. I wear my Hedaya ring every day. (No Hedaya necklace, though...)

I guess maybe I'm avoiding the Seforim Sale to be different. That rationale can't be it either – if I were to avoid the Sale to specifically be different, I would, in effect, be just like everyone else who avoids the sale to not feed into stereotypes and be different. I guess that makes me just like everyone else, doesn't it?

Aha, no. I will venture to say that my version of nonconformity is, in essence, the only type of legitimate nonconformity – precisely because I am so involved in other aspects of the school. Those who aren't involved on campus and "want to be different" or "make a statement" by not going to the Seforim Sale feed into the conformist outsider stereotype, whereas those

who are involved, and do feed into other Stern stereotypes are, in this case, uniquely nonconformist.

## MANY GIRLS WHO COMPLAIN AND DAVKA DON'T GO TO THE SEFORIM SALE FOR WHATEVER "NONCONFORMIST" REASONS ARE REALLY JUST FEEDING INTO THE REBEL-STERN GIRL STEREOTYPE.

Allow me to explain: I believe that the whole concept of conformity comes down to one question – is it better to be a conformist outsider or a breakaway insider?

To me, my resistance is reminiscent of the dynamic in the 1999 classic (yes, it's a classic) *10 Things I Hate About You*. According to an academic paper written by Danna Shapiro, a media studies and communications major at NYU Steinhardt, the film suggests that to survive in the world as an individual, you must be either

a breakaway insider, or a conformist outsider.

*10 Things'* obvious female heroine, Kat, is presented as the film's role model despite (or perhaps because of?) her rejection of mainstream ideals and seemingly blatant nonconformism. Upon further consideration, there are major flaws in this line of thought. In the beginning, Kat's character plays into quite the opposite role—she becomes a conformist outsider – by becoming the character who conforms to a typical "rebel" role, thus making her a less-than-ideal role model.

However, as the film progresses she ends up going to the prom of her own volition – not because anyone else "expects her to," and she ends up fulfilling the whole boy-meets-girl stereotype in a completely nonconformist way, different than anyone else. Thus, Kat actually begins as a conformist outsider but then becomes uniquely nonconformist.

Kat is the unique nonconformist after all, and that's when things really come together for her – when she acknowledges she does conform to some stereotypes and stops trying so hard to be so different.

Back to the Seforim Sale: many girls who complain and *davka* don't go to the Seforim Sale for whatever "nonconformist" reasons are really just feeding into the rebel-Stern girl stereotype.

So, maybe I don't have strong reasons to go or not, but let me pose the following question: why do *you*, yes, you, Stern Girl, go to the Seforim Sale. To meet your bashert? (if you answered yes to that one, *chazak u'baruch* that you can admit it and I hope it works for you...) To see what its all about – doesn't that just add fuel to the stereotypical fire? To buy seforim? Let's face it, the seforim aren't even particularly inexpensive...

So, again, I pose the question, why bother?

## 50 Years of Theater

*continued from page 9*

than most modern stages allow for; it demands a dynamic stage. There are no pauses [to allow] for set changes ...behind the curtains, and, except for any changes made during intermission, anything moved on and off stage has to be brought on or off by the actors themselves, in character, or by stagehands who look like they belong. For instance, in *Hamlet* the stagehands were given similar (but simpler) costumes as the rest of the male characters (a long, *tzenuah*, tunic), and they seemed to be servants in the palace."

Some other SCDS members have also shared cherished memories of the theater. Dina Wecker, vice president of SCDS, recalls "turning Stern girls into princes and Disney characters for *Into the Woods*, sitting onstage with 3 girls who were learning how to simultaneously spit water they were drinking all over the stage in *Sandbag, Stage Left*, [and] throwing dirt on the audience and talking to a skull called Yorick in *Hamlet*." In all seriousness, Wecker adds, "There is a unique emotional bond that forms in a theater group. The friends you make in that theater remain friends for life."

Elkaim, like all of SCDS, recognizes the limitations of the SCC. "The seating is a bit awkward, the backstage is a nightmare... emergency alarms go off every other time you open a door. But despite all that,

or maybe because of it, I've really grown to love the theater for its wacky charm, uniqueness, mystery, and versatility." Hannah Rozenblat, a junior with SCDS, adds, "The theater felt like home. During the last week before the show... we almost lived there."

Due to a need to balance the budget, Yeshiva announced this past fall that it would be selling the SCC. The building is currently listed with a broker at an asking price of \$16.5 million. Rosengarten says that offers have been made, but as of right now the building is still on the market. Though they understand the need, students are sad to see the building go.

SCDS has not yet found a new location. Shafner says, "As a producer and president of the society, it is unnerving, and I do not intend us to remain in that state until it is too late." When

asked about possible new venues, she replied, "When we thought we might not have the theater even for this semester, we looked into the YU Museum's stage. It was not ideal – the stage is also quite small, there is hardly any backstage to speak of, and there's a grand piano that lives on the stage. The acoustics were lovely, though." Further complications due to scheduling conflicts are inevitable because of several other organizations making use of the YU Museum.

Still, plans are moving forward. "We are working with Student Life to find a space we can use for our performances," concludes Shafner.

No matter the student, no matter the story, most students have some kind of connection to the SCC and are sad to see it go. Elkaim put it simply, "I'm really going to miss the Schottenstein Cultural Center."



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## Your Undivided Attention, Please

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meet and get to know one another. But if the agenda is getting to know someone of the opposite gender, how about a bona fide date? Far be it from me to propose such a radical idea. Rather than *chesed*, *kiruv*, politics, or fundraising, let's make dating about dating. Two people, a table, and undivided focus.

A losing battle? Let's not underestimate the profound impact we have on our environment. We are all contributors to the reality we inhabit. Our comments, our mass emails, our offhand remarks and careless humor all have impact. We're in a highly pressurized system as it is – we are doing ourselves no favors by continuing to feed the system.

## Genotoxic Hazards of Makeup

**BY BATSHEVA KUHR** “I love the confidence that makeup gives me,” said media personality, supermodel, author and business woman Tyra Banks. Many women couldn’t agree with her more. Females often enjoy their ‘enhanced look’, which they feel makes them prettier, and can often draw a little extra attention to their features. However, makeup often includes ingredients that pose a danger to humans, which casts doubts on the benefit of makeup as compared to its potential hazard.

Titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) is a common makeup ingredient. Given its reputation as a genotoxic agent (affecting the integrity of the cell) and carcinogen, this is somewhat surprising. Specifically, TiO<sub>2</sub> is known to cause cancer in rats (Roller 2009). Furthermore, in a study by Sycheva *et al.* (2011), the genotoxicity and carcinogenicity of TiO<sub>2</sub> were investigated by exposing mice to varying dosages of TiO<sub>2</sub> for one week. The study found that TiO<sub>2</sub> had differing effects on the various cells and concluded that the results point to a potential health danger associated with TiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticle contact. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that another study found that chronic exposure of Chinese hamster ovary (CHO) cells to TiO<sub>2</sub> was not found to be conclusively genotoxic or cytotoxic (Wang *et al.*, 2011). However, as noted in that study, it is possible that CHO cells are somehow able to detoxify and thus adapt to the chronic exposure of nano TiO<sub>2</sub> particles. Thus, the evidence of the severity of TiO<sub>2</sub> genotoxicity is debated.

Parabens, one of the most notorious ingredients in cosmetics, has rightfully earned such a reputation.

Parabens serve as preservatives in makeup and come in the form of methyl-, ethyl-, propyl-, butyl-, etc. and are deemed “highly toxic” by the Organic Consumers Association (OCA). In a report by Crinnion, parabens are potentially causative of breast cancer because they are estrogenic and accumulate in tissue for a short period of time (2010).

Crinnion (2010) also cites that phthalates, also a common ingredient in cosmetics, are associated with problems such as infertility, specifically testicular dysgenesis (which results in male infertility), obesity, asthma, allergies, leiomyomas (a smooth muscle mass) and breast cancer. In the same study, it is noted that *in utero* exposure to phthalates causes decreased attention span and increased frequency of mood disorders, premature sexual development in females. These toxic ingredients should surely be avoided by purchasing makeup that is free of phthalates and parabens, especially while pregnant.

According to the OCA, the top synthetic ingredients to avoid in makeup are the formaldehyde-releasing chemicals imidazolidinyl urea, dimethylol urea and diazolidinyl urea. They are second only to parabens in their usage as preservatives or additives in makeup. A study found that both imidazolidinyl urea and diazolidinyl urea should be categorized as genotoxic *in vitro*.

Since these chemicals release formaldehyde, it is important to look at the potential genotoxic effects of formaldehyde as well. In the Twelfth Report on Carcinogens (2011), Formaldehyde is “known to be a human carcinogen” because epidemiological

studies have consistently shown how formaldehyde is carcinogenic in humans, specifically causative of nasopharyngeal cancer, sinonasal cancer and lymphohematopoietic cancer among individuals with higher measures of exposure to formaldehyde. The Report cites formaldehyde’s usage in industrial resins, adhesives for wood products, tissue preservative for embalmers, laundry detergent and as a biocide as well as its use as a preservative in makeup, of course as means of exposure to the chemical. In a study that looked at the genotoxic effects in occupational exposure to formaldehyde, a significant increased frequency of specific genotoxic damage such as micronuclei were found in the group with long-term formaldehyde exposure (Viegas *et al.*, 2010). Such genotoxicity makes a compelling argument to avoid formaldehyde-producing agents in one’s makeup routine.

