



The Yeshiva University

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Reclaiming The F-Word

GAVRIEL BROWN "I'm not a feminist."

"So you don't believe in equal opportunity or equal pay?" I ask. "Oh, but of course I do."

This trope stings my ear whenever I hear it, and I hear it all too often. In my experience at Yeshiva University, feminism is treated as a pathology and feminists are labeled as liberal fanatics; admit to being a feminist, and you must be a bra-burning, man-hating lesbian or an emasculated weirdo. It is therefore not surprising that a vast majority of women (and men, but that goes without saying) don't consider themselves feminists and many of the most committed, politically engaged and active student leaders at Stern College shy away from the term. This troubles me.

The stereotyped cliché of radical feminists, reinforced by old-school religious figures and the entertainment industry, vilifies feminists as angry, hateful, irrelevant, illogical, selfish, and uninformed. These straw-(wo)men are caricatures strung together from misconceptions, misrepresentations, and popular opinions, and are often used to construct arguments about the feminist movement as a whole. That many people seem to picture a fictional radical whenever someone uses the f-word points to the widespread damage done by this dogmatic and unfair

distortion.

"Feminists are crazy," I often hear people say. Are there and have there been radical factions within the feminist camp? I have no doubt the answer to that question is yes, but it would be unjust to judge mainstream feminism by those on its ideological edge. Every movement will have radical members that take more than their fair share of the limelight. Radicalism gains more momentum in the media and is far easier to critique in conversation. Angry hordes of feminists burning their bras (which, for the record, never happened) sounds far more exciting than a consciousness raising group discussing gender disparities in the workplace.

In reality, the vast majority of feminists (women and men) simply want to see a landscape that is devoid of sexism, patriarchy, chauvinism, and harassment, and that offers *continued on page 11*

Pants-Pants Revolution: A Skirt Wearer Talks Back

HANNAH DREYFUS This article is a response to the widely circulated article, *Pants, Pants Revolution*, recently published in *Tablet Magazine*.

When you're served a kosher meal on Air Berlin, openly identifying as Jewish takes on whole new meaning.

I travelled last summer with a group of Jewish students to Germany. The program, sponsored in large part by the German government, encourages Jewish American college students to re-visit modern-day Germany, confronting the complex questions and emotions that naturally go with. As a group, we landed in the Berlin airport, responding with differing degrees of apprehension to the brusque German voice on the loudspeaker. As a group, we visited Buchenwald and Track 17 (the platform from which the cattle cars departed for Auschwitz). As a group, we walked through the Wannasee Villa, our footsteps making the tired floor boards creek in the eerie still. And, as a group, we re-confronted

what it meant to openly identify as Jews.

For the boys, the decision revolved in large part around wearing a kippa. The unmistakable skullcap garnered an interesting variety of responses, ranging from humorous (one rambunctious teen stealing the kippa from off the head of one of our number, and prancing around with it atop his own stiff hairdo) to chilling (one group member was openly threatened while out for drinks because of his conspicuous head-covering). There was, however, a certain defiant pride in being openly identifiable as Jews. One member of the group, who did not normally wear a kippa, decided to dawn the headgear a few days into the trip. His words exactly: "The hell with anonymity—I'm a Jew, and I want people to know it." *continued on page 9*



Irit Greenboim

Registrar Updates MYYU With Degree Track

MELISSA ADLER Keeping track of the classes you've already taken and the classes you still need to take in order to fulfill all of your requirements can be a challenging task. To help provide an effective way for students to track their academic progress throughout their undergraduate academic career, the Registrar is launching a new feature on MYYU called Degree Track.

Degree Track is an online advising tool that enables students to monitor their progress towards their degree. Degree Track shows students which requirements they have fulfilled and which courses they still must fulfill toward their major and general requirements, allowing students to plan their academic life at Yeshiva University.

Degree Track also



provides a GPA calculator that will allow student to calculate major and minor GPAs.

Since demonstrating this new feature to the Student Life Committee, the Registrar has received positive feedback. Ruth Brown, co-chair of the Stern Student Life Committee, explains that before each registration period it can be very stressful to determine what classes to take for the upcoming semester and manually mapping it out can be confusing. Instead of sitting down with a sheet of general requirements, a packet of majors, and previous schedules, students can log into their banner account and view their progress on

Degree Track in order to determine completed and outstanding requirements. "It is simple and aesthetically pleasing," says her co-chair, senior Elana Raskas.

Besides for showing students their current progress towards their degree, Degree Track also allows students to consider other majors or minors and see how the change will affect their classes for future semesters. Students will be able to see what the classes they have already taken will fulfill, and what classes they would still need to take, if they were to change or add on a major. Students can explore other options and easily map out how that will affect the rest of their academic course at Yeshiva University.

Rachel Lebovits, majoring in accounting at Sy Syms, explained that while she was in the middle of her studies in accounting, she was also contemplating switching to Speech in Stern College. "Figuring out what my next few years at Stern would look like was confusing," she recalls, explaining that she "met with different advisors and tried to plan out all of my future semesters at Stern with the new courses I would have to take. Then, a few weeks later I decided not to switch from accounting to speech, and had to plan out another schedule for all of the classes I still had to take in Sy Syms, and it was not an easy process."

Degree Track simplifies this process enabling students to weigh different options and plan their academic career effectively. "We believe Degree Track will be an extremely helpful and useful tool for students as they progress their degree," said Diana Benmergui, the Interim University Registrar. "We are excited and hope people will enjoy it and appreciate it."

The Registrar hopes to organize an Information Session within the next few weeks in order to demonstrate this feature to the undergraduate student body. As well, the Registrar is interested in student feedback and is eager to hear question, comments, and suggestions. Email the Registrar at registrar@yu.edu.

Shaping Your Future

RACHEL DELIA BENAIM CJFee: (adj). def. Leadership qualities, exclusive, debriefing...

These are a few words that come to mind when I hear the term. How do you define it?

However students define the adjective, the Center for the Jewish Future has a vast influence on the Yeshiva University campus and beyond.

Over winter break, the CJF sent 91 students abroad on a variety of service learning trips. This winter's trips is yet another successful feather in the CJF's well adorned cap. The students on these trips join the ranks of their CJFee predecessors—1016 students sent on 50 service-learning missions since 2005.

These service learning initiatives directly reflect the CJF's mission:

To shape, enrich, and inspire the contemporary Jewish community by convening and empowering the resources of Yeshiva University to, as the CJF mission explains:

Infuse the student body with a spirit of

leadership and sense of Klal Yisrael

Build, cultivate, and support communities, rabbinic and lay leaders, and individuals

Create a global movement that promotes the values of Yeshiva University

What does this mean? According to Dean of the CJF, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, the CJF caters services to the Jewish community in 3 different ways: inspiring students, work with communities, and spreading the Torah of YU to the larger community. Effectively, The CJF promotes student activism, creative tenor, and creativity.

The CJF, as many students are aware, accomplished this goal through running a variety of programs. Although service-learning missions are the most popular CJF activity among YU students (closely followed by the Schrieber Torah Tours in which 3475 students have participated since its inception in 2005) the CJF spearheads many more programs than just these student

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In Response to the Lit Deptment's Tech Ban

A Message From Your Editor-In-Chief

RACHEL DELIA BENAIM A news alert published on www.yuobserver.com on January 3 informed students of a new English Department policy change: technology will be banned in the classroom. On Monday December 17, at a regular department meeting, English Department full-time faculty voted 6-0 on a new policy as follows: "No laptops, cell phones, or mobile devices may be turned on during class except at the instructor's discretion." Every professor has the discretion to overturn this new rule for specific instances throughout the semester, and students with documented disabilities, in accordance with the American Disabilities Act, are permitted to use laptops or other devices in the classroom. However, besides for these special circumstances, the entire English department arrived at this decision for the same reason.

This ban comes in response to professors' frustrations with students who are too absorbed in their laptops to engage in class discussion. According to Dr Linda Shires, chair of the English Department, "We have seen a rise in texting, surfing, shopping, Facebook checking, writing papers for other classes, and other forms of multitasking in English Department classes in the last few years. This activity has occurred in most classes, no matter the size, seating arrangement, or teacher."

Quill and parchment? Pen and paper? Have we made no progress since the days of stone steles and the clay tablets of ancient education? Well, we've added Gutenberg's revolutionary invention to academic standards and expectations, but in some classes, that's the only technology allowed. Who decides where to draw the line? Professors, naturally.

Students in the twenty first century have access to more distractions than ever before: Facebook, G-chat, the News, Twitter, online shopping, and work for other courses. Students have unbelievable means to multitask—even when a student is taking notes and following along with class readings from their laptops, she can still be G-chatting several other people simultaneously. Computers and other "smart" devices provide endless means for distractions. Arguably, in a Literature class, there is no fact based testing as the class is mostly discussion based and, as such, there doesn't seem to be much of a need for technology in the classroom.

While technology can serve as a readily accessible distraction, students should be responsible for browsing responsibly. Many Stern College Women have shifted to buying E-books for courses for both practical and financial reasons. In those instances, it only makes sense—especially in a lit course—to take notes beside the text and annotate books. As a lit major myself, I believe this is the most effective way to take notes on a passage, line, or chapter of a novel or short story. To tell these students that's they will now be at a disadvantage because they cannot bring their texts to class seems counterproductive.

And then there is the 'distractions' argument. Laptops are distractions. We get it. What about the ever entertaining and yet forgotten world of daydreaming and doodling? Remember the days when we used to channel Van Gough in the margins of our notebooks and bring comics to life a-top a college ruled notebook? As NYU student and journalist Ben Zweig notes in jest, "when you look back at your notes from freshman year and see triangles, spirals and missing blocks of text between the transition from dinosaurs to homo-sapiens, surely you'll think to yourself, 'Gee, am I glad I didn't have the opportunity to use a laptop, or I wouldn't have produced all of these helpful pictograms!'"

Why the crusade against iPads but not note pads? As Zweig's editorial put it, "Quite simply, because professors

are afraid of it: afraid of its potential, frightened it will eclipse academia....Like a good jealous boyfriend, educators are always afraid that their lessons will be overshadowed by the outside world."

If a student does not want to pay attention in class, she will find any means not to participate. . many students will space out regardless of whether.

If a lesson isn't intellectually engaging, students will find any other means to occupy their attention. This has always been the case, no matter what level of technology happened to be widely available. Education is a two way street the classroom the meeting point. Professors and students must meet each other half way.

According to the Monique C. Katz Dean of Stern College, Karen Bacon, this policy is currently an English Department policy and has not expanded to any other departments. To this, I say while literature may be about books and texts, it's also about thoughts that have evolved alongside technology for centuries. Technology can contribute fresh, engaging, and immersive experiences to the classroom. "It's a new, engaging voice in a tired conversation," explains Zweig.

The most effective teacher meets the students where they are; speak the language of your students and they will respond. Instead of banning laptops, professors, should try new strategies to engage students. Instead of teaching the same syllabus or readings they've used for years, perhaps professors should try something more exciting so they are equally as passionate and excited as the students, and less robotic even if this is their fifteenthen-th time teaching the course.