Oxyquinoline and oxyquinoline sulfate are also ingredients used

# SCIENCE & HEALTH

SHULAMIT BRUNSWICK  
NAAMAH PLOTZKER  
SCIENCE@YUOBSERVER.COM

in cosmetics. Previously, these chemicals were not studied enough to determine whether safety measures were necessary in the incorporation of the chemical into cosmetics. However, there has been evidence of more frequent chromosomal aberrations in an *in vitro* study (Anderson 2006).

To test how prevalent these chemicals are in “every-day” cosmetics, I did a cursory check of the ingredients in my own personal makeup. I found that Revlon Custom Creations foundation as well as a combined blush/bronzer by Revlon Beyond Natural each contained methyl-, ethyl-, and propyl- paraben as well as titanium dioxide. L’Oreal Paris HIP ColorTruth eyeliner contained propyl- and butyl- paraben as well as titanium dioxide. Zoe & Zac Naturals mineral blush, Beauty Rush minty lip shine, and Maybelline New York FIT me! Pressed powder contained titanium dioxide as well. All of my makeup with the list of ingredients available on the package, from lip

gloss to blush, contained at least one of the ingredients mentioned in this article. Though this is not conclusive proof that almost all common drugstore makeup includes one of these aforementioned ingredients, it is surely indicative of the relevancy of this topic to those that use makeup on a somewhat regular basis.

Regulation of cosmetics is directed by the Food and Drug Administration. Though the FDA is constantly under scrutiny, they are constantly making progress to making cosmetics, among other things, safer for the public (Sharfstein 2011). In the words of Rosalind Russell, a famous movie star of the mid-1900s, “taking joy in living is a woman’s best cosmetic.” In light of this article, perhaps an alternate interpretation to this statement is that the best way to truly enjoy one’s life, instead of potentially risking it, is by avoiding the use of harmful cosmetics.

## Going to the Movies

**BY SHULAMIT BRUNSWICK** Remember VHS tapes and hand-drawn animated movies? Or even having to wait until the movie you wanted to watch was on TV or in the video rental place before you could watch it? How we perceive movies has drastically changed in the two decades most of us students have been alive. The motion picture industry has made several huge advances in technology, all to improve our viewing experience.

Advances in animation are seen in the difference between *Snow White*, released in 1937, and the crisper images of *Aladdin*, released in 1992. Advancements in computer generated, (CGI) characters can be seen in the 1995 movie *Toy Story* contrasted with the more true-to-life movement of the 2004 *The Incredibles*. Until very recently, 3D movies were limited to theme parks; now they are becoming mainstream. Movies have come a long way from their humble origins.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the concept of moving images as entertainment was gaining support. For some time, several types of devices had been used to create the moving-image effect. Magic lanterns projected images on glass slides onto a screen and levers were used to make these images “move”. Another machine called a Phenakistiscope consisted of a disc with images of successive phases of movement on it, which could be spun to simulate movement, similar to a flipbook. Additionally, there was the Zoopraxiscope, developed by photographer Eadweard Muybridge in 1879, which projected a series of images in successive phases of movement, obtained through the use of multiple cameras. Muybridge used his Zoopraxiscope to capture the movements of people and animals, and is regarded as having made the first successful “photographs of motion.”

At this time, the moving pictures were just that – pictures that moved – no plot, no story, no sound. One of

the earliest movie shorts was a collection of 15-30 second scenarios created by the Lumiere Brothers in France. The first movie “shows” lasted 5-8 minutes and were a collection of short scenes: a train arriving at a station, a man watering his garden, men playing cards, people getting off of a ferry, and a street vendor selling his wares. The early Lumiere presentations delighted people in Paris, drawing huge crowds. Part of the shows’ draw was their realistic quality. In one film, a train pulled into a station, coming directly at the viewers. Famously, some theatergoers thought the train would come right into the theater – scared, they panicked and ran out.

In 1888, Muybridge visited Thomas Edison and proposed a collaboration, combining the Zoopraxiscope with the Edison phonograph to create moving images combined with sound. Although he appeared intrigued, Edison turned Muybridge down, perhaps realizing that the Zoopraxiscope was not a very practical or efficient way of recording motion.

However, this in no way meant that Edison was rejecting the idea of creating such a device. Later that year, he filed a caveat with the Patents Office describing his ideas for a device which would “do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear” – record and reproduce objects in motion. Edison called the invention a “Kinetoscope,” using the Greek words “kineto” meaning “movement” and “scopos” meaning “to watch.”

Edison also developed the Kinetograph, which was based on his phonograph cylinder. Tiny photographic images were affixed in sequence to a cylinder, with the idea that when the cylinder was rotated the illusion of motion would be reproduced via reflected light. This ultimately proved to be impractical.

While in Europe, Edison met French physiologist

## Why “Ghost-Hunters” Belongs on the SyFy Channel

**BY NAAMAH PLOTZKER** Grant Wilson, the co-lead investigator on the TV show “Ghost Hunters,” announced his retirement after eight years on the show. If you never heard this news, don’t feel out of touch; you’re probably just not into the paranormal.

“Ghost Hunters” is a TV show on the SyFy Channel in which Wilson and his cohort, Jason Hawes, conduct “scientific” investigations of sites that are believed to be haunted. While Wilson and Hawes have done much to promulgate the idea that ghosts and other paranormal phenomena are very real, including launching a TV show and founding The Atlantic Paranormal Society (TAPS) to educate about and enable investigation of the paranormal, skeptics abound and have founded their own societies to counter what they call as-of-yet unsubstantiated claims.

One such critic is Benjamin Radford, a vocal member of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI). The premise for Radford’s argument against “scientific” paranormal studies can be illustrated by the following example: If one were to claim that he or she “found” the cure for cancer, a huge

body of powerful evidence would be required to support such a claim. So too with ghost-hunting, if not more so, because here we are dealing with the supernatural. The evidence we have thus far is too weak to support such fantastic claims.

Why is it that “feelings” and faulty scientific methods seem to be enough to prove that there are ghosts when such evidence would be laughable in other fields? Do Wilson and Hawes even believe their own claims, considering that their show is viewable on the Sy-Fy Channel and not a more factual network, such as Discovery?

According to Radford, paranormal research is as respectable a scientific inquiry as any, and as such, does not deserve to be treated with the “pseudoscientific” methods of typical ghost-hunters. On the CSI website, Radford exposes all the things that are wrong with the “scientific” ghost-hunting of today.

First of all, he argues, all you need to do is just take a look at the people who are ghost hunters to see that ghost hunting is a hoax. Ghost hunters are

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## Going to the Movies

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Étienne-Jules Marey, who used a continuous roll of film in his Chronophotographe, another early attempt at creating moving pictures, to produce a sequence of still images which were projected in rapid sequence, giving the illusion of motion. The Edison Company used this technique with emulsion-coated celluloid film sheets developed by John Carbutt. By 1890, a new assistant, William Heise, joined Edison's point man on the project, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, and the two began to develop a machine that exposed a strip of film in a horizontal-feed mechanism.

In 1891, the Edison Company successfully demonstrated the Kinetoscope. However, it allowed only one person at a time to view moving pictures. At this time, several people were working to create a projector to bring shows to large audiences, but Charles Francis Jenkins and his projector, the Phantoscope, are credited with giving the first showing to a large audience in 1894. However, the first public screening of film ever is due to Jean Aimé Le Roy, a French photographer. On February 5, 1894, his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, he presented his "Marvelous Cinematograph" to a group of around twenty show businessmen in New York City. The first motion pictures shown in a "movie theater" in America were presented to audiences on April 23, 1896, in New York City using Edison's later projector, the Vitascope. Eventually, the Edison Company developed the Projectoscope and abandoned the Vitascope.

Around 1900, the second phase of movies began emerging: stories told through moving pictures. The first movies were short, about 5-8 minutes. Director David Wark Griffith developed innovative techniques, including cross cutting (cutting from one scene to another scene, and then back and forth, to develop various parts of a story and to build suspense) and close-ups. However, some early movie company owners objected to close-ups, arguing that moviegoers would want to see the entire person. Griffith maintained that close-ups could bring drama, and it is clear from the movies we have today that he won the argument.

Griffith and other filmmakers wanted to move beyond the simple formula that characterized the industry in the early 1900s. But industry owners were resistant and wanted to keep to one-reelers with limited story telling. So Griffith and like-minded people moved to a rural area near Los Angeles, where there the weather was good (lots of sunshine, little rain, ideal for outside movie work) and plentiful barns for inside work. This place later became known as Hollywood.

In Hollywood, Griffith produced the first successful full-length feature film, called "The Clansman," adapted from a book by Thomas Dixon. The film cost \$100,000 to make (a lot of money in those days, particularly in a small industry such as the movie industry) but it brought in \$18 million in revenues. It ran over three hours, was popular, controversial, and established Griffith as one of the nation's leading directors. It was of high technical quality too, with close ups, cross cutting, fadeouts, and dramatic lighting.