Instead of banning technology and resisting progress, YU should work to become a technologically pioneering university—one of which students can be proud. As a university, we value technological progress: our transcripts, registration, and applications are all digitalized. Professors communicate with their students outside of class via email. Why can't professors similarly incorporate technology into their lessons? One example: professors could use a similar strategy to the one employed by Florida Atlantic University: students register an iClicker in their course and then professors can project a few multiple choice questions to which the students must "click" A, B, C, D, E. These responses will accumulate points for the students and serve as a major aspect of students' participation grades. There are many innovative ways technology can be used to enhance the classroom experience—banning technology is not the answer.

For Yeshiva University, a university that prides itself on being record breaking, record making, and an academic pioneer, this shift in English Department policy creates the framework for a larger discussion about the place of technology in the classroom at all. What if this technology ban trend expands? Should it spread?

Had an individual professor banned technology in his or her classroom, as several have, the issue would not be as pressing; however, once a department unanimously implements a policy, it should be questioned why that ban is not relevant to other departments as well. Why is there more need for a laptop in a political science classroom? In a Bible classroom? In a chemistry lecture—yes, even in the science department students have access to G-mail and Facebook.

We invest in our education and should be able to use any mode of transcription we wish—especially since, when we register for YU and for courses, there is no academic warning or legal clause informing us of this technology ban. As a lit major, this is definitely not what I signed up for.

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Founded by the women of Yeshiva University's Stern College in 1953, *The Observer* is the official newspaper representing the student body of Stern College and Yeshiva University. *The Observer* is an independent student publication, self-funded, and pulished on a monthly basis throughout the academic year. Views expressed in *The Observer* are those of the writer's and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board or the student body, faculty, and administration of Yeshiva University. All *Observer* Content is copyrighted and may not be reprinted without permission.

Yeshiva University Community Commemorates Sandy Hooke Massacre

MIRIAM KHUKHASHVILI The Jewish response to tragedy is loud: it is not silent. It is conversational, reflective and thought provoking. Sefer Iyov discusses varying degrees of divine intervention and reasons for suffering. Tragedy is not meant to be digested in silence, whether it's a personal tragedy – such as a death of a relative, where we are mandated to sit shiva amidst the comfort of our friends and families – or a national tragedy, where reflection and a struggle to find answers are part of the process of healing.

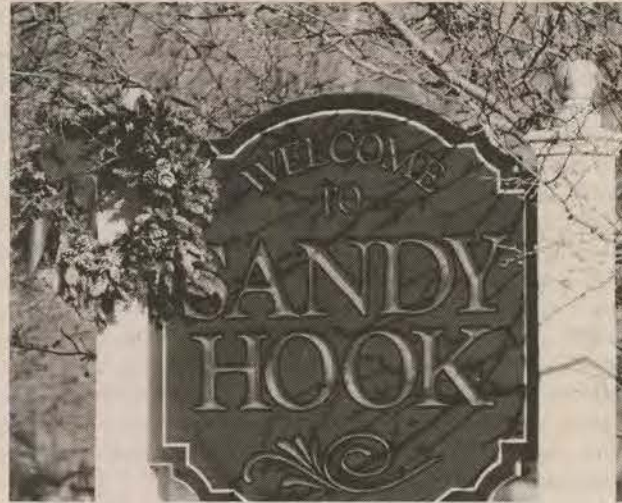
Thus, as a response to the December 14th, 2012 shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, the students of Yeshiva University organized a memorial in reaction to the tragedies that occurred. The second deadliest school shooting in United States history left twenty children, between the ages of six and seven, and six adults dead.

The event, run by TEIQU (Torah Exploration of Ideas, Questions and Understanding) included remarks from varying YU staff members including a poem written and read by Dr. Ruth Bevan, a recitation of Tehilim and Kel Maaleh Rachamim, and candles lit for all the victims, accompanied by a somber Esa Enai from the Y-Studs.

President Richard Joel was the first to speak about what he dubbed “the unspeakable.” He began by referencing on the holiday of Chanukah as the perfect paradigm for adding light in times of darkness. He called upon the students of YU to unearth the “mandate to matter in this fractured world,” explaining that “there is a mandate to kindle light in darkness” and that this mandate is the both the message of Chanukah and the essence of the Jewish response to tragedy. Rather than feeling crushed and immobilized by unspeakable tragedies, the Jewish community searches for the mandate to matter and so, as President Joel emphasized, “As the Yeshiva University community we rise to the occasion in the only way we can: by living up to our mandate”.

Rabbi Yonah Reiss, Dean of RIETS, echoed the sentiments of President Joel by calling upon the students of YU “to make the world a better place”. Rav Reiss explained that YU students should respond to the tragedy by making an effort “to increase our acts of Gemilat Chassadim, to demonstrate kindness towards each

other, and to live with compassion”. Rav Reiss also touched upon the political effects of the shooting in particular, he discussed a government awareness of the need for stricter gun control laws. “On a communal level, I believe we should strongly consider being



Gabriel Braun

constructive participants in the political process to prevent these types of tragedies” said Rav Reiss. The demand for stricter gun control was also a view expressed by Dr. Gabriel Cwilich, Director of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program, who called upon politicians to begin to act in the wake of the deadliest era of mass gun violence America has ever seen. Rabbi Kenneth Brander, led the recitation of Tehillim before adding that “as Torah Jews, it is our moral responsibility to care for all,” Jews and non-Jews alike.

The commemoration was meant not only as a means of remembering and honoring those that were killed but as a way for the YU community and the greater Jewish community at large to grope for answers in a world tainted by the blood of innocent children. As this the case during Chanukah, the Jewish community was compelled to respond to this tragedy by making a commitment to strive to bring more light to a world that had turned too dark.

The Yearbook: An Imperative Publication Indeed

NOAH BOTWINICK “When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

This beautifully constructed and smoothly-flowing sentence was composed by Thomas Jefferson in what went on to become one of the most important documents ever written in recorded human history. Good thing it was written so well because it was a very important document indeed, one that contains within it many such beautiful sentences such as the one quoted above. Over the course of human history there have been many documents composed by venerated human beings, and only a select few are destined to ever become so important and influential as to become quoted in college newspapers, in articles that have nothing to do with these documents themselves, in the hopes that attaching a random quote from the document will make the article itself seem important and worthy of the reader’s consideration.

Like Jefferson’s work, this article has been written to inform the reader of a tremendously important piece of information: this year, unlike the past ten years, there will be a Stern College for Women and Yeshiva College yearbook, fused together into one single piece of literature that will record the many important and historically significant events that have taken place in the two separate-but-connected campuses over the past four eventful years. This yearbook, which is currently in the process of being diligently put together by a select group of talented individuals, will contain within it the only recorded history of the many seniors who will be graduating from these historic halls in June. If successfully completed – because its successful composition is not an easy task and its success is therefore by no means guaranteed – the yearbook will be the only book ever written that contains the pictures and some information about all the seniors of the Yeshiva University graduating class of 2013.

This highly rare book will also contain within it the recorded history of all the professors that impart vast amounts of wisdom in this

great university, as well as a section containing valuable information about the many remarkable events that have occurred over the duration of the seniors of 2013’s stay in YU. For those among what is certain to become an extensive readership that relies on photographic evidence for proof that something exists, the yearbook committee is already in the process of amassing an immense amount of rare and highly-valued photos of the many events and proceedings that have taken place these past four academic years. As such, the yearbook is sure to please the eyes with its stunning imagery as much as it will certainly tickle the intellect with its brilliant writing and vivid presentation of life in the largest Jewish university in the Western Hemisphere.

For without this yearbook, one would have no means of knowing who from the class of 2013 was a member of what club or what team, who majored in what and what program they were in, or what outfit they chose to wear on either of the two dates when the portrait pictures were taken. Without this yearbook, the president or deans of this marvelous institution would have no means of composing a letter to the graduating class and the students would have nowhere on which to autograph their friends’ autograph pages. This glorious manuscript will serve as a record keeper for all time of those important pieces of information that will be recorded in the many pages that will encompass the 2013 yearbook.

And in thousands of years, when the earth has long since been blown up in a nuclear war and pillaged by aliens who ship all the surviving humans off to another galaxy for low-paying but physically demanding slave labor, the yellowed and cracked pages of the 2013 Yeshiva University yearbook will remain as a testament to the aliens that choose to remain on earth to start a new life with their families that there was indeed a YU class of 2013 and that their existence was, in fact, important enough to be documented. And someday these aliens will choose to quote a sentence from the 2013 yearbook in their college newspaper in the hopes of gaining the attention of fellow alien classmates so that they will cast their many eyes or feelers or whatever aliens use to read with in the future on the words of their article. We graduating seniors should all feel an immense pride knowing that the words from our 2013 yearbook will someday be quoted in alien college newspapers here on earth.

NEWS

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NEWS ALERT: SCW English Department Votes in New Technology Policy

STAFF Stern College for Women’s English Literature Department has made an executive decision to ban technology (laptops, cellphones, iPads, Kindles etc) in the classroom next semester. The new regulation has been added to syllabi under course regulations and is currently being strictly enforced.

This ban comes in response to professors’ frustrations with students paying more attention to their laptops than they do engaging in class discussions.

Every professor has the discretion to overturn this new rule for specific circumstances throughout the semester, and students with documented disabilities can use laptops and other devices in the classroom; however, as it stands the entire department voted to implement this new regulation.

For more information, see the official statement released by the English Department.

English Department Releases Official Statement Re Technology Policy

Below is the English Department’s official statement regarding the new technology policy:

We have seen a rise in texting, surfing, shopping, Facebook checking, writing papers for other classes, and other forms of multitasking in English Department classes in the last few years. This activity has occurred in most classes, no matter the size, seating arrangement, or teacher. Several of us have, in the last year, individually adopted a policy restricting use of mobile devices. We have seen a rise in attention and participation. The use of laptops and other mobile devices in classrooms is an important issue for discussion across the country.

On Monday December 17, at a regular department meeting, English Department full-time faculty voted 6-0 on a new policy as follows: “No laptops, cell phones, or mobile devices may be turned on during class except at the instructor’s discretion.”

Clarification:

The Department follows the law regarding the American Disabilities Act. If the student has a disability letter indicating that she needs to use a laptop or other device, she may. Otherwise, the individual faculty member may determine if, how, and when devices are used in her or his particular course/classroom. It should be clear that such choices will vary not only by faculty member but also, in some cases, by course or even by day-given course content and pedagogy. A faculty member may, for example, choose to have laptops turned off until a part of the class period necessitates their being turned on for educational reasons. Each faculty member should state a policy about devices, including whether or not there is a grade penalty for improper use in class. Students should ask during the first weeks of class if a policy is not clear.