Until the late 1920's, motion pictures were silent except for the musical accompaniment provided by theater owners in the form of live orchestras. Up to this point, movies had enjoyed a wide degree of popularity, but they still remained a secondary form of entertainment, largely due to their lack of sound. All of this changed in 1926 when Warner Brothers, in conjunction with Western Electric, introduced a new sound-on-disc system. In this system, sound effects and music were recorded on a wax record that would later be synchronized with the film projector. In order to exhibit this new technology, Warner Bros. released *Don Juan*, the first motion picture to have a pre-recorded score and synchronized sound effects. Although *Don Juan* proved to be a box-office hit, many movie studios still refused to adapt to talking picture technology, believing that "talkies" would never replace silent pictures. However, the premiere of *The Jazz Singer* in October of 1927 changed these opinions, and in doing so, changed the history of motion pictures forever. *The Jazz Singer* triggered the talking-picture revolution. It was the first "talkie" to use spoken dialogue as part of the dramatic action, and "Wait a minute, wait a minute, you ain't heard nothin' yet" is still a famous line. The combination of Jolson, America's most popular singer, and the new medium of sound helped to produce a profit of \$3.5 million. When Warner Bros. created more "talkies" that also became box-office hits, the rest of Hollywood switched to sound with startling speed, hoping to adapt to the new technology.

During the silent film era, it was considered acceptable to talk while the movies played, as it did not disrupt anyone and allowed fellow patrons to discuss the movie's action while it was taking place. With talking pictures, however, audiences concentrated on hearing the movie and their own movie experience, rather than

## Why "Ghost-Hunters" Belongs on the SyFy Channel

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nearly always "amateurs;" they rarely have scientific training in the study of the paranormal and therefore are unqualified to apply scientific methods to research. According to Radford, in order to carry out an effective investigation, a reasonable amount of background in the areas of investigation, logic, critical thinking, psychology, science, and forensics is required.

However, the problem is much greater: Many ghost hunters do not consider natural explanations for ghostly phenomena. They automatically conclude that phenomena such as orbs or electronic voice phenomena (EVPs) are "unexplainable" and therefore are evidence of paranormal activity, while really they are due to other causes.

Orbs, which are considered manifestations of ghostly presences and are usually found only in photographs, are most likely caused by the flash illuminations of dust, insects, rain and many other objects by the camera flash, as Radford demonstrated in a series of experiments. EVPs, which are strange noise, are also attributable to static, wind, human voices, radios, and auditory pareidolia (the interpretation of random sounds as speech in one's own language). Although the TAPS website discourages inquisitors from immediately ruling out natural circumstances, their proposals that true orbs can be distinguished by features such as trails of movement behind it and white, blue, or green color is not enough.

"Scientific" ghost-hunters recognize that it is not enough to claim that there are ghosts because of weird, creepy, or sad feelings or sensations because a person's emotions are not necessarily connected to anything specific in his or her environment. Richard L. Smith, a ghost hunter and guest poster on the TAPS website claims to investigate clients for mental instability, phobias, delusional behavior, and depression before he agrees to conduct investigations with them, perhaps decreasing the possibility that sudden "inexplicable" feelings or sensations are due to causes other than ghosts.

A further problem is that searches for ghosts are almost always conducted in the dark. Logic dictates that a search ought to be conducted in light, even for ghosts. It is true that some ghosts are described as emitting light, and in that case, a search in the dark would make sense, but often ghosts are described as being shadowy and dark, and in those cases a search in the light would be the more logical approach. Searching for the paranormal in darkness exacerbates normal feelings of fear and paranoia in the hunters. Most of the time, a search will be more successful if you can see what you are looking for.

There is another significant problem with ghost-hunters. Control groups are a fundamental principle of scientific research. A scientist cannot just assume that when he does an experiment and sees the result that he wanted that it is because his experiment "worked." The system by which the causal relationship is experimented is by establishing an independent variable which

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those seated around them, leading to the "no talking during the movie" policy most people have today. As Robert Sklar said in his book *Movie Made America*, quoted on the American Studies page on the University of Virginia's website, "talking audiences for silent pictures became a silent audience for talking pictures."

The invention and growing availability of the television in the late 1940s and 1950s was a blow to the movie industry. The TV was right in the home, more convenient than going out to the movies, and soon offered a variety of interesting programming for the whole family. In response, the movie industry tried to woo viewers back with increasingly sophisticated techniques. "Wide screen" used three projectors and a curved screen, which enhanced the illusion of depth. 3D movies also gained popularity in the 1950s. One 1960 movie featured "Smellovision" where smells released from the theater's chair to correspond to scenes on the screen.

Special effects also become more sophisticated during this time, as evidenced in the 1968 movie "2001: A Space Odyssey." Spaceship miniatures were highly detailed and carefully photographed for a realistic depth of field, and careful motion-control work ensured that the elements were precisely combined in the camera. In 1993, CGI, was used to create many of the dinosaurs in Steven Spielberg's "Jurassic Park" and CGI is now a staple in many movies we watch today.

The movie industry has grown and changed rapidly in the 130 or so years since moving pictures were first conceived. From talkies to smellovision, Hollywood continues to come up with innovations to capture our attentions and leave us spellbound.

alone is responsible for changes in the dependent variable. This means that A must cause B, so that if the conditions of A change, B changes too, and scientists need to be sure that the dependent variable does not exist without the independent variable (because this would imply that B is not caused by A). When ghost-hunters carry out overnight investigations of a haunted location, they do not have a large enough time-frame to take the hundreds of samples necessary to establish the control state of the location, that is, the natural state of the location without paranormal activity and the haunted state.

Lastly, much of the equipment used in "scientific" ghost-hunting is faulty. Several high-tech machines are used to find ghosts, such as Geiger-counters, which test for nuclear radiation waves, EMF detectors, which measure changes in electromagnetic fields, ion detectors, and infrared cameras, which take pictures that sense the presence of energy in the infrared range of the electromagnetic spectrum. Yet there is no evidence that the phenomena that these tools measure have any connection to the presence of ghosts.

Furthermore, even the equipment that can be used to test for ghosts is not used correctly. Sound recorders and microphones can test for strange noises, but it is not enough to just record these sounds and study them later, as ghost-hunters do. If you place microphones around a room, you can test where the sound is coming from by which microphone has the highest signal strength, and then analyze what the source of the sound is. For example, if the microphone picks up a strong signal near a radiator, the sound is probably coming from a furnace or boiler. If a sound is strongest near the center of a room, especially an empty one, this may be a sign of paranormal activity, but of course, much more extensive investigation would be required to be sure.

Though science has not yet given us strong evidence in its favor does not mean that the idea is dead. Perhaps science will eventually succeed in proving the existence of the paranormal, for as shown in this article, the problem with ghost-hunting is faulty methods, not a faulty hypothesis. On the other hand, science may not lead the way to this elusive world. Perhaps we are supposed to have forgotten the way of the ancient and dark powers of times gone by.

## Nutrition Nook: Be the Next Queen Esther

BY SARAH EDINGER

Cookies and candy and are ushered through the door  
In cellophane, on platters, or in bags galore  
Children and adults from young to old  
Seem to forget the message *shalach manot* really hold  
For each ring of the door bell, less space is seen on the table  
Up to our noses with chips and soda each family member must  
label  
Every last neighbor, every last friend we must seek  
For otherwise our Purim snacks won't even last a week  
After the day is through, let the tallying begin  
Soda, taffy, candy, chocolate and even a bottle of gin  
What is one to do with all this junk?  
Toss it? Are you nuts, I am not that kind of punk!  
You may wish to eat it, it is true  
However here is my challenge to you:  
Let his year be of a whole new kind  
When shopping for your Purim treats do keep in mind:  
Share not with your family and friends like you have in the  
past  
This year give out things that will make their insides last  
You love those that you exchange with, do you not?  
Then raise their spirits not their triglycerides a lot!  
Never would you intentionally hurt them to any degree  
Then send them healthy love with your gift, do you not agree?  
Instead of cookies, soda, danishes, doughnuts and goo  
Let the body enjoy actual nutrients, talk about a v'nahafoch  
hu!  
By exchanging healthy *shalach manot* your fulfillment of the  
mitzvah would be two  
For this year the Purim salvation depends not only on Queen  
Esther but also YOU!

*Sarah Edinger is President of the Nutrition Club.*

## 0.420 Seconds

**BY MEIRA LERNER** The pitcher, already exhausted from pitching a full game that morning, wiped the sweat off her brow. Though the road to the championship game had been rocky, starting off with a first-game loss in the double-elimination playoffs, we had managed to play our way to the championship game of a national softball tournament. The championship game, our fourth game of the day, could not have been more exciting.

Tied at the bottom of the final inning, there were two outs and bases were loaded. The pitcher, realizing the importance of her next few pitches, stared down at the batter and began her motion. Foot striking the sand and arm slapping her side, the pitcher mustered the strength to shoot a 60 mph fastball at the batter. Standing just 43 feet away from the pitcher's mound, the batter has a mere 0.420 seconds to react. Will the batter hit the ball? Will she send it flying over the fielders' heads for a run-scoring base hit, to end our hopes for a championship win?

You may expect a gallant account of a fielder's diving catch to keep our gold medal dreams alive. Nevertheless, the 0.420 seconds of uncertainty

as the ball sped towards the batter were more important than the result of that last pitch.

Standing in right field, I learned the importance of will power and perseverance. Already having played eight hours of softball that day, beginning with our first game at 6:30 in the morning, saying we were all exhausted is an understatement. Yet, we submitted to neither our fatigue nor our talented opponents. We decided to put everything we had into that game: our hearts, our years of practice, and our sweat. And, for the first time, struck a sense of doubt into the hearts of our undefeated rivals. Sports have taught me how capable players can be when they work together towards a single aim.

Although we had lost our first game that day, even early failure can often be overcome with great determination. How many of our great leaders have first fallen before rising to make a difference? How many experiments have failed before scientists successfully found the cure to a disease? I realized then that perseverance is the key to success in all aspects of life. Who knew 0.420 seconds could be so meaningful.