Tzvi Hametz

Reflections On Counterpoint Winter Mission In Jerusalem

DOVI NADEL I signed up for the CJF's Counterpoint Israel winter mission a bit cynical. What difference could my peers and I make in a week? Was art really a positive way to interact with 150 boys between seventh and ninth grade? Granted, the art would be a way for the kids to talk about their personal narratives, but would the messages of our lessons really pierce through? With these questions in my head, I signed up, nonetheless, for a subsidized trip to Israel, and for what promised to be a different type of Israel experience than I'd previously had during my years spent learning in Israel. Yet, I was still skeptical about what this different experience actually could accomplish.

After a day and a half of preparatory training, our group of twelve student volunteers from YU and Stern entered the classrooms of Ort Spania, a school for seven through twelfth grader in



Atara Burian

Jerusalem. The school was different than most. Most of its students came from poor and underprivileged families and many of the students had been kicked out of other schools, landing in Ort. Each teaching pair was given three different classes of kids to teach each day over the course of the week. Each class we taught was different: the seventh graders were calm and naïve; the eighth graders were off the walls, throwing art supplies around the room and fighting with one another on the very first day; and our ninth grade class – well, they were in that perfectly imbalanced state of adolescence, in high school but not yet touched by the pressure of Israel's matriculation exams. Yet, despite the differences in age and maturity, there was one thing that all the kids in each of the classes were lacking: personal attention.

Imagine the following classroom: upwards of thirty kids – rowdier than average – all handed over to one Israeli teacher. With physical fights, racial slurs and negative peer pressure rampant in these classrooms, one wonders how any teacher could be expected to both control and teach these kids. Indeed, many teachers resorted to stereotyping and labeling in order to maintain

classroom order. Teachers labeled kids as the bolder or the shy ones, or the ones that didn't need any attention. So, sweatshirt-clad, hooded Adam was perceived merely as an aggressive personality; little Yosef was the shy one, and creative Ariel was perceived as a troublemaker.

We split the classes into groups of fifteen and entered in groups of two or three teachers. In the week we spent with them, we tried to give these students the personal attention each of them craved and deserved. We saw (and showed the teachers) Adam's work ethic and diligence when it came to finishing his projects. We made Yosef smile by engaging in simple, casual conversations with him. We watched as Ariel, armed with art supplies, was able to focus and create something beautiful of his own. Sometimes we saw artistic talent, but mostly, we saw personalities. We saw the value in each kid, and we allowed them to see that value in themselves. Art for some was the alternative form of expression that they lacked and that we were able to provide. For most, however, art was merely a medium to create conversation, between their group and ours. Whether those conversations were centered around the lessons plans of personal identity or around their favorite new games on the iPhone, the focus was clear: creating a dialogue in which each kid felt that he mattered.

Our teaching program did not take place in a vacuum. When we left the school at four we did not go off to undirected free time for the rest of the day (though there was free time later in the evening). Instead, we were just as much participants in this program as we were teachers. Every evening, after finishing our teaching at Ort

Spania, we had programming designed to help us come to terms with this underbelly of Israeli society to which we had never been so tangibly exposed. We ran a program for Afikim, an organization for kids and families from low socioeconomic backgrounds committed to assisting kids in schools and equipped parents with parenting skills. We met with a panel of Israeli soldiers and were exposed to the concept of Tzahal not just as a militarily focused army but as an all-encompassing corrective organization for youth at risk. We saw Tzahal in a new light, understanding it to be also a medium for Israeli kids to mature and become productive members of Israeli society – even at a profit loss for the army.

Each of these evening activities contributed to creating a more holistic experience. Through various activities we were able to obtain a more complete understanding of the background of the kids that we were teaching. At the same time, the programming exposed us to other Israeli venues attempting to break the vicious cycle of poverty and violence that the kids we were teaching came from.

Tamar Berger, another program participant from Stern College explained that "usually when ending a program I can look back and say where I wish things could have been tweaked or could have been done a bit differently. Not so on this program." Indeed, everything that we did on the program was planned in a deliberate, thoughtful manner. We gave and we learned: we gave kids the attention they needed; we helped students create art that they could proudly show their parent at our final schoolwide event; and we

Atara Burian



Johan's Ark

SHALVA GINSPARG For Johan Huibers, Noah's Ark is more than just one of the most iconic images of the first book of the Bible; it's the blueprint for the project which has consumed him for close to two decades. In 1992, the Dutch owner of a construction company awoke from a nightmare in which the Netherlands was submerged in water. The dream spurred him to set sail on what proved a twenty year endeavor: to build an Ark according to G-d's instructions to Noah in the sixth chapter of Genesis. Now, throngs of tourists stream in to Dordrecht, Netherlands daily to view his completed work, which weighs in at about 3,000 pounds and spans more than half the length of the Titanic.

In 2004, Huibers built a smaller replica of Noah's Ark which he opened to the public and then channeled the profits to help finance the full-scale model. In the end, he spent \$1.6 million of his own money to actualize his life-long dream. Nicknamed "Johan's Ark," the second ship boasts a movie theatre, a restaurant, and a Genesis-themed train ride. Unlike its diluvian counterpart, Johan's ship does not house every animal in

existence, though it does feature a menagerie of plastic animals as well as a petting zoo with dogs, ponies, and sheep.

Of course, the passengers on board are not the only aspect of the ship which distinguishes it from the biblical boat. In Genesis, G-d commands Noah to build an ark out of "gopher wood." The exact nature of gopher wood is a matter of dispute among scholars; Johan substituted the gopher wood for steel frames and American cedar wood.

Also, according to the Bible, the boat Noah built was three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. To convert this biblical system of measurement to modern times, Johan based his calculations on the length of his own arm and generated the dimensions in feet: about 450 feet long, 75 feet high, and 90 feet wide. The boat has a capacity of about 1,500 passengers.

For its daily deluge of visitors, the finished boat serves as a sort of floating biblical museum. One such visitor, Martin Konijn, commented after viewing Johan's ship that "you might know the story of Noah, okay, but if you see this you begin to get an idea of how it would actually have worked

in practice."

Though the Netherlands has been ravaged by floods in the past, Huibers doesn't fear another deluge the scope of the biblical flood; the sight of a rainbow signifies G-d's promise that He will never again destroy the world with water as He did in the days of Noah. Instead, Johan's motivation for building the ship is, according to his website, "to tell people that there is a G-d who loves us, and that He has a plan for our lives." Unfortunately, some have misconstrued the intent of Johan's efforts. Prior to the purported "end-of-the-world" as predicted by the Mayan calendar, the manager of the ark, Deborah Venema-Huibers, was forced to re-iterate that "this is not a rescue boat. It's a museum."

Huibers is currently contemplating the ship's next destination: possibly another European port or even across the Atlantic. If the buzz from its first debut is any indication, wherever Johan's boat will dock next, it is sure to make waves.

Quotes derived from the Huffington Post and www.examiner.com

learned from the students we taught and about the part of Israeli society from which they came; most importantly, perhaps, we learned from one another. Our dynamic, diverse, and committed group of student participants – led by Kiva and Atara – successfully created a group ethic focused on teaching, learning and having a great time.

The art projects were an effective alternative to normative learning for some kids and the concept of a "personal narrative" struck a chord



Atara Burian

with some kids too. For all kids, however, one thing was for certain: that week and a half was not too short of a time period at all. We made kids smile; we made kids feel confident about themselves; we gave them the personal attention that they needed. We all emerged tired from the week and a half. But we also emerged with an immense sense of fulfillment, with a new perspective on Israeli society, and with 150 new young friends from Ort Spania.

As Herzl, the vice principal of Ort Spania said in the final tekes (event), "Tov Mareh Einayim Mimishma Oznayim" – "Seeing is better than hearing." The type of lessons we learned about chessed, Israeli society and the value of time cannot be learned through a text. These are lessons that can only be learned through experience. This week in Israel was a lesson like no other – one that I most certainly will never forget.

New Campus Couple On Beren Campus

STAFF With the start of the semester came the Office of Student Life's announcement of Beren Campus' new campus couple: Jonathan and Esty Schwab. If their first Shabbat here, January 25, is any indicator, their tenure here will prove a successful and inspiring one.

On Friday night, Esty prayed with the women of SCW in the 7th floor Beit Midrash and infused the prayer with extra vigor. Keeping with the traditional role of the campus couple, Jonathan (more commonly known by his surname, Schwab) and Esty ate with students for all three of the Shabbat meals and made an effort to meet, if not every woman, well over 75% of the women on campus for Shabbat. Their meet and greet after Shabbat lunch had the entire 36th street front lounge, which was packed with over 50 students captivated and laughing for a solid hour and a half.

We look forward to their work here and, on behalf of the women of Stern College: Welcome to Midtown!

Stay tuned for a full bio on Schwab and Esty in the next issue of *The Observer*



onyaimchas.com

Shaping Your Future

continued from page 1

missions. The CJF also pioneers initiatives including (but not limited to) the Medical Ethics Society, ChampionsGate Leadership Conference, YU Connects, Quest, Student Life, Torah Tours, Service Learning Programs, and Counterpoint.

"In return [for all of this]," Brander explains, "you get positive energy from students which has a reciprocal effect on YU." Brander continues emphasizing "The CJF shouldn't be taking credit for these initiatives other than that it allows students to inspire themselves."

The CJF's empowering qualities expands farther than the walls of YU. Josh Joseph, Vice President of Yeshiva University and the Chief of Staff to President Richard M. Joel who previously worked for the CJF and its precursor—the Max Stern Division of Communal Services, shares that "For me what's exciting about the CJF is that it provides us with an opportunity to incubate programs and projects that impact not only the students and the broader YU community on our campuses, but also the communities across North America—and beyond. In that way, we take YU beyond its walls and share our products with the world."

The CJF pioneers a variety of national Jewish community leadership programs ranging from community outreach to rabbinic placement and continued rabbinic networking.

The CJF has also begun combatting what some have dubbed as "the shidduch crisis." YU Connects, which, incidentally, was started because of ChampionsGate, is not solely a matchmaking service, but it also geared towards fostering and maintaining healthy relationships.

YU Connects has opened communication and encourage discussing positive relationships and intimacy. Brander stresses

that the Jewish community, as a whole, must begin discussing positive relationships and intimacy as early as elementary school: "We need to start talking about it young so we can affect our future," he says. To that effect, the CJF has reached out and partnered with a few local elementary schools to tailor intimacy and healthy relation lessons for youths in order to stimulate a more positive state of affairs.

In a similar vein, a newly established rabbinic marriage counseling programs has already certified 45 rabbis and counting as marriage counselors. Once a rabbi leaves YU, he still has a network. If he has a problem—perhaps needs to take a course in marriage counseling—he can turn back to his Alma mater without hesitation. "Even though rabbis leave the 'YU nest,'" Brander explains, "They're not alone. There are continued education opportunities as well as a network of rabbis for them to access." The CJF provides ongoing educational opportunities as well as rabbinic consulting opportunities for rabbis in the field.

Rabbi Brander rhetorically poses the question, "Did you ever wonder if your rabbi has a rabbi?" Well, in terms of community rabbis trained and associated by the CJF, the answer is an empathic yes—a whole community worth. The CJF has created an online network of rabbis, the Rabanan website. Through this site, rabbis gain access to interactive classes, questions and answers, and discussion forums. Hundreds of rabbis from around the world are involved in this site, which is run from Hollywood, Florida, by Rebbetzin Meira Davis.

There is also "a secured blog run by Rabbi Josh Flug where they can discuss issues that they'd feel uncomfortable discussing in a more public forum," explains Brander. Similarly, the CJF

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orchestrates online conference calls every 6-8 weeks in which around 100 rabbis participate.

While the CJF creates a home away from home sort of network for rabbis, these rabbis are well prepared for their independent jobs in their respective Jewish communities. Give a man a fish, he'll have food for a day; teach a man to fish you'll feed him for life. The CJF teaches their rabbis to fish. In addition to the continued networking provided, they, very basically, train communities how to do their own placement and provide rabbis with 400-page leadership and placement guidebooks.

For the community member and Torah seeker, these rabbis come as a tremendous resource. Moreover, these rabbis, in conjunction with the CJF are launching a new Torah TED Talks initiative accessible to community members and Torah seekers worldwide. The CJF is in the process of creating these online TED talks delivered by Torah scholars on pertinent, interesting Torah topics.

The CJF has created a community of community leaders. These are people who believe in Torah U'Madda.

If the extent of your CJF exposure is the word CJFee, I urge you to expand your horizons and become familiarized with the countless CJF initiatives that serve to better our home communities.

Profile, Anita Zucker

RACHEL DELIA BENAİM For a few minutes, she smiles warmly at the student leaders around the round wood table—a student council president (or three), the student life committee leaders, a presidential fellow, an editor—enjoying her words of wisdom regarding everything Stern College for Women related. Amid launching a new education program in her hometown of Charleston, spreading the idea of tikkun olam, and being CEO of her late husband's company, The InterTech Group, Anita Zucker shared her experience as a female Jewish entrepreneur.

Anita Zucker's days are like any other working woman's: she wakes up, goes to the office, checks up on her kids, and does some charity work on the side—but beneath her humble exterior lies a whirlwind of success.

On November 12, in the company of CJF Dean Rabbi Brander, Monique C Katz, Dean Bacon, Office of the Dean Fellow Faygel Beren, OSU representative Rachel Ciment, SCW board member Mrs. Shira Yoskor, CJF community initiatives, Rabbi Ari Sitner, six student leaders were privileged to hear Mrs. Zucker reflect on her experiences as a Jewish woman in the professional world.

Ari Geller, president of SYMSSC reveled at Zucker's business finesse, passion, and honesty. As a SYMS student and aspiring business person herself, Geller commented that Mrs Zucker "gave me hope that I could be a woman in the business world and be successful."

InterTech Group, Zucker's Forbes 500 Company, according to Business Week, "acquires and builds manufacturing companies specializing in polymer and elastomer products. It provides image marketing, order fulfillment, product distribution, and financial transaction services." They produce products for all sorts of industries ranging from, but not limited to, aerospace aviation, medical, and hygiene products.

As Zucker takes a moment to think about the ramifications of her work, Zucker affirms that it "feels good to be making products that can keep someone safe when they are facing terrible obstacles in their lives."

Perhaps it is a mixture of her Southern lifestyle and staunchly Jewish beliefs that have influenced her, but even as a high power CEO, Zucker still brings her Jewish values to work every day. "Tik-

kun olam (fixing the world) is very much a part of our business platform," says Zucker about Inter-Tech Group. "It is very neat to be able to be in a non-Jewish society and take my Judaism with me," she says of all her business transactions.

When asked how she specifically incorporates tikkun olam and Jewish values into her business, Zucker leans towards the table animatedly: "I do it in many ways though my business," she says in a matter of fact tone. "Through the products we make—making sure we produce products that are safe and complete...and excellent quality!"

InterTech Group products, as Zucker explains, are "products for safety." Incidentally, "since 9/11 we've been involved in fire service...and we've been involved in military [technological products]," boasts Zucker. "If [consumers] get excellent quality hopefully they'll be safe and secure. That," she emphasizes, "is tikkun olam."

Like many people who have the ability to affect change, Zucker has her political opinions in addition to her communal ones—though she didn't present them from a given party platform. "I choose to lobby," she tells us while encouraging students to get involved in fostering change in our communities. As a powerful woman in the workforce, Zucker noted that she is "excited to see what happened to the voice of women at the federal level." When asked if she'd ever run for office herself, Zucker laughed and responded "I'd rather [work with politicians and see my ideas run through] than [run for office myself]."

One such idea that Zucker is currently working on is an education initiative. In Charleston, Zucker's hometown, students aren't as lucky as we are. Margot Reinstein, TAC president and Legacy Heritage student, internalized Zucker's every point about education. "It was inspiring to me, as an aspiring educator, to see someone like Anita Zucker also believe education is the most important thing in the world. One idea which I thought was brilliant," said REinstein excitedly, "is the idea of having teachers go into different fields for a day to learn about them. Of course, such a brilliant point! If teachers and supposed to be able to give student opportunities and open doors to go far in life and follow their passions, they need to know a little about the different options out there. They need to educate towards them!" This, a focal

point of Zucker's educational reform in South Carolina.

Zucker is currently spearheading a program with some South Carolina legislators to change some of the education funding patterns in her state. The program would send high school teachers into different educational fields to enable them to better teach their students about said careers. Furthermore, the aim of the program is to ultimately teach high school students, who don't view themselves as college bound, some sort of trade—welding, for instance—so that they too can be employed and enter the work force with a set of useful skills.

She addressed the failures in the current public school systems but maintains that it is not the part of the government or the school: "Our government can't keep up with how fast industry changes," says Zucker passionately. "What we need to do is help education keep up." Educational change is a necessity.

When discussing her motives in shifting educational funding Zucker got quite serious: "I've seen kids who have no one—their lives are really poor. They don't have anyone who loves them or advises them... I try to provide the opportunities to be exposed to what the world is all about...Not every kid needs a college diploma but every kid

needs some kind of career to support themselves and their future families."

Having been a teacher herself for fourteen years, Zucker took this opportunity to teach the student leaders of SCW and, for that matter, the YU administration. "Once a teacher always a teacher," she jokes. Even though Zucker has businesses, she is "involved in education every single day." She reflects, "We live in a community [the American community] that has great needs in [the field of] education. Education is the key—it unlocks every door. If you educate someone you give them the opportunity to...get health care...to know what to do and ultimately to be successful and support a family." As meta as it was to hear a former teacher reflecting on the positive role of education, Zucker's point was clear: education is a valuable commodity and we at Yeshiva University are privileged to have such an extensive one.

Education is a point that resonates strongly with Zucker's YU audience. Margot Reinstein, TAC president and Legacy Heritage student, could not stop singing Zucker's praises. "She's an incredible role model for us at SCW," says Reinstein. "It was an honor meet with her. She was genuinely interested in our pursuits and only encouraging us to continue to make change and follow our dreams." Change though, is a huge part of today's world—students must not be fooled. "You have to be prepared and learn about flexibility and be able to change if it's necessary," advises Zucker. "Change is hard. I got out of the teaching world and into the business world, but even though I got dropped into the business world, I knew the skills necessary to be a leader."

The other valuable piece of advice Zucker has for women in business: network, network, network. "Having the ability to network really open doors that you may not even know need to be opened for the future," she says enthusiastically. "I have found networking to be a great tool."

Partly in praise of Zucker and partly as further advice to the ambitious ladies in the room, Dean Karen Bacon commented, "You have to collect as many skills as possible. You need to collect a lot of ideas and you never know when you'll need to pull it out. You never know when ideas will be valuable don't narrow yourself now so you can face the future."



<http://ab.cofc.edu>

The Dos and Don'ts: Staying Healthy In The Cafeteria

YAELE LASSON The caf. A place to catch up with friends, cram into the elevator, and rationalize those pizza snaps as your second lunch of the day.

While the cafeteria is a great landmark in Stern College, there are many "do's" and "don'ts" to consider when it comes to weighing the nutritive value of the foods you choose to refuel your body for classes and studying. **DON'T** overload on sushi with raw fish too many times a week. Raw fish has high concentrations of mercury which could be potentially toxic for your body. **DO** try to moderate how much sushi you have each week. Also, try to swap your white rice for brown rice for added fiber. **DON'T** turn to bagels as an automatic option. While most cost effective when you are running low on caf money, the high carb content in bagels is more like the suggested average carb allotment for the day. **DO** opt for the pieces of whole wheat bread next to the bagels for a smaller portion. Still great for toast and paninis!

DON'T think that Chobani fruit yogurts are the healthiest option. They have added evaporated cane juice which adds to the high sugar content. **DO** choose plain Chobani yogurt and add your own fresh fruit, cereal, and a small packet of splenda for a more natural, less sugar-loaded meal. **DON'T** make the excuse that salad is too expensive! **DO** always load up on a salad or fill the bowl with fresh, cut up vegetables as an on the go snack. **DON'T** think that blueberry muffins

or danishes have real fruit in them. The caloric value of those desserts can set you back the rest of the day. **DO** grab a fruit from the fruit stand right next to the pastries for a vitamin and nutrient-laden snack. **DON'T** fill up your froyo cup because it has the word "yogurt" in it. The taste resembles ice cream and the nutrition content is not very different either. **DO** look for the small, already portioned greek yogurts in the ice cream freezer. That way you are guaranteed the size portion that you really need for the afternoon "pick me up."

DON'T eat the "Around the Globe" dinner every night. While it looks delicious, many of the meat dishes are high in sodium and sauces with too many calories to count. **DO** turn to the grilled chicken cutlets that are so versatile: Put pieces in your salad or eat with sliced avocado over quinoa. **DON'T** assume that white baked potatoes are the same as sweet potatoes. White potatoes are much higher in starch than their orange counterparts. **DO** take the sweet potatoes for a filling lunch, especially because they are categorized as a "super food" which contains the necessary nutrients for a working mind and better focusing in classes.

DON'T automatically turn to the sugary soda drinks and juices as a way to refuel and gain energy. **DO** take advantage of the of fridge with a large stock of water bottles. Water is the best way to hydrate throughout

the day. **DON'T** fall prey to eating french fries every night, especially if it's all you choose to eat for dinner. **DO** choose the roasted potatoes or a pre-packaged quinoa or tabouli salad from the fridge.

DON'T rely on pizza from the caf store if you can only find time to eat after the caf is already closed. **DO** investigate the other options that the caf store does have, such as yogurts and soups. **DON'T** load up on cookies and candy from the caf store to keep in your dorm room. **DO** choose the baked and air popped chips, pretzels, and nuts to have on hand as a better option for when you need a late night snack. **DON'T** presume that all cereals that seem healthy really are! Regular Cheerios and others like it might be a better choice over the "healthy" cereals. **DO** check the nutrition facts on your breakfast cereal. Many contain close to twenty grams of sugar and aren't as great as they may seem!