## Congratulations

*Congratulations to Rebecca Yoshor on being named to the Hudson Valley Women's Athletic Conference All-Conference team. This past season, Yoshor had the second highest number of rebounds out of any NCAA basketball player in the country!*

# SPORTS

MEIRA LERNER  
SPORTS@YUOBSERVER.COM



## Sports Quotes

*"Football is a great deal like life in that it teaches that work, sacrifice, perseverance, competitive drive, selflessness, and respect for authority are the price each and every one of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile."* - Vince

*Lombardi*

*"Success is living up to your potential. That's all. Wake up with a smile and go after life....Live it, enjoy it, taste it, smell it, feel it."* - Joe Kapp

*"Inside of a ring or out, ain't nothing wrong with going down. It's staying down that's wrong."* - Muhammad Ali

## How to Add Fun to Your Workout Schedule

**BY ERICA HASTEN** While some people are able to maintain a steady exercise routine, I personally find it difficult to keep myself interested in any form of physical activity for extended periods of time. After 15 minutes of running on the treadmill, going on the elliptical, or even riding on the stationary bike, I find myself bored, tired and out of breath. This is not because I am out of shape. I physically can continue, yet I feel that there is no point to my workout when I am not going anywhere. During my 45 minute "bike ride" I am still stuck in the same gym with Keeping up with the Kardashians playing on the television in front of me. As much as I truly care about Kim's failed marriage, I would rather be more mentally stimulated during my time exercising. I mean, exercising is supposed to be enjoyable; and it should not feel like another chore to cross off my list. There are only so many times I can listen to my exercise playlist on my iPod without going insane. Hence, I decided to find a fun, creative, and new way to spice up my routine and share my discoveries with all of you.

Don't get me wrong. I am aware that some people enjoy maintaining a routine and sticking with it. Some love doing the same workout on a daily basis, which I think is admirable. Yet, if you fall into this category, be aware that the human body is a major adaptor to intense situations.

For example, if you run every day, it is best to slightly increase your speed, intensity, or distance each time you run in order to ensure that your body is truly getting the exercise it needs. It is important to continue to push yourself to your body's limit in order to gain all the benefits that come with working out.

For all of those who do get bored easily and enjoy switching it up every day, here is a list of ideas that can motivate you to continue your workout routine. Just keep in mind that it is important to warm up before your workout as well as stretch afterwards to avoid injuries. It is also imperative to eat lots of protein before and after weight training or hard-core strength training. If you experience any pain whatsoever, stop immediately. Oh, and don't worry: no monthly gym membership is necessary for any of these ideas.

1. Find a workout buddy. Let's face it, when I workout alone it is extremely challenging to motivate myself to continue for any extended period of time. Easily 45 minutes of any gym related activity turns into 30 minutes, and this turns into 15 minutes. Before you know it, that new TV show or that book becomes more and more tempting. This may cause you to cancel your workout altogether. But working out with a partner may help your commitment issues. Once your decision to skip a session affects someone else, it may

cause you to rethink. Plus, it is more fun to discuss the latest Kardashian drama with a friend than think about it alone.

2. Join a cheap exercise class. Nothing motivates me more than having a super scary instructor yelling at me to move my butt. I recently joined a weekly Zumba class that takes place in 36th Street back lounge that has been amazing! In addition, this opportunity gives me a professional advisor to let me know if I am doing any move incorrectly. If Zumba is not your style, there are yoga classes offered at Stern; and I am sure that there are Pilates, spinning, aerobics, boxing, and any many other classes offered somewhere close by in NYC. (This is midtown, after all.) Don't forget to ask if the classes offer student rates.

3. YouTube can be your friend. If you do prefer to work out alone, there are many great workout videos on YouTube. I recommend trying out 8 minute abs, arms, legs, buns, or any other body part you can think of. Just make sure that you follow the instructions carefully to avoid injuries. Also, don't forget to stretch when you are done with an 8 minute routine. It is also important to be cautious when searching the internet for new workouts. It may be best to avoid any videos about weight lifting. Lifting incorrectly can seriously damage your body. If anything hurts you at all while doing any move, stop

immediately.

4. Play sports. Okay, some are not athletically gifted. But getting a group together to play intramural basketball or soccer in our somewhat-half-sized gym is considered an intense workout. You will be surprised about how much faster you can run when there is a ball involved.

5. Switch off days between cardio and strength training. This rule is simple enough. If you run on Monday, try doing Pilates or Yoga on Tuesday. Remember what I said about our body being a master adapter? This is one way to switch up your workouts while maintaining a scheduled routine. Alternating cardio with core muscle building is not only healthier for your body, but it also is an easy way to switch up your exercises. If you are so inclined, you can combine both cardio and strength training in one session by alternating between the two.

6. Workout outside. Sometimes I find small, crowded gyms smelly and un-enjoyable to be in. Find a pretty path along the river or through a park and resume working out there. A change in scenery can instantly revamp any drab routine. You may find that your running experience will be more enjoyable outside than on a treadmill. It is even possible to walk to a desired location instead of taking the subway to sneak in more exercise to your day.

7. Buy a jump rope. As lame as this tip sounds, jumping rope can enable

you to burn many calories and is tons of fun! In just 15 minutes of moderate speed jump rope, the average person burns up to 140 calories. You can even sing those loveable songs from grade school about strawberry shortcake.

8. Choose a hobby that involves exercise. There are many new classes or hobbies you can try that can count as your daily dose of activity. For example, dancing alone or with a group of friends is not only fun, but it counts as exercise too. More fun ideas are ice skating, kick-boxing, karate, rock climbing, and horseback riding.

9. Be creative. Seriously, just moving in any way, shape, or form is beneficial and can count as exercise. Doing 20 sit-ups or push-ups per day and walking to the 1 train can count as a full day's workout. Any physical activity is good without even setting foot anywhere near a gym.

10. Don't kill yourself if you skip a workout. Exercise is supposed to be enjoyable and fun, not a burden. Hence, it is important to cut yourself some slack. If you miss a day to write a paper or study for an exam, it is not the end of the world. You can pick it up another day instead. Just try not to make this mentality too habitual. It is possible to get a great workout in 15 minutes a day. Some exercise is better than none at all.

- NOTE: Personal trainer Danny Robinson was consulted for all of these ideas.

# ARTS & CULTURE

ATARA ARBESFELD  
AIMEE RUBENSTEEN  
ARTS@YUOBSERVER.COM

## Tzniut With Style: 6 Fashion Blogs To Follow

**BY ATARA ARBESFELD** Tired of those Kikki-rikkis? Does dressing according to halakhot of tzniut to you often mean “frum” as in “frumpy?” Wish you had something more interesting to wear besides for that seminary sweatshirt and slinky skirt – for the third day in a row? Whether looking for inspiration on what to wear to school, *shul*, a wedding, or a job interview, these fashion blogs can come in handy for helping Orthodox dressers in looking into brands, deals, and how to match outfits. In the spirit of Fall Fashion Week spanning all over the globe from New York to Paris, check out these trendy blogs to learn how you too can be fashion forward and bring out your inner fashionista.

**Fabologie** – A Facebook page that post pictures of celebrities, runway models, and even fashionable women on the street caught in modest designs. These gorgeous photographs, especially the street ones that closely resemble something that would be seen in *The Sartorialist*, are worth a look. Check out and “friend” Fabologie on Facebook!

**Frumanista** – According to the website, the Frumanista identifies herself as “a frummie with a fetish for Sephora, skin-care, and sci-fi.” Written by single twenty-something, Frumanista shares clever and informative makeup reviews such as which mascara to use for your best “Shabbos Face,” as well as more intellectual fare such commentary on the recent David Brooks article on Linsanity, and of course, the absurdities of shidduch dating. <http://frumanista.blogspot.com/>

**Fashion Isha** – Lakewood mom and freelance designer Sharon Langert women’s lifestyle site posts pictures of celebrities, runway models, and fashion magazine pictorials to bring inspiration for modest dressers. The website also showcases some work of up-and-coming Orthodox designers. The photos are pure eye candy that surely every girly girl with a penchant for designer fashion can appreciate. Additionally, there are posts with creative displays for interior design and recipes. <http://www.fashion-isha.com/>

**Frum Fashion Maven** – A resourceful shopping guide that displays stylish outfits and accessories and where to buy them. Prices range from \$500 Missoni tunics to more moderately priced \$40 ALDO shoes. European fashionistas will also appreciate that the blog features pretty finds from British brands such as Dorothy Perkins and Miss Selfridge. <http://frumfashionmaven.blogspot.com/>

**The OAK (Other Aron HaKodesh)** – Your go-to style guide to improving your “holy closet” (get it? “aron ha’kodesh”), OAK is great for finding websites that do custom alterations for dresses that won’t hit the knee, celeb scoop on the best modest Oscar gowns, and finding great buys from Anthropologie skirts for Shabbat to Gap weekday shirts. Though not all the clothing featured by celebs on the website are modest by all halakhic standards, they are there nonetheless for fashion inspiration and discussion. <http://www.jewishworkinggirl.blogspot.com/>

**The Sartorialist** – Though not a Jewish blog, premier fashion photographer Scott Schuman deftly captures fashionistas on the street as well as the runway stars in interesting eye-catching garb – including many shots of women wearing with knee-length skirts and long sleeve tops. A recent favorite was a post of an uber-chic female photographer working a ¾ sleeve camouflage jacket together with a knee-length navy polka dot skirt, sky blue scarf and orange handbag as she crouches and looks through her camera. Those who don’t necessarily share a passion for fashion can also appreciate the artistry and depth of character of his subjects. <http://www.thesartorialist.com/>

## When Contemporary Art Talks: New Museum 2012 Triennial

**BY AIMEE RUBENSTEEN** If great art generates new conversations, then the New Museum should expect anything but silence in their galleries. The New Museum 2012 Triennial, *The Ungovernables*, is the only recurring exhibition in the United States devoted to presenting young artists from around the globe. *The Ungovernables* is an exhibition about the urgencies of a generation who came of age

after the independence and revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

At the exhibit’s opening, curator Eungie Joo explained that she did not just create this exhibition as a forum for the artists, but also to generate a conversation among the viewers formally in the museum and informally after exiting the museum. In the wake of the Occupy Wall Street movement and youth revolts around the world, Eugnie Joo said, “*The Ungovernables* embraces the energy of that generation’s urgencies. These urgencies are formal and philosophical, material and ideological.” Throughout the five floors, the gallery urges the viewer to conceptualize the urgency of this generation through unlikely medium and form.

Gabriel Sierra’s installation demonstrates the way his generation feels claustrophobic. Specifically, his “Untitled (The Devil in the Shape of a Ladder)” – a ladder, a level, and a table, stuffed into holes in the museum’s walls – captures the claustrophobia with urgency. His incisions in the wall offer the perfect amount of space for the contractor tools, which he could have used to make the incisions, but offer no room for movement or change. Sierra explains, “My approach is to understand how the spatial components are articulated within the atmosphere and how the ambient environmental qualities are synthesized within the experience of perception.” While the art does strategically fit its mold, the title begs the viewer to reconsider the mundane objects they are viewing.

I was intrigued by Danh Võ’s installation of copper sheets lying on the floor and against the wall. A group of reporters crowded around the installation’s description label, and then continually nodded their heads as they, then, walked again around the installation. While the medium’s malleability and color were naturally aesthetically pleasing, it was not until I read the words of the artist that I understood the piece’s place in *The Ungovernables*. When Võ learned that the Statue of Liberty was simply a steel armature covered by a copper

skin the thickness of two pennies, and he replicated the statue’s skin for his work “We The People.” While the installation presented the viewer with the construction of America’s historical landmark, it also exposed the monument’s thin and malleable medium, which might have never been considered.

*The Ungovernables* continued to challenge my perceptions on the fifth floor when I was standing in front of a Venn diagram. I was struck by the simple, but powerful, way the pink spotlight and the green spotlight overlap on the white wall. The juxtaposition of the harmless lights and the alarming descriptive texts forced me to reconsider the impact a higher authority has on our visual and mental consciousness. Amalia Pica’s “Venn Diagrams (Under the Spotlight)” demonstrates art’s ability to transform the way a viewer understands history and reality. While a Venn diagram has been quite a mundane and helpful informative device, it represented a weapon when it was censored in Argentina in the 1970s. The text printed below the spotlights read, “A Venn diagram is a mathematical illustration used to describe group dynamics and logical relations of inclusion and exclusion. During the period of dictatorship in Argentina in the 1970s... Venn diagrams were banned from primary school as they could provide models for subversive thought.” Both the artists and public have the ability to not just observe the Venn diagram, but also speculate the way it was used under oppressive authority. Pica’s art produces new conversations by exploiting the device that the Argentinean dictatorship banned in order to prohibit conversation.

Over 50 participants – artists, artist groups, temporary collectives – collaborated on *The Ungovernables*. The exhibit probes the viewer to reconsider his or her preconceived notions about art’s position within society. The three works of art I have described only begin the conversation of ungovernability among youth and manipulation of conception among society today. I will let the rest of the art at the exhibit do the rest of the talking.



*Librado Romero/The New York Times*  
The New Museum’s second Triennial, featuring over 50 artists, is opened to the public from February 15 through April 22 at 235 Bowery, Lower East Side.

## Strike the Stage

BY DAVIDA KOLLMAR

This past week I was lucky enough to get a last minute job as a production of *The Madwoman of Chailot*. As a stagehand, an help to change scenes during the intermission. As part of this task, we needed to remove all of the props from the first scene, or, as the theater lingo goes, “Strike the stage.” We would then replace all of the props with those for the second act.

For this puzzle, there is a grid with a list of props. Your job is to follow the instructions to determine which props to strike, i.e. remove from the grid. The remaining props are those to be placed on the stage for the second act.

	M	A1	D	W	O	M	A2	N
P	parasol	basement door	phone	pillow	pen	armchairs	playing cards	radio
A	tea	desk	mantle	vase	awning	gold brick	sofa	notebook
R	cigar	cups	iris	cabbage	boots	water	armoire	wine
I	rag	wicker chairs	kerosene	mirror	mural	pan	paper bag	dropcloth
S	melon	table	lily	button	notepad	lamp	candles	money

Strike everything from column D that is a type of flower.

Strike everything from column A1 that is a type of furniture.

Strike everything from row R that can be put in the mouth.

Strike everything from column O that is part of the scenery.

Strike everything from column N which is made out of paper.

Strike everything from column W that has a double letter.

Strike everything from row P that starts with the letter P and everything from row I that does not.

*The first correct response sent to arts@yuobserver.com will receive a \$5 Starbucks giftcard.*

# Five Minutes with Julia Siegel

**BY RENEE KESTENBAUM** Hailing from Kansas City, Missouri, Julia Siegel, SCW '13, is becoming the go-to girl on campus for poignant photography. Siegel's photos have been used by the Alumni Affairs and Admissions Offices, as well as in the pages of *The Observer*. "I love being involved," she says, "and I'm excited that I can use my photography to help further my involvement at Stern." Siegel maintains a digital portfolio on her Facebook profile, deceptively titled "Pictures of the Day(ish)" though it's updated sporadically and often with one picture at a time, with prime shots from around Stern, NYC, Israel, and some that are just plain random.

In her own words:  
 "My mom taught me the basics [of photography]. When we'd go on family trips my mom would always let me use the camera.

**THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. SOMETIMES A PICTURE STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE IS GREAT, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN DO SOMETHING MORE CREATIVE.**

I broke a couple of them, but I also captured many moments from our trips.

"I took a photojournalism class in tenth grade, where I learned a lot more, and then I became the photography editor of the high school yearbook.

"There's different types of photography – there's the kind where you take pictures of nature or pose people, but there's also the kind where you watch animals and people and take pictures of their natural behaviors. I really like taking those

kinds of candid pictures.  
 "Sometimes there's lighting challenges that make it tough. You have to know ahead of time about any unusual conditions – like taking photos indoors, on a stage – you have to be prepared to work with it.

"There are other times when you'll be photographing a moment that will only happen once, and you can't miss it. For the yearbook, we'd always have a picture of the Homecoming King and Queen finding out they'd won, their shocked expressions. Something like that's only going to happen once. You have to be ready to capture the moment. And then, if you miss the moment, you also have to think outside the box to find another photo you can use to show what happened. Sports pictures are really hard [for the same reason]."

Siegel's future plans: "I'm majoring in Sociology, but I'm minoring in Studio Art. I took some of [SCW's] computer design classes, and I'm also taking some photography classes at FIT. I don't know if I'm not planning to do anything official with photography, like for a career, but it will be a hobby, something I'll do on the side for the rest of my life. I want to do something *kiruv-y* while I change the world, and who knows, maybe I'll be able to change the world with photography."

**Tips for Budding Photographers:**  
 Whenever you're taking pictures, take more than one. That way you can look at all the shots and pick which ones came out the best. Especially with an event that will only happen once - take a couple hundred. You'll probably end up with several dozen good ones.

Whenever you start taking pictures, use the Auto setting on your camera. See what the camera gives you for light settings, and then use the other modes on your camera to play around from there.

Think outside the box. Sometimes a picture straight down the middle is great, but maybe you can do something more creative.

Buy a large memory card, so you can take lots of pictures, and a card reader if your laptop doesn't already have one.

*Siegel captures the moment with a Nikon D80, which she got as a Hannukah present in eleventh grade.*

## The Mad Woman of Chailot: A Photo Journal

Photos by Julia Siegel





Photos by Irit Greenboim

# Streets of NYC CAKE WARS



Julia Siegel



Photos by Elisheva Aeder except where noted



BY DONNA NOBLE

Rebus. Noun. A puzzle in which words are represented by combinations of pictures and individual letters.

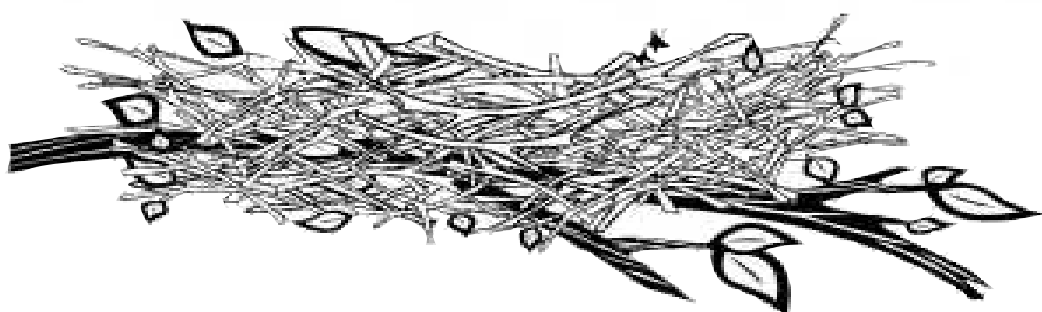
Each row of pictures represents a term in Biology (and occasionally Chemistry). To solve them you'll need to think creatively about what each picture might represent. Answers can be found on Page 24. Good luck!