DON'T say that you don't have enough time to spend on choosing healthy options. Making a hasty and easy decision can be detrimental to your meal plan and your health. **DO** take a minute to plan out your meal so you can choose the best options throughout the day. Think about what you ate for other meals during the day and what nutrients or food groups you may have missed. The caf also posts their monthly menu, so you can check out what is available even before you get there. Happy eating!



Irit Greenbain

Puzzle Corner:

This winter break, I went on CJF Coast to Coast. But this time, it wasn't really a coast. Your challenge for this puzzle is to find the state we went to, and the three cities we visited in that state. The words can be in a straight line in any direction. Once you've finished, connect one corner of the grid to the other by connecting the letters "coast to coast to coast," etc., in order. The letters can be in any direction but the words are not in a straight line. Happy solving!

C	O	L	X	E	O	I	N	O	T	N	A	N	A	S
C	A	I	H	U	C	C	X	E	U	H	E	X	H	U
D	S	O	T	N	D	A	L	L	A	S	T	T	O	N
N	U	T	C	O	O	S	T	T	L	I	S	E	C	D
C	H	X	E	A	S	S	C	O	C	O	A	I	O	L
L	D	D	I	E	A	T	T	I	L	D	L	A	E	I
C	I	L	L	O	C	A	X	E	I	N	S	H	X	U
I	C	D	H	U	E	D	N	D	L	U	T	U	N	D
L	D	T	E	X	A	S	C	I	X	H	T	A	S	L
N	O	T	S	U	O	H	D	L	E	O	C	O	I	T

C	O					O	I	N	O	T	N	A	N	A	S
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The 7 Steps To Landing An Internship

SASHA BOGURSKY Internships are a great way to gain professional experience in the field of your choice. No matter what your major is, there are opportunities in everything from accounting to pre-med to music. In this economy, it is more important than ever to get internships to improve your chances at getting a job upon graduation. Jocelyn Coalter of the Career Development Center (CDC) shares several tips on how to land an internship.

1. Make a Meeting with the CDC
Not sure where to start? Try making a meeting with the CDC. They are here to help guide you through the entire internship/job search and application process. Coalter suggests scheduling an appointment during your first semester on campus for advice and to learn about what opportunities are available to you.
Even if you are nowhere near declaring a major, Coalter says, "You have to remember that you are putting yourself up against students at other universities who have already

had at least one internship between their freshman and sophomore years." Most Yeshiva University students spend a year or two in Israel and therefore enter college as sophomores.

When you apply for an internship, the hiring manager is more likely to choose the applicant with more experience, and other college students have already had an extra year to gain experience. That means you have to make the decision if you are going to go back to work at summer camp the summer of your sophomore year or choose that internship at your cousin's law firm.

2. Research
Don't be discouraged if you feel there are no opportunities for you. The CDC's website lists multiple resources to help students find out what types of internships are available. Search according to major, area of interest, or just to see what's out there.

3. Resume Rescue
It goes without saying that you

need a resume to apply for any position. Meet with the CDC to ensure that yours is free of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. Formatting is also important, and depending on what internship you are applying to, Coalter says it is important to tailor your resume based on each position.

4. Apply!
It may seem like an obvious step, but if you do not apply for internships, even if they are not your number one choice, you won't ever land one! If you do not have much previous experience, it is important that you apply to several positions so that you can up your chances of landing one. You may not land your first choice right away, but remember that each internship you do get means you are just one step closer to landing your dream job.

5. Follow-up
Don't panic if you don't hear back from the places you applied to right away. Remember that these companies are extremely busy and receive

quite a few applications. They don't always have the time to answer you immediately and sometimes they need a follow-up email from you to be reminded of your application. Simply send them a quick email reminding them that you applied and look forward to hearing from them.

6. Interview Prep
Worried about sounding too eager or overly aggressive? This would be the perfect time to stop by the CDC during walk-in hours or shoot a counselor a quick email asking them how to proceed.

A good interview is key to landing an internship, and what better way to bolster your confidence than scheduling a mock interview with the CDC? Although it may not be comfortable, Coalter suggests students videotape themselves during the mock interview so they can better see how to improve their interview skills.

Before the interview, it is important that you know your resume backwards and forwards, because you may be asked questions about

previous jobs or extra-curriculars. Knowing your resume well will help you call upon answers for questions that at first stump you.

Also, never go into an interview without researching the company and the person who is interviewing you. You have to be prepared to answer questions like, "Why do you want to work here?" and "Do you have any questions for us?" You will not be able to answer either of these critical questions without conducting background research first. A simple Google search and studying the company's website will pay off.

7. Say Please and Thank You
Within 24 hours of your interview, be sure to send a thank you note to your interviewer. "Be specific with your thank you and try to mention something you spoke about during the interview," recommends Coalter, "or anything you didn't have the opportunity to say."

Follow these 7 steps and you'll be well on your way to landing an internship!

On Being Something

TALIA FELMAN You get a strange feeling when you're about to leave a place. You won't just miss the people you love and the memories you've made, but you'll miss the person you were then, at that time and place, because you'll never be that way again. You carry the lessons you learn with you to every new destination, but your identity, it changes with where ever you go. After all, where you are, literally and figuratively, differentiates one moment from the next. As a first time on campus student, I do not yet know who I am at Stern. My first few months here have been a blur of wandering; the first phase of a mission to color in my blank identity. A new place offers a chance at a different me, and over my next four years at Stern, I hope I can add a dimension to who I am.

My initial exploration at Stern has involved scanning endeavors I want to undertake and values I want to integrate. The values at Stern range from social to educational to religious. While I attempt to filter which values I want to espouse and which I want to exclude, I notice one dangerous value that threatens to creep into me. The urban culture that pervades the people of New York City tries to make its way through the empty slots of Stern's revolving doors and permeate all of our perspectives: the culture that emphasizes a person's image and his level of ownership. Those values are dangerous, for an inflated image can result in a deflated self and excessive ownership can reduce a person to just another object.

With Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, it has become the norm to have several webpages, complete with photos, likes, dislikes, and followers, a constant audience, all devoted to one person: me! But, we would be deluding ourselves

if we believed that our friends on Facebook were befriend us, and our followers on Twitter and Instagram valued who we are. Facebook and Twitter are our attempts to reduce ourselves to

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an image, our ideal representation. What is Instagram if not a literal transformation of people into portraits? With so many profiles, perhaps our paraphernalia outlives who we actually are.

An image is the antithesis of an individual. True to its name, a still shot captures what cannot move or change. On the contrary, life differentiates itself from death in its unique ability to accommodate growth and development. Additionally, where as an image is confined to its frame, it's four borders, life is defined by the ability for a living being to overflow the boundaries of his body and the frame of his inner world, and impact the environment and people around him. Last, an image has the ability to be adjusted to reach perfection. Imperfection, making mistakes, falling, failing getting it wrong; that is what it is to be human. That is what leaves room for hope.

In American culture, only what is quantifiable merits meaning. A person is summarized by his net worth, and the price of one's suit has become

the measure of the man. However, whereas in our society, things are valued only when they are describable, in the world of spirit, things are valued when they are indescribable. What is eternal is not what is seen, it is what is done. What lives on cannot be possessed, only given.

Last year I had the privilege of traveling to Poland and touring what is left of the Jewish communities and concentration camps that were destroyed in the Holocaust and the years thereafter. I saw what the Germans stole from our grandparents; they took the quantifiable, their shoes, their clothes, their money, even their time. Despite the German's every attempt to dehumanize our grandparents, their humanity triumphed. Our grandparents survived on sharing hope, as that was all they could offer one another; connection was their lifeline. They flourished on faith, and the light in their lives was their loyalty to morals outside themselves. When their props and their scenery in the play of life disappeared, it was their roles become critical. Their characters became essential.

The contrast between what I observed months ago in Europe and what I face everyday in New York is moving. King Solomon taught us that there is nothing new under the sun. The sun set yesterday and will rise again tomorrow. The trees have watched winters and summers pass. The skies have been witness to generations coming and generation going. But the earth—it's hard to believe that the earth that hosted our grandparents' hollow hell is the very same one that hosts our hearty homes.

Before I know it, Stern will be my second home. One day, when I leave this home, I want the identity I struggle to leave behind to be one that is intrinsically valuable and not just extrinsically

expensive. My piece of advice to myself and to my fellow classmates on campus is to remember what it is that makes us important. Don't allow the excess and appearances that surrounds us to delude us into viewing the world as a place created to satisfy arrogance and entitlement. The world is a place better suited to satisfy learning, curiosity and loving-kindness.

I am not writing a request to reject everything contemporary society has to offer. Rather, this is a plea to proceed with caution—to find the point of intersection between imagery, ownership, individuality and action. To find their place of convergence in the expression of artful ideas, enduring values and transcendent connection. To remember that what we have and how were seen is not nearly as important as who we are.

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Because when the show is over, the curtain closes, the costumes are taken off, the spotlight goes dark and the audience goes home. What live on are the actors, the parts they played, and their impact on those who watched.

Groupon: Praise And Warning

AMY WEISS With a mass influx of tourists flogging to Midtown in the month of December, I knew to plan ahead. I recently became aware of the wide world of Groupon, and I was hooked. To think that people still paid full price for anything—from iPhone touch-sensitive gloves to bike rentals in Central Park—made me pity those in the dark. I downloaded the App on my phone, and scrolled through deals like it was my AIM buddy list in 6th grade, in the elevator, on my walks to school, in the library.

It was so simple; I log into the App with a password, and my credit card digits were stored for my buying convenience, allowing me to buy a plethora of goods, activities, yoga sessions in the Park, flying lessons... Essentials for a college sophomore, of course. And as I finally had a rational excuse to scour the Groupons, I planned ahead for an only \$20 wash and blow-dry! Only 0.6 miles from my bed in Brookdale! With a slight tap of the screen while wearing my new touch-sensitive gloves, I bought my voucher for a wash and blow-dry that I intended to use two weeks later, on December 27th.

Early the next morning, I called the salon number printed on my voucher provided by Groupon. A terse, "yeah" greets me, and his tone of voice questions my request for an appointment: "in two, uh weeks from now," he repeats back to me, "10:30 a.m., oh, okay. Yeah." After I penciled in the appointment, my fingers slid to

my phone to search for a makeup artist session to prepare for that same night, two weeks later. The limits of my beautification process were endless, thanks to Groupon.

For those two weeks, the sprinkling of international languages could be heard all around as New York was in full swing with its being a World Class City, and all. On my walk to school that morning of December 27th, I congratulated myself on my foresight as I peered into the busy salons lining 34th street. And then it started to rain. Though hesitant to postpone my appointment at my Groupon selected salon with the fear they would be booked until I was 40, I called. "Yeah," he answers, "this appointment you want- it is for you?" "Uh-huh," I keep my cool.

Until he tells me I have rang a barbershop, with a name much unlike the one featured on my voucher. And then I laughed. Thank you, Mr. BarberShop. You have just begun to unleash me from my obsession with Groupon.

Although he was in fact aware of Groupon deal, he explained that the barbershop outsourced some appointments to one lady who came in on certain days. Had it not rained, I would have been there bright and early at 10:30 am, greeted by six stools, electric razors, and blaring Latino music- without a blow drier in sight.

Warily, I showed up for my altered appointment, voucher in hand. I checked and rechecked the address,

but the names did not match up. I climbed the stairs to the second floor of a small opening, and was seated at the one washing station in a corner, as 6 men and their barbers gave me confused, sidelong glances. The woman washed my hair, and began to blow it dry, but not before bluntly telling me I desperately needed a haircut. Oh, and that my hair felt like straw. Maybe it sounded nicer in her mind. Nonetheless, I came in a bun suited for a rat's nest, and left with hair that, after I waved goodbye to the men in the chairs, blew glamorously in the wind, dead ends and all. Needless to say, the wash and blow dry that I was led to believe to take place at an elegant salon was very unlike the second floor barbershop for which I bought the deal.

Women of Stern, consider yourself warned; Groupon is really a treasure of deals and bargains, but take caution in purchasing on a whim without doing the proper research beforehand. It may even pay to visit the place where the service is being offered to ensure it is what you have in mind. Besides for taking a quick look into the place, here are some other tips that can transform you into the intelligent shopper we all strive to be.

1. If you don't visit the place of interest, make sure to call ahead of time with any additional questions. The Groupon site always provides the merchant's number, and though Groupon is generally on the mark about what to expect, you can never be too sure. Hearing from the individual

company first hand can help you decide whether to buy the voucher or not.

2. Before buying the deal, decide if it is something you really, truly want or need. This should eliminate all purchases with the disclaimer, "but it was so cheap!" Just because it is on sale, does not mean you have space in your dorm room or your life for it. The smartest tactic, that does require immense amounts of self-control, is to not log on to Groupon without a specific mission. The mindless scrolling and professional advertisement is enticing enough to cause us to buy things and services we just do not need, nor will ever use. Though the prices seem cheap, if what you buy you will never use, you are essentially flushing good money down the drain.

3. Please, please, please make sure to read all of the fine print written below the voucher. It may seem incredulous that we buy without reading carefully, but it happens more often than you can imagine. Say for example, this first-time on campus kid from Miami longs for her bike at home, misses the thrill of hopping on and riding until the sun sets. One frosty January night, she stumbles on a voucher for an all-day bike rental at Central Park. One small tap, and its mine! Er, hers....The expiration date for the reduced-price rental may expire in mid-February however, and my Miami-raised bones cannot endure the increased wind-chill of New York while on a bike! The Groupon will then go to waste. You need to check the expiration

date of the voucher. And read all of the fine print, every single time.

4. Finally, some of the deals are from small, but growing, businesses. Groupon tallies and publicizes how many of each deal has been bought, and the numbers are sometimes in the thousands. For small businesses, the owners may be swamped with the influx of new costumers calling and expecting (immediate) service. When using Groupon in conjunction with small businesses, try to have patience as they may be excitingly, yet exhaustingly, reworking scheduling conflicts and hiring extra hands to cope. Make sure to call well in advance for an appointment, as there may be none available for a while if the said Groupon sold to hundreds of new costumers.

With all this said, Groupon is a great source for cheap deals, but it too has its limitations. If we are made aware of its shortcomings, however, we can use the site for all that its worth, as smart and informed shoppers. Good luck!



SPORTS

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Exercise For Back Pain

LINDSAY WESS Stretching isn't just a necessity for athletes. Sitting in uncomfortable classroom chairs and studying for long periods of time force students to succumb to back and neck pain in exchange for a good grade. Enrolled in a dual curriculum university, Stern students must register for an overwhelming amount of courses, resulting in countless hours of sitting in miniature wooden desks or plastic chairs.

Heavy loads of homework require many hours of studying in bent over contorted positions. A student in a prominent college accepts mental stress and the pain it creates. However, physical back and neck pain should not be brushed off as unavoidable collateral damage. Exercise could be a powerful weapon to fight off the physical pain.

Illinois University conducted a study in 2010 on back pain, which confirmed that prolonged sitting with poor posture could contribute to students' lower back pain. Compared to standing, 40 percent more stress is due to the spinal discs while sitting; twice as much stress can be caused if a person is in a slouched position, which tends to occur while studying or in class.

Studio Art major, Talia Saghian (13) expresses her back pain frustration saying, "my art work requires me to paint for extensive hours in the studio, and since the stools have no back support, it can become very painful going into my fourth hour of painting". The pain in Saghian's neck and back force her to work in her dorm from the comfort of her bed, which "isn't the ideal place to paint", she adds.

A misconception about lower back pain is that it is better to lie down and rest. On the contrary, exercise is the best medicine for your pain, as it will support your spine, and relive the tension in your back. Stretching, swimming,

Pilates or simply walking are different ways that can help relieve physical stress, when pulling an all nighter cramming for a test.

Back pain can usually be a result of or cause neck pain. Neck and shoulder stretches don't require equipment, a facility, or too much of your time. They can be done in the comfort of your dorm room, when you wake up or before you go to sleep.

The "Chin to Chest" stretch can be done sitting or standing. Gently bring your head forward, while bringing your head toward your chest until you feel a stretch in the back of your neck. Hold for 10 seconds, and repeat three times. Another stretch to help with neck pain is the "Ear to Shoulder" stretch. Gently bring your ear to your shoulder until you feel a stretch in the side of your neck. Repeat this exercise to stretch the other side of your neck. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat three times as well.

Speech pathology major, Tamar Benzaquen (14) feels that yoga has helped her relieve back pain after spending hours studying at the library. She says, "I have better posture, and I'm able to study longer because of yoga. It used to be really hard for me to work on a paper for more than an hour at a time, because I kept straining my neck when looking at my laptop". She goes on to say, "I really think that yoga or any type of exercise is the best medicine for back pain".

The "Child's Pose" yoga stretch has been known to improve weak muscles, which can cause back pain. By sitting on your heels, having your knees hip distance apart, stretch your arms forward while exhaling. Hold this stretch for about 45 seconds. This will strengthen your muscles, allowing them to relax, after hours of leaning forward while studying.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
The first Lady Macs Madness in Stern College history will be held on February 11th at Baruch College. Activities will include a Macs Pride photo contest, free t-shirts, cool prizes, and, of course, cheering for our Lady Macs. Hope to see you there!
After hours of hard work and dedication, the Athletics Department has successfully put together a softball team for this spring, and many of your fellow students have courageously committed their time to this new team. Look out for team updates to support your Lady Macs.

Peaks Without The Summit

MEIRA LERNER After three days of "laziness rehabilitation" following finals, my father managed to convince me to accompany him to the gym. Stepping foot in the gym, I was filled with pride in the fact that I had found enough motivation, albeit with my father's help, to work out.

After playing around with a few machines, I decided to complete a Pilates routine on gym mats. I found an open spot beside a woman in her early 30s who was working with a personal trainer. The trainer instructed the woman to hold a plank position while touching each knee to an elbow, one at a time. This weekend-warrior lasted no more than two knee lifts before collapsing. Embarrassed, she apologized to the trainer profusely for her low level of fitness.

While the woman next to me struggled with leg lifts, I was doing pushups with my feet on a stability ball. Needless to say, I felt very good about myself.

Before long, I grew tired of Pilates and relocated to an exercise machine. Working out in my new corner of the gym, I looked around, trying to find something - or someone - that could take my focus off exercising. My eyes happened to rest on a skinny, frail-looking man in his 70s; this man had at least a decade on everyone else in the gym. To my surprise, this old man approached a machine and did fifteen pull-ups.

I was no longer scrutinizing a woman who

struggled to perform exercises of minimal difficulty but engulfed by a world full of men and women performing exercises that I could only dream of achieving. Yet, even in their states of extreme fitness, these gym-regulars spend hours working out in the gym. They are not satisfied by what they have accomplished but rather focus on their potentials.

Every so often, the world of professional sports introduces the story of a team that has - or almost has - accomplished all its goals, a team that has neared perfection.

For example, after winning all eighteen games of the 2007 season but losing in the Super Bowl, the New England Patriots' season was labeled the Almost-Perfect season. Had the Patriots won in the Super Bowl, however, would their season really have reached perfection? Perfection is not a Machiavellian term; winning does not magically transform an error-filled game into a perfect sum.

In fact, there really is no meaning to the word "perfection" in regards to athletics.

A person may have peaks in fitness levels, but there is never a summit, an absolute maximum; we can always run a bit faster, bike a little longer, and do just one more pushup. Exercising often and with drive may not transform us into the next LeBron James or Mia Hamm, but it will always increase our fitness levels, drawing us ever closer to that unreachable summit.

Upcoming Home Game Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
January 20	21	22	23	24
	- Inaugural softball season begins			- 8:00 @ Baruch
27	28	29	30	31
			- 8:00 @ Baruch	
February 3	4	5	6	7
- Eric Sollee Invitational	- 7:30 @ Baruch		- 8:00	
10	11	12	13	14
- EWFC Dual Championships	Lady Macs Madness - 8:00 @ Baruch			

= Basketball
 = Fencing
 = Soccer

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Pants-Pants Revolution: A Skirt Wearer Talks Back

continued from page 1

For women, externally identifying as Jews, to the exasperation and consternation of many, usually comes down to a discussion about pants.

The recently published article "Pants, Pants Revolution," brought up many important points, the author eloquently voicing the internal struggle faced by many traditionally observant women. I include myself unquestionably in their ranks. Seems like just yesterday I was twelve-years-old and smuggling a pair of jeans to my friend's house for a sleepover, desperately not wanting to look different when we took our highly anticipated trip to the mall. I, like the author, am not one to trivialize the pants/no pants dilemma.

To those who mutter disgruntledly about discussing something important for a change, I point out that, respectfully, that while the conversation begins with a pair of cloth cut down the middle, it ends in a deeply complicated exploration of communal expectations, social mores, change within halakhic practice, and Jewish guilt. The article adroitly touches upon all these topics. Her decision to wear pants was a choice to unshackle herself from the communal expectations and 'Jewish guilt' which she finally deemed unfounded.

While I too am a "card-carrying member" of Jewish guilt in many areas, that is not why I wear skirts. And I want to talk about it.

I wear skirts because it is a way for me to proudly and openly identify as an observant Jew. Because I am no Talmudic expert, I make a conscious decision to skirt (no pun intended) the halakhic dimensions of this discussion. I merely point out that while the article operated under the assumption that wearing pants is an arbitrary decision when it comes to keeping the halakhic code, that is not a commonly accepted opinion. The halakhic discussion moves beyond just the question of begged ish—men's clothing, as cited by the article. It also involves certain guidelines of modesty, pants inevitably outlining certain parts of the body more definitively. That said, my discussion of the sources stops here.

What I want to discuss instead is the message of Jewish pride I tacitly communicate by dressing differently. Describing the moment she first wore a pair of jeans, the author writes, "When I wore them, I knew I wouldn't stand out as different from everyone else, as I had for most of my life. I would be like any American girl, wearing her jeans."