# Pizza on Capitol Hill

**BY SOPHIA GRACE** In a shocking discovery early Monday, financial analysts in the nation's capital unearthed the reason for our country's staggering deficit. It seems that every event on Capitol Hill has had pizza. Budget meetings, armed services committee sessions and Senate votes alike were all furnished with ample supplies of the Italian delicacy. The discovery was made by a curious intern, with an ironic lactose intolerance, who had noticed the scent of melted cheese and what was either Ragu or Barilla sauce wafting through the halls of Dirksen and Hart. This intrepid intern followed his nose to Raeburn and the Capitol as well and was shocked to discover that the smell was, in fact, everywhere.

Policy makers on both sides of the aisle are warming up for what will undoubtedly be an epic battle. The President's office has issued a statement noting that "all options are on the table" when it comes to responding to this financial catastrophe. Other branches of the government seems less sure. The House and Senate majority leaders have both agreed that all options are on the table, "excluding those that may or may not pose a threat to said pizza."

Republicans are coming armed with the support of American wheat growers who have been seeing tremendous financial gain from the pizza. Democrats on the other hand are in support of the migrant workers picking the tomatoes and manning the milk farms. Both it seems, are in favor of the pizza. As the House and Senate duke it out over what cherished beverage should accompany said pizza we will be dragged back to the age old question – Coke or Pepsi?



## The Purim Story... well sorta

BY ELI LEBOWICZ

**Narrator:** Long ago, there were many Jews who lived in Persia, which is modern day Iran, but this was way before it was crazy. One day, King Achashverosh—telemarketers had trouble with his name for sure-- threw a party for everyone in his kingdom. One of the Jewish leaders, Mordechai, insisted that Jews not go to the party because it was going to have non-kosher food there and because Achashverosh was a Patriots' fan. But the Jews didn't listen, and went to the party anyway.

**Scene 1:**

**Waiter:** Here you are, sir: ham, with a side of bacon, and your lobster pie will be out shortly.

**Local Jew:** "Mmmm...smells like treif. Can I borrow your phone? I gotta call Mordechai and tell him what he's missing. (Calls) "Hey Mordy, this bacon stuff looks great! Jim Gaffigan was so right!"

**Narrator:** Well anyway, the king was partying a little too hard, and had a bit too much Bartenura. After taking the lampshade off his head and singing *Don't Stop Believin'* karaoke-style, he got bored. He ordered for his wife Vashti, who supposedly was a real looker, to come down to the party to show his guests how pretty she was so he could get tons of high-fives. (He would've shown them her pics on Facebook, but the palace had really weak Wi-Fi).

**Vashti** (in her chambers): I can't go down there; I've grown a tail. Plus, *The Notebook* is on.

**Servant:** It doesn't look so bad; it really brings out your eyes. By the way how much is rent at your apartment?

**Narrator:** So after the Queen's refusal to appear at his summons, King Achashverosh, who by this time definitely couldn't do the alphabet backwards, asked his advisors what he should do. One of them, a guy named Memuchan, who always tried to be really inconspicuous with his Hitler-mustache and tri-cornered hat, put in his two dinars of advice.

**Memuchan:** Your Drunken Highness, we have to punish Vashti's disobedience. Women need to know their place in society. I mean if we don't put them in their place (coughs "the kitchen"), before we know it they're gonna want the right to vote, and may even try to run for President. You got to get rid of her. I know a guy who can do it. He runs a waste management company in Newark.

**Achashverosh:** Good idea Memuchan. There's no way I can regret this decision.

**Narrator:** So the king listened to Memuchan's advice, and Vashti was never heard from again. Rumor has it she's buried under Giants' Stadium. So the King sought out to find a new queen. He gathered all the girls from all over his kingdom, and held a contest judged by Simon Cowell, to decide the best choice to be his First Lady... er... Second Lady. After a long search, he found his new queen in a girl named Esther. Esther, who conveniently happened to be Mordechai's niece (small world, huh), was reluctant to become the new Queen. She wasn't sure she could be a Jewish Iranian Queen. But Mordechai insisted that G-d wanted it to be this way. Mordechai instructed Esther not to tell the king she was Jewish or lactose intolerant.

Also, in a seemingly unrelated part of the story, but something that makes you go "Ohhh, now I get it" when you read the ending (kinda like at the end of *The Sixth Sense*), these two palace guards wanted to kill Achashverosh. They were in the midst of discussing their master plan, when Mordechai overheard them talking.

**Scene 2:**

**Bigan:** Seresh, are you pondering what I'm pondering?

**Seresh:** I think so Bigan... but maybe Sarah Palin really can see Russia from Alaska.

**Bigan:** No Seresh, you idiot. We have to

kill Achashverosh and take over the Persian Empire.

**Mordechai:** You know I can hear you, right?

**Bigan:** Yeah, what you gonna do about it, tell on us? Seresh, let's switch to our own language. E-way eedn-ay ot-ay illk-ay e-thay ing-kay.

**Mordechai:** Idiots. (Calls Esther) Esther? Did you Tivo *Modern Family*? Listen... There's something that you should know...

**Narrator:** The assassination plot was foiled, and the two guards were hanged for treason.

**Executioner:** Any last words?

**Seresh:** NARF!

**Scene 3:**

**Narrator:** So, the two guards are killed. And the whole story was written on a cocktail napkin, and added to the book that has all the other weird bedtime stories for the king.

Meanwhile, Haman, one of the higher-ups in the Persian government, was really peeved at Mordechai (yeah, the same one) for refusing to bow down to him when he walked by, and cuz he didn't pick him for softball. So Haman was super mad, and to be honest, he was already on the Mel Gibson team to begin with when it came to Jews. So he devised a plan to kill all of the Jews, which frankly, was a classic case of making mountains out of molehills.

Haman wanted to find the perfect time to hatch his plot, but didn't know when he should do it. So he picked a surefire way to decide, something that couldn't fail: a lottery. After agreeing with the lottery that Adar was the best time to do it since Moshe Rabeinu had died in that month (which I guess was a good reason to choose Adar), he brought his plot to Achashverosh.

**Haman:** Your Highness, I want to kill the Jews.

**Achashverosh:** Take it easy Ahmadinejad. I'm not such a big Mel Brooks fan either, though I love *Space Balls*, but chill out.

**Haman:** No. I wanna kill them. I'll pay you to give me permission to do it.

**Achashverosh:** Get me one of those kickin' tri-cornered hats and you've got yourself a deal.

**Haman:** Deal. This'll be great; I'll be a hero after this. Whenever people hear the name Haman, they're gonna cheer as loud as they can. In fact, people will be cheering so much that they'll have to hold up a flag to stop people from cheering. I'll go down in the annals of history as a great guy like Hitler, or O.J. Simpson, or Charlie Sheen. I should make a movie out of my story, directed by Steven Spielberg... oops... actually let's see what Mel Gibson is up to these days. I'm gonna go build a gallows 50 cubits high (whatever the heck a cubit is) and I'm gonna hang Mordechai on it, and it won't be ironic at all. Charvona, you wanna help me with the gallows?

**Charvona:** (gives a furtive glance)... Of course I can help you... for now (evil laughter)

**Scene 4:**

**Narrator:** So Haman was given the royal authority to perform his jihad against the Jews. When Mordechai and Esther got wind of this whole situation, they figure now's a good time to play the *Hey-I'm Jewish-and-have-secretly-been-the-entire-time-and-you-just-allowed-this-anti-Semitic-lunatic-to-kill-us-all* card. So Mordechai declared a fast for the Jews - it had been awhile since the last one - in order that Esther should have a successful meeting with the King. This fast would be called Ta'anit Esther, and it would be a day when all Jewish schools get out a few hours early.

**Achashverosh:** (singing) So raise your glass if you can see... hmmm (humming tune). Esther? Is that you? Good thing I have my ridiculous, novelty-sized scepter that can be reached out to your head to tell my men not

to kill you. What's going on?

**Esther:** Oh not too much. I have a small request to ask from Your Majesty.

**Achashverosh:** For sure. Even if you'll ask for half the kingdom (thinking, *Please don't wish for half the kingdom*), it'll be granted to you, and you won't even need a lawyer.

**Esther:** Oh I was just going to throw a small party, which I hope the King can attend. I also invited Haman. No biggy.

**Achashverosh:** (excited) Haman's gonna be there? Sick! Man, I love that guy. Maybe he already got me that sweet hat. Ok, I'm so in.

**Esther:** Great. Looking forward. (Breathes sigh of relief)

**Scene 5:**

**Narrator:** Later that night, Achashverosh had trouble sleeping and Ambien hadn't been invented yet. He kinda started freaking out, wondering why Esther specifically invited Haman to her party. He was getting paranoid that the two of them were planning to *Bigan-and-Seresh* him. So he asked his guards to read him a bedtime story from that weird book of crazy stuff that happens in Persia.

**Achashverosh:** Why would she invite Haman? Does she like weird mustaches? Does she know that he hates the movie *Shawshank Redemption*? I really hope they're just really good friends. Guards! Will you read me a story? Bring that book that has all the crazy stuff that goes on in Persia. Maybe G-d, wait sorry, karma, is punishing me for not helping someone who saved my life?