For me, that is the very reason I choose to wear a skirt. Why not stand out, if we're proud and confident in what we stand for? By ceding this external method of communal identification, a silent but significant decision is made to associate with a different community. It is a decision that was not lost on the author, as she consciously stepped out of the recognizable Orthodox Jewish girl-mold, and into the typical, comfortable, Indian-style friendly American silhouette.

I do not pass judgment on someone who grows tired with being openly identified as Jewish. But, to all those pants-revolutionaries who have decided to burn their knee-length pencil skirts to the chanting cry of 'freedom,' I merely point out that the decision simultaneously embraces a new level of anonymity. If slipping undetected into the New York hustle seems a tempting prospective, you owe it to yourself, as a Jew, to at least ask why.

I chose differently. I was not yet ready, willing, or wanting to give up that "nod of recognition" when I see another proud member of the tribe. For me, there remains something comforting, and triumphant, about identifying openly with the religion that pulses at the core of my being and daily decisions.

"To me and my community, skirts are a symbol of something more than a fashion decision; they are symbols of Orthodoxy, the mark of belief in a religion that can and will guide the minutest aspects of our day" writes the author. I could not agree more. Some choose to give it up. I, personally, think it too valuable to give up—more valuable, I dare say, than being able to sit comfortably Indian style.

I don't write to criticize, and I don't write to preach. Modesty, as the author beautifully expresses, is a deeply personal form of expression, and should remain so. Nor are pants the determining factor between the righteous and those damned to eternal hell—I gratefully commend the author and her article for taking the first steps towards debunking the feckless stigmas and meaningless judgments that serve only to deepen rifts in a Jewish world already struggling to stay together.

No—truth is, I couldn't care less if the girl next to me is wearing pants or a skirt. And, as the author was pleased to discover, neither do her friends, family members or colleagues.

But, while the author presents her decision to wear pants as a benchmark of independence and bravery, I'd like to share how my decision to wear a skirt communicates the very same thing. When I put on a skirt, perhaps my community and immediate peers will give me the once over and say 'same old.' But, to the rest of the world, the decision provokes questions, curiosity, and often engaging conversations, accounts of which would fill up this entire article (need I say more than amusement parks). To the rest of the world, I look different when I consistently wear a skirt. And, when they ask why, the conversation always begins: because I'm Jewish.

But, even if the rest of the world isn't looking, and doesn't care, I know my code of dress identifies me with a certain community, and a certain way of life, both of which I have chosen, and of both of which I'm proud.

Towards the end of my stay in Germany, an Israeli woman who had moved to Berlin spoke to us on a panel. Asked if she had ever experienced any anti-Semitism, she responded, "No. I don't dress like a Jew. And, luckily, I have blue eyes and light hair. So I have the privilege of being invisible."

Those words settled, with an uncomfortable weight, on my mind. There was something strange, something unnatural, about wanting to hide. Invisibility—a privilege? A reel of stories, images, began to chase through my mind—stories of women who cried with embarrassment when the head coverings they wore with pride were ripped away; stories of men who refused to shave their beards and side-locks, and of men who were marched in endless, jeering lines, phylacteries upon temples and skullcaps clutched in place.

For me, this isn't a question about a piece of cloth, cut down the middle. For me, the choice to wear a skirt is a personal refusal to embrace invisibility.

OPINIONS

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Lavish Weddings: A Response

YITZY MAYEFSKY Tali,

I think there were many valid points made in your article about the exorbitant amount of money people have been spending on weddings in recent years. However, I think that the direction of your article needs a bit of a redirect. Allow me to explain.

"Orthodox weddings, like weddings across the country, have long since passed the point of excess and have approached the realm of absurdity. Orthodox weddings can often carry a price tag of \$30-40,000, with weddings in the \$80,000 not unheard of." "The excess that has become standard in Orthodox weddings..." These are direct quotes from your article. Now, I have had the fortune of attending many Orthodox weddings and I don't think the cost of any of them comes close to approaching the tremendous amount of money that you discuss in your article. That being said, I am not writing to claim that your comments are false. I totally agree that many people "flex their financial muscles" too much when it comes to occasions like weddings and this is a tremendous problem. However, I do not believe that the issue is something that one can say is true for the global, or even national, Orthodox community.

According to a study in Reuters, New York led the nation in 2012 with the highest average cost per wedding at \$65,824, a number that is nearly \$40,000 higher than the US average.

Obviously this study included all kinds of

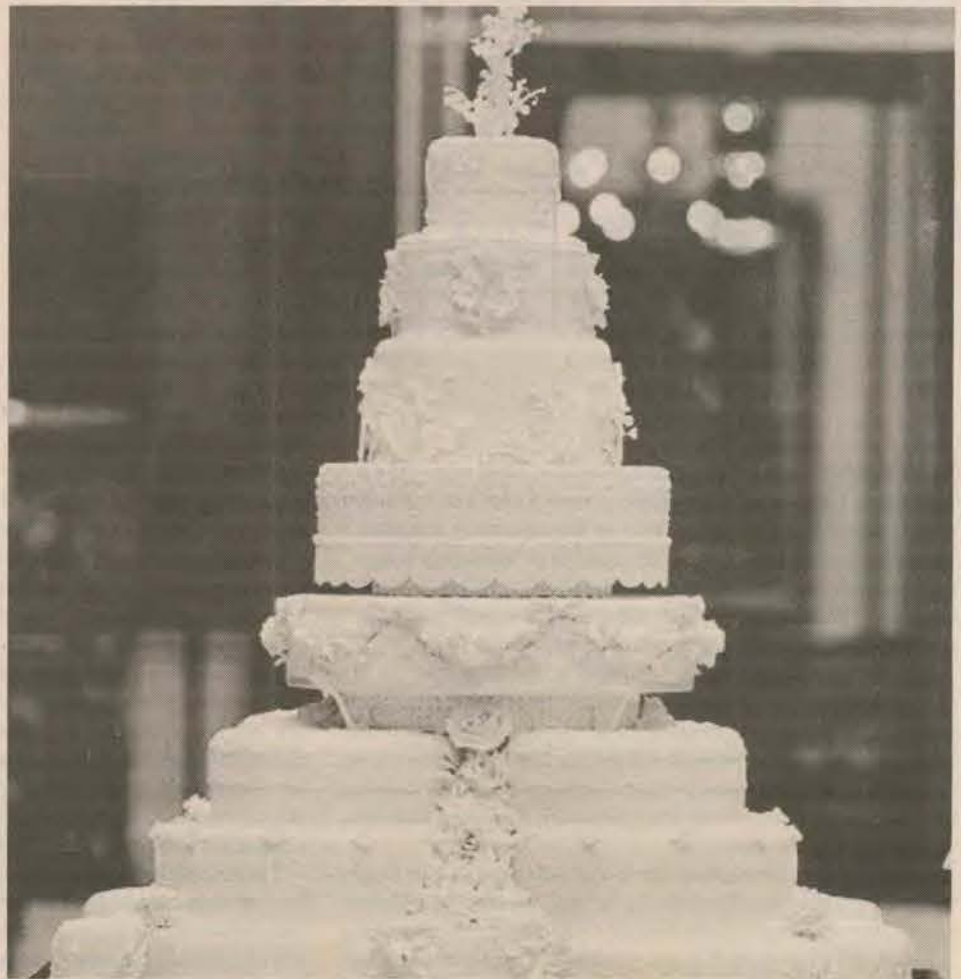
weddings and not just those of Orthodox Jewry, but the demographic is, for all intents and purposes, the same. You see, while everything may be bigger in Texas, everyone knows that everything is more elegant, extravagant, and expensive in New York.

Where have you taken your "experimental sample" from? If the answer is "mainly New York weddings," I don't think that is a fair test sample to say that a fault of Orthodoxy that too much money is spent on a wedding. Based on the article in Reuters, however, it is fair to say that it is a fault of those who live in New York and other big cities. I will admit that Chicago, my home town, is second on the list.

Now that that has been established, I agree that religious people, who view matrimony as something that is sacred, should be more conscientious about where their priorities lie when it comes to planning a wedding. People also need to overcome their egos and stop trying to compete with one another by showing off the weight of their wallet. Jealousy, arrogance, and vanity are all things frowned upon in the Jewish value system.

However, to reiterate, this "keeping up with the Joneses" issue is not limited to, or even primarily infecting, the Orthodox community at large. It is simply a symptom of the rich who live in the big cities and like to show off their wealth, regardless of their religion.

Yitzy Mayefsky



www.weddinginspiration.com

Do Yourself A Favor: Study Arabic

PROFESSOR CHARLES KATRI I believe, as a professor teaching Arabic in Yeshiva University (YU) and in Magen David Yeshiva high school (MDYHS), that there are many reasons for Arabic to be taught both in high school and college. Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and is considered one of the official languages of the United Nations.

The first and main reason is that the “new generation,” children of Arabic speakers who were born here in America, must recognize the language of their ancestors. They must realize that this is the language that their parents and grandparents spoke, read, and wrote for centuries in their native countries like Syria, Lebanon, Egypt. Moreover, some members of the previous generation still speak Arabic in America to this day. It would be exciting for these parents to talk to their children and grandchildren in the same language they used to communicate in the Middle East. Arabic allows the different generation to connect and understand each other.

I remember when I gave the first Arabic lesson in YU the students were eager to learn more to be able to talk to their grandparents in Arabic. When they learned how to use new words and expressions they were very excited. One of the students told me that her grandmother gave her a present when she spoke to her in Arabic. My student was elated that she understood what her grandmother said to her in her mother tongue, and her grandmother was proud that my student was learning to connect to her roots. Arabic, a beautiful language, has the power to connect people to their pasts as well as build new connections in the new world.

In addition, since the students at YU are

familiar with Hebrew, Arabic would be a relatively easy second language for them to learn. Arabic is actually the twin sister of Hebrew since the two languages are derived from the same roots, shorashim, and Semitic source. Although the pronunciation may differ somewhat, there are many words, names, verbs, and prepositions that are almost the same—especially the verb conjugations, which follow the same rules in both languages. The prepositions and some of the symbols, like the vowels and consonants, are also very similar. Similarly, both of them are written from right to left. It would be easy for our community’s members who know Hebrew to learn Arabic quickly because of these similarities.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, students of all majors should learn Arabic for communication purposes. It is estimated that hundreds of millions of people around the world speak, read, and write Arabic. It follows that in order to communicate with this large worldwide population, one would need to learn Arabic. Whether one interacts with these people in their native Arab lands, or if they are immigrants in a new land, learning Arabic would make these interactions easier and more pleasant. When traveling in foreign Arab lands, if one knew Arabic, he would be loved and respected by the people to whom he is speaking because it would display that the foreigner cares about the Arabic culture to the extent that he even took the time to learn the language. The traveler would, in turn, feel like one of the locals: he could read the traffic signs, behave like them, and be able to function in their society.