**Guard:** Here's one. Several years ago, these two guards, Bigan and Seresh tried to kill the king by making him watch the movie *Snakes On A Plane*. Wait never mind, I read that wrong. They were actually planning on putting a snake in Your Majesty's water. They didn't seem like

the brightest bunch. Anyways, this Jew named Mordechai found out about their plan. I think they texted him by accident or something. So Mordechai had spread the word to the palace and the guards were hanged.

**Achashverosh:** How did I reward this Mordechai?

**Guard:** He was given a coupon for one dollar off at Starbucks.

**Achashverosh:** Yeah, sounds pretty weak. So we gotta fix this. I may need at least one ally in this kingdom.

**Narrator:** Meanwhile, Haman wasn't being weird at all, and was just waiting in the palace courtyard talking to himself. He apparently got super excited about the new gallows that he had built, on which he intended to hang Mordechai. The guards had informed Achashverosh that Haman was weirdly chillin' by himself in the courtyard, and the King summoned him.

**Achashverosh:** (questioningly, like Seinfeld to Newman) Hello.... Haman.

**Haman:** Hey King, I got a favor to ask. Your hat is in the mail by the way, but I'm not an Amazon Prime member, so shipping might take a while. Um...

**Achashverosh:** (cuts him off) Wait, before you get to that, I have something really important to ask. What do you think should be done to someone who the King wants to honor? Yankee tickets behind the dugout?

**Haman:** (blushing) Nah. It should be something really lavish and elegant. I should, I mean, he should wear royal robes and be led on the King's horse throughout all of Shushan. They'll announce, "This is what should be done to whom the King wants to honor." He should also get a massage and haircut on the palace's dime. Also, get him a parking spot.

*continued on page 23*

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# The Purim Story... well sorta

*continued from page 22*

**Achashverosh:** Sounds good. Alright, do all those things you just said for Mordechai, that Jewish guy. Don't leave out any details. I knew you were a good advisor, Haman. So pick up Mordechai tomorrow morning and get cracking. By the way, you coming to Esther's shindig tomorrow?

**Haman:** (despondent) Yeah... I guess.

**Achashverosh:** Cheer up man. It won't kill ya.

**Narrator:** So Haman led an adorned Mordechai through the streets of Persia on the King's horse, while muttering anti-Semitic remarks under his breath. Afterwards, Haman got back to his house and was about to shower when the palace guards summoned him to the palace for Esther's party.

**Scene 6:**

**Achashverosh:** Jesus, Haman, you stink. Did you have to use the whole bottle of Axe?

**Haman:** I didn't really have time to shower; Mordechai wanted a foot rub.

**Achashverosh:** So, Esther, was there a specific reason that you threw this party? By the way, would you like a bagel?

**Esther:** No thanks. It's to tell you about the party I'm having tomorrow. I would be honored if Your Majesty and Haman would come.

**Haman:** (swears and mutters) You got to be kidding me...

**Achashverosh** (interrupts him): We'd be happy to come.

(The next day)

**Haman** (inebriated and laughing): I'm having a lot of trouble right now deciding if I like Mordechai or I hate myself.

**Achashverosh** (also inebriated, but sporting a new tri-cornered hat with the words *It's Good To Be The King* written on it): Did you ever notice that when Ahmadinejad and the President of Syria are standing next to each other, they look like Bert and Ernie? Check that stuff out. Anyways, Esther, what's this party for anyway?

**Esther:** So I have a small confession to make. I'm... how do I put this... um... Jewish.

(Haman does a spit take and pulls his collar nervously)

I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner, but I was little worried how you would take it, especially when someone in the kingdom has a price on every Jew's head.

**Achashverosh** (twirling his new hat): And who might that be?

**Haman** (sweating profusely): Well, I gotta go the bathroom. But I think I'm gonna use my home base. Your Majesties, I had a lovely time.

**Esther** (points to Haman): HIM!

**Achashverosh:** Oh yeah. Good call. Forgot about that one for a sec. Wait, a second, Haman, now that I found out my wife is Jewish, your decision to kill the Jews makes me mad. I'm gonna go outside to get some fresh air.

**Haman** (in near tears): Queen Esther, please have some mercy. (Falls over, which puts him on top of Esther, but not in *that* kind of way) Oh, no I fell over. I'm so clumsy. Oh, I fell over again.

(Achashverosh walks back inside)

**Achashverosh:** Haman, trying to assault my wife while I'm here? I can't believe I was wrong about you. Maybe I should have seen the signs: your mustache, your wall of Jewish propaganda cartoons, and your intense hatred of the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*... Guards, take him away. I'll decide what to do with him later.

(Guards seize him and start marching him away)

**Charvona:** Hey, look outside. You can see that new gallows Haman built in his backyard.

**Achashverosh:** Tell me Haman, what did you plan to do with that gallows?

**Haman** (looks down at the ground embarrassed, mutters under his breath): I was gonna hang Mordechai on it.

**Achashverosh:** Mordechai?! But I love that guy now that I know he saved my life. I got an idea. We should hang Haman on his very own gallows. Wow, that was convenient.

**G-d** (cynical): Yeah... I know.

**Narrator:** So Haman and his ten sons, who had really long and weird names, were all hanged. Mordechai and Esther declared that the holiday of Purim be celebrated by Jews every year on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month of Adar (well, depending on if you live in a city that was walled at the time of Yehoshua, that date would change), just one day after Haman's plan was supposed to take effect. They also decided that on Purim each year, Jews would have to make a feast – go figure– to commemorate the fact that they were saved from complete annihilation yet again.

Additionally, they said that Jews should give each other Shaloch Manot, which must contain two ready-to-eat treats. (Hopefully, you get Fruit Roll-Ups, but sometimes you get raisins, which is really annoying. It's also a known rule that three terrible snacks do not equal one good snack.) The Jews then developed the custom to take out the bad stuff they got in their Shaloch Manot and regift those things in the Shaloch Manot they were going to send out to others. And the holiday of Purim has been celebrated until today, always confusing non-Jews everywhere why we dress up for Halloween in the middle of March.

# Coming Out of the Closet, Nerd Style

**BY BATYA KLEIN\*** *Names have been changed to protect the innocent, namely me*

This is going to be hard. I. Am. No, I just can't say it. Yes, I can. Yallah, out with it. Okay. I am a nerd and proud of it!

Let's start with "what is a nerd"? How does one diagnose a nerd? Though nerd and geek are commonly used interchangeably, they are fairly distinct titles. Ergo it is worthwhile to familiarize yourself with the distinction between the two. Essentially, nerds are individuals with a fervid fascination with an academic field (like inorganic chemistry or 17th century English literature). They are of superior intelligence by definition but can possibly be lacking in social skills.

Geeks, on the other hand, tend to have more average intelligence and are often involved in "niche activities" like hacking or gaming. Tangentially, I will refrain from reproaching about assigning stereotypes, but I find it worthwhile to remind you that assumptions about who is or is not a nerd will not get you far and that once someone says they are a nerd, do not assume anything more than that.

For example, if Jessica tells you that she is a nerd, do not expect that means she is socially awkward or has no interest in playing basketball. Do not assume she has asthma/allergies or builds model rockets. The vast majority of nerds enjoys the same activities as everyone else and can be the most graceful socialites. For example, Stern nerds enjoy eating Stella D'oros with their manicured nails while listening to the latest Maccabeats song just as much as you. On a personal note, thankfully, I am told that I do not have any of the "outer trappings" or "social graces" of a stereotypical nerd, so you'd really never know aside from this article. Oh, who are we kidding? I freely admit it.

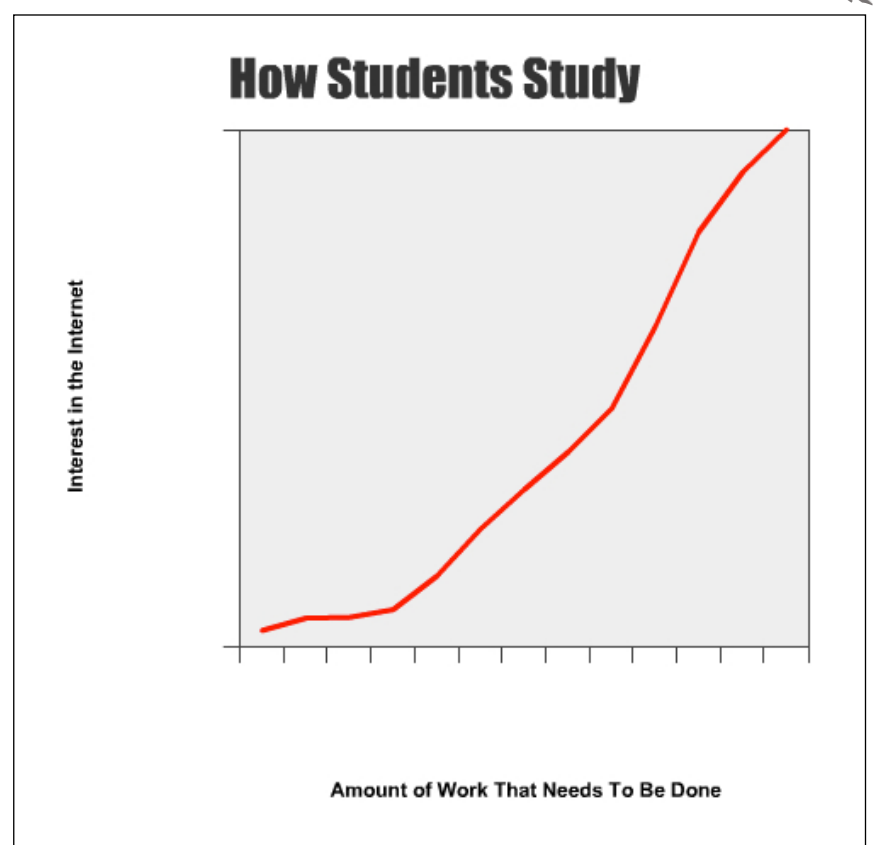
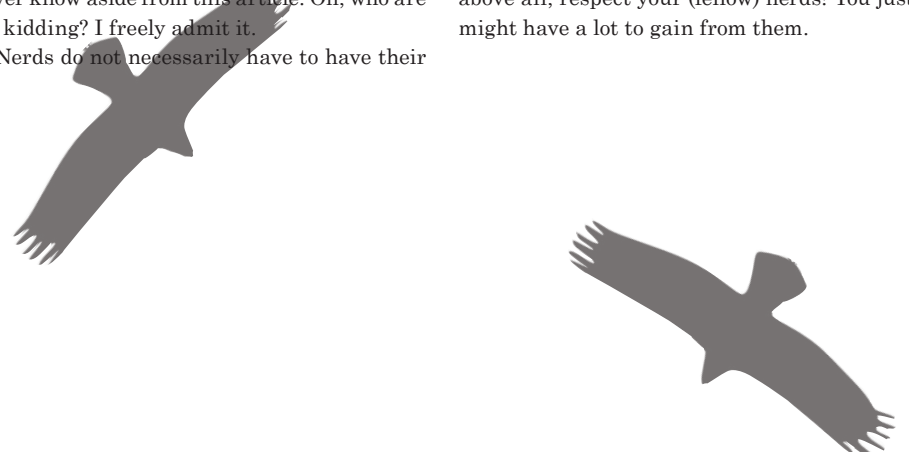
Nerds do not necessarily have to have their

nerdiness rooted in computers or science. I should here point out what "flavor" nerd I am – though I have several interests, I suppose the strongest interest I have is biology. I am not a "cultural nerd", which often falls under "geek" (think "nerdly" hobbies or interests such as DnD and WoW, neither of which I have ever played, and are anyways more geeky).

Since I'm coming clean, I'd like to admit a few more nerdier things about myself. First, I know pi to the fortieth decimal place (I was bored during Spanish class in high school.) Second, I know uber-random trivia like the platypus is the only venomous monotreme (an egg-laying mammal) that perplexed Europeans so much that they thought the animal was a deception. Third, one of my favorite nerdy trivia factoids is that there is a gene called Sonic hedgehog (it is involved in roles like the organization of the brain, formation of fingers, cell division, etc.) and its alleged inhibitor is robotnikinin, named in honor of Dr. "Eggman" Robotnik, Sonic the Hedgehog's nemesis.

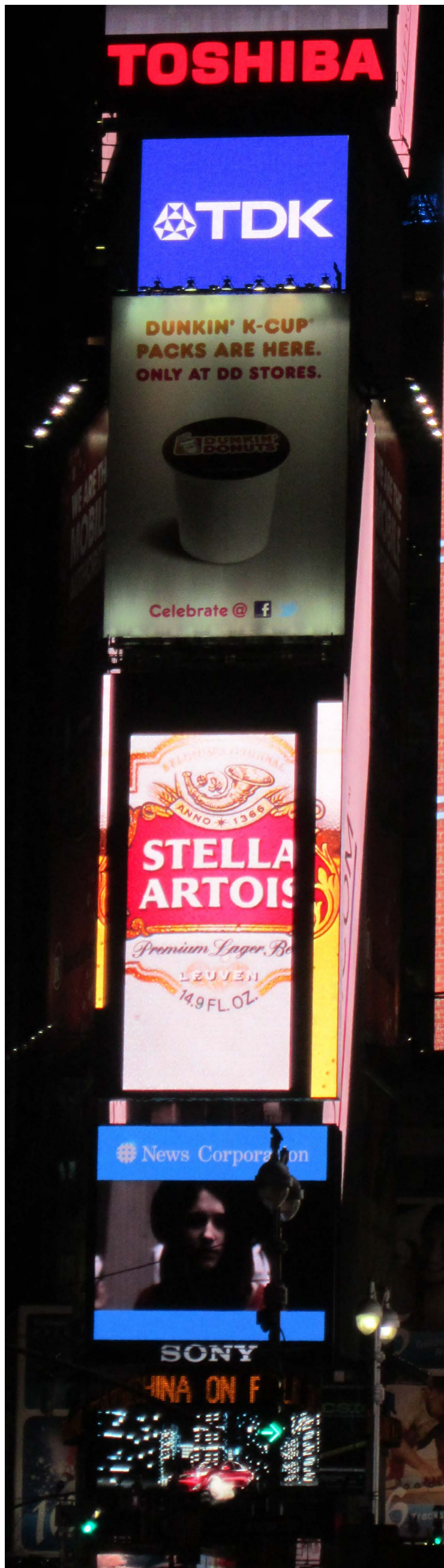
Interestingly, being a "nerd" is seen as cool these days. Look no further than geek chic, my friends. Fashionistas accessorizing with black-rimmed glasses and Converse is definitely a trend that idolizes geeks (who are here considered interchangeable with nerds). This trend is positive, because, though superficial, it still gives those of a nerdly nature a degree of admiration. Most importantly for American youth, this focus on seeing more intellectual individuals (as opposed to hippies or gangsters) as icons to be imitated can allow the youth to engage in stimulating intellectual pursuits without fear of committing socially suicide.

If you are a nerd yourself, embrace it. If you are not a nerd, that's okay, too. But remember above all, respect your (fellow) nerds! You just might have a lot to gain from them.



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## PJ Wants Sushi

**BY THE EARL OF SANDWICH, AND WEASLEY** President Joel tells his secretary to make sure to order the extra large sushi platter for the West Wing event.

PJ's secretary tells Dean Bacon that PJ is planning a Sushi party.

Murray Sragow walks by and overhearing "the west wing" thinks that PJ is starting a campaign to get a YU student elected to the White House. Murray immediately thinks it will be one of his beloved honors' students and uses it in his next advertising crusade.

Meanwhile, Murray runs to tell his favorite honors student that she will be running for president in 2012.

Honors Student is confused. Honors Student is only 19. Honors Student assumes Murray is confused and wants her to run for the presidency of YU. Honors Student has forgotten that the position is appointed.

As a bio major, Honors Student goes to Dr. Loewy with her plans.

Dr. Loewy assumes Honors Student is running for president of the PreMed Club, and informs the club. The club revolts.

Chem Club sees the PreMed Club gathered in the Dean's office, assumes they are pushing for a larger budget, and fearing the reduction in their own budget begins to rally their forces.

Inspired by recent protest, the

Chem Club decides to occupy the fancy Sussman bio lab.

Forgetting that the bio labs are notoriously low on safety standards, the Chem Club goes about cooking themselves dinner over a series of Bunsen burners.

Misunderstanding the Bunsen burner directions, a first-time on campus student connects the tubing to the wrong end of the Bunsen burner causing the lab to blow up. No one is injured.

Dr. Babich, hearing a large BOOM, CRASH, and several screams, comes sauntering out of his lab. "Would anybody like tea?" he asks. "Or a lollipop?" He is greeted only by blank stares and ash-smudged faces.

Meanwhile, Professor Lalo, having realized that she had never been to 245 Lexington decides to go on a fieldtrip. She walks into 245 and heads for the fifth floor because it reminds her of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. She is aiming for self-actualization. Professor Lalo accidentally wanders into Dr. Edelman's physics Lab.

Thinking that Professor Lalo is a student, Dr. Edelman tells Dr. Santos and Professor Lalo that there is a space issue in the physics lab, too many bio majors have signed up.

"A space ship?!" cries Professor Lalo. "How did it get there?"

She rushes out of the lab to

inform her psych colleagues of this spectacular discovery but runs into a massive crowd of people at the elevator.

Lost, and disoriented, she walks through a blue door. "Blue is calm," she thinks.

Professor Lalo trips down a hall, lost in her own world. She sees a marble staircase and follows it down. Smoke and soot fill the air. She takes one look, takes one whiff of the H<sub>2</sub>S Chem Club released and, terrified, runs out.

Back in 215 the English department has heard about the Great Chem Club revolt and cannot risk losing its own funding to the blood-sucking sciences. The life-giving arts band together to take them on.

Sy Syms holds back awaiting a prospectus on profiteering in College-level war.

Armed with pliers, Shakespeare, and some very nasty adhesives, The Arts march on 245 Lex.

As they storm the lobby, another loud BOOM, CRASH, and several more screams are heard.

A CRAAAACK. And another. And another. BOOM. A school no longer.

Out of the rubble a figure rises. "Where is my sushi?!"

## Answers

### Science Shoes:

1. Dr. Estes
2. Mrs. Victory
3. Dr. Schuck
4. Dr. Weisburg
5. Dr. Blau
6. Dr. Frenkel
7. Dr. Santos
8. Mrs. Dobin
9. Dr. Vigodner
10. Dr. Edelman
11. Dr. Babich
12. Dr. Loewy

### Biology Rebus:

1. Acetylcholine
2. Lipid
3. Polysaccharide
4. Topoisomerase
5. Periodic Table of Elements
6. Leukocyte
7. Genome
8. Carbohydrate
9. DNA Polymerase
10. Deoxyribonucleic acid