Professor Katri taught Arabic at Stern College for Women

kharoof حُرُوف	hisan حِصَان	jamal جَمَل	tha'lab ثَعْلَب	tuffaah تَفَّاح	battah بَطَّة	arnab أَرْنَب
soorah صُورَة	shams شَمْس	samak سَمَك	zaraafah زَرَّافَة	reeshah رِيشَة	thahab ذَهَب	deek دَيْك
qaarib قَارِب	faraashah فَرَّاشَة	ghazaal غَزَّال	aynab عِنَب	tharaf ظَرْف	taa-ccrah طَائِرَة	dhiifa'ah ضِفْدَع
yad يَد	ward وَرْد	haram هَرَم	naar نَار	muftah مُفْتاح	leymun لَيْمُون	kitab كِتَاب

wordpress.com

Decency

TALI ADLER Like many Stern students, I spent a year after high school studying in a seminary in Israel. Like most of my peers, I can reel off a list of indelible memories from that year abroad: meandering adventures in Machaneh Yehudah surrounded by a kaleidoscope of unfamiliar scents and sounds; the peaceful loneliness of an impromptu 2AM prayer at the kotel; the paradoxical experience of feeling “at home” in a place not despite, but because it was so different from the place I’d lived my entire life. Most of these memories are good ones, the sort that I swap with friends when we reminisce about our seminary years. They’re pleasant, unchallenging, and the most difficult emotion they’re likely to provoke is wistfulness.

None of this, however, describes the single most provoking and life-changing moment I experienced during that year. It was Yom Yerushalaim, the day that celebrates the conquest of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Religious Zionist community in Israel celebrates the day with a march from the center of downtown Jerusalem to the kotel. The march enters through Jaffa Gate and winds its way through the Arab shuk while the marchers dance and sing and wave signs that celebrate the religious significance of the day. My friends and I were euphoric. The day was the culmination of a year spent studying in a Religious Zionist seminary. It marked a day in history that most of us viewed as miraculous, the beginning, according to some, of the Messianic Era. I felt, in that moment, like I was experiencing the ultimate of what it meant to be a Religious Zionist and a proud, committed 21st century Jew.

The very next moment, all that changed. We were halfway through the Arab shuk when I saw a group of boys around my age, bedecked in crocheted kippot and exposed tzitzit, gathered around a middle-aged Arab man. They stood aggressively close, chanting “Am Yisrael Chai” in thick American accents, hurling the phrases “Kahana tzadak” and “mavet la’aravim” in his direction. The incident lasted only a minute or two; the boys quickly danced on, and I continued with the march, walking instead of dancing. I went to bed early that night while my friends stayed awake to watch the sunrise. I told them that I didn’t feel well, which was true. I didn’t know how to express what I felt in that moment. Years later I can still only use a jumble of vague words like anger, disappointment, and disillusionment.

Unfortunately, I’ve learned in the years since that incidents like that one involving American yeshiva students are not uncommon. I’ve heard stories about Arabs harassed “in town” by rowdy students fueled by too much alcohol, seen the racist posters and bumper stickers that adorn too many seminary dorm rooms and binders. I felt shock and embarrassment when the Wall Street

Journal mistakenly identified a group of young men harassing an Arab woman who’d been evicted from her home in Sheikh Jarrah as Israelis. They boys who appear in that now-internet famous picture are Americans. I know because I recognize several of them from home.

The phenomenon is not a surprising one. Take hundreds of American eighteen year olds, transport them en masse to a foreign country with a complex political situation shot through with religious significance, remove the boundaries and supervision that they are used to, and toss in the added influence of legally obtainable alcohol, and you’re bound to get more than a few who choose racist harassment in the name of religion as their recreational pastime of choice.

What is surprising, however, is that yeshivot and seminaries do so little to curtail the attitudes that underlie such behavior. While principles of respect and sensitivity towards others are taught throughout the year in most institutions, too few make any effort to remind students that these principles apply to people who might instinctively be categorized as “the enemy.”

What’s damning are the subtle ways that many seem to encourage such convenient forgetfulness: several popular seminaries take their yearly trips to Hebron with a guide who encourages them to sing “Am Yisrael Chai” outside of Arab homes while he informs them that eventually all houses in Hebron will be occupied by Jews alone.

Not all yeshivot have failed in this responsibility. Some make efforts to remind their students to be sensitive to others, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. I was overwhelmed when I heard that a rabbi at one prominent Religious Zionist yeshiva takes the time to discuss the ethical ramifications of the yearly pilgrimage to Hebron on Shabbat Chayei Sarah, during which Arab residents are confined to their homes for days at a time. The rabbi asks his students to remember that their presence in the city means that families, many with young children, cannot venture outside for days on end and to consider that fact when deciding whether or not to attend. Stories like this make me hopeful, but the fact remains that there are too few of them.

This issue is not a political one. It should be equally pertinent to readers who believe in the Biblical imperative of Greater Israel and those who yearn for a two-state solution. It is fundamentally religious in nature, a question about the sort of Torah that we believe in and choose to teach.

My claim is simple: that the same religion that teaches us to value Torah and the Land of Israel demands that we behave as decent people. It’s time we demand that the institutions that educate our children to be committed religious Jews and Zionists educate them to be thoughtful, sensitive human beings as well.

Small Matters

ESTI SCHWARTZ At the end of last semester, I had more caf-card money left than I could reasonably spend. I also knew another \$1,500 would be added at the start of the upcoming semester. I have often heard caf-card money referred to as “monopoly money,” and the truth is that outside YU, it’s just about as valuable. Unable to redeem the money anywhere outside Stern’s confining walls, I needed to find a useful way to spend my remaining funds.

I found the solution to my problem a few days later in the Schottenstein caf-store: breakfast bars. Stacks of Nutri-Grain bars were just sitting there, begging to be bought and given to the homeless and hungry. Instead of thinking, hey that seems like an interesting idea, and then moving on with my life, I took fourteen boxes and added them to my other groceries. It seemed so simple, so easy—maybe too easy.

As a child, and throughout my Jewish education, I was taught that changing the world is difficult, but that, despite the difficulty, we should try anyways. I was brought up thinking that something is only truly rewarding if it is a challenge. This attitude always discouraged me—how was I ever supposed to do anything

worthwhile if it was so difficult? However, since I’ve begun giving out breakfast bars, I’ve realized that an act of kindness does not have to be difficult to be worthwhile.

Good is waiting right outside the doors of our dormitories. We are conveniently located in New York City, a city that is not only home to countless shopping and entertainment possibilities, but a huge number of hungry and homeless as well. Before I started this project, I had become so accustomed to seeing the homeless that they had almost begun to blend into the landscape. But they are not made of concrete. They are people, who get hungry throughout the day, just like you or me. For the past few weeks, I have been keeping a box of breakfast bars in my backpack. Instead of ignoring the homeless people sitting on the sidewalk, I take out a breakfast bar and send a small act of kindness their way.

The best part of this project is that it is not only easy for me, but for just about anybody. I do understand that not everybody has extra money on his or her card. I know that out-of-towners probably need to use their caf-card cash until the very end. I also understand that some parents may want their children to use their spare caf-

card dollars on groceries for the family—that is totally reasonable. But, during this upcoming semester, if you do happen to have extra money, as do so many of us, please think of how much you can improve someone else’s life by sparing a thought and a couple extra dollars. And, if you have no spare money, ask an in-towner friend to by the box, and you can walk around distributing the bars.

Truthfully, it doesn’t have to be a breakfast bar, and it doesn’t have to be a homeless person. It just needs to be something easy that will add to someone else’s life. I am doing breakfast bars because they are relatively filling, nutritious, and easy to carry around.

But I don’t only give them to people on the street. Feeding anyone hungry, improving anyone’s day, is important. Everyone feels better when he or she is full. There are so many opportunities to perform small acts of kindness. This upcoming semester, I encourage you, fellow Stern students, to find your one, small way. It doesn’t have to be hard to matter. It’s not your job to change the whole world—but you do have the power to change someone’s world.

Reclaiming The F-Word

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women equal opportunity to participate in the public and private sphere.

Even if there are extremist views within the canon of feminist literature, to dismiss any movement of well informed, sensible, and empowered people by deliberate mischaracterization is immature, imprudent and anti-intellectual.

There are many conceivable reasons for the distrust of feminism. I suspect that underlying the distrust of feminism there is a deeply rooted discomfort with empowered women. Perhaps this stems from a fear that women will assume typically male gender roles in the workforce, and men will have to assume traditional female roles in the home.

Another possible cause of the perceived extremist nature of feminism lies in the public's unfamiliarity with the socio-economic realities women face and the necessary and appropriate solutions offered by moderate feminism. The inaccurate view of feminism is apparent in everyday discussions of feminism. Ask those who claim that "feminism has gone too far"

to give you examples of this radicalization, and they will most likely stumble to provide a meaningful answer or fall back on straw-men arguments.

Because of common misunderstanding of issues and perceived radicalization of the movement, some would like to simply

THE INACCURATE VIEW OF FEMINISM IS APPARENT IN EVERYDAY DISCUSSIONS OF FEMINISM. ASK THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT "FEMINISM HAS GONE TOO FAR" TO GIVE YOU EXAMPLES

dispense with the word feminism and institute a more neutral term. "Why 'feminism'? It is infected with so many ill associations," I hear people say. "Feminists should restart with a new

title." However, cutting off feminism from its important ideological and historical roots not only concedes the argument to those misinformed about the history of feminism, but also disconnects the movement from its essential historical context and its significant achievements. Feminism is not merely a semantic umbrella for those fighting for women's liberation; it has a proud history of change to which we are all indebted.

The forgotten achievements of feminism and the inaccurate views of its goals have distorted feminism into a sad slurry of misconceptions and averse associations. Today's mainstream view of feminism has stymied much needed progress nationally and in the Jewish community. The gender wage-gap still exists in full force and women are far underrepresented on the executive levels of corporations and even government.

Top executives at Jewish Organizations are much more likely to be male. Women lead only 9 of 76 major Jewish organizations recently surveyed by the Forward. Furthermore, these

women earn 62 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts.

Here at YU, only one of President Joel's 15 cabinet members is a woman. YU's Board of Trustees is 80 percent male. While the days of a strung-out gender discrimination case against YU's Albert Einstein Medical School seem long gone, Education News reports that 75 percent of tenured faculty are men and only 31 percent of tenure-track faculty are women. The androcentric Yeshiva seems too obvious to mention, but it is worth

THE FIRST STEP IN CORRECTING THESE DISPARITIES REQUIRES A RECOVERY OF THE PERCEPTION OF FEMINISM.

pointing out the vast gender disparities that separate women's and men's Torah education is essentially discrimination

in disguise. In a culture where textual fluency translates into power, a de jure limitation of women's access to that currency necessarily limits the abilities of aspiring Jewish women.

At YU, in the United States, and around the world, the project of feminism is not yet over. A "blaming the victim," and "you asked for it" attitude against victims of rape is still perceived as an appropriate defense in the United States. International advocacy for the basic rights of women around the world is crucial to liberalizing laws that will unfetter women from the legal status of chattel and protect women from the sex-slave trade.

The first step in correcting these disparities requires a recovery of the perception of feminism. We need to recognize the reasons why many people distrust feminism and we must combat this disregard for women's issues with a pragmatic approach under a rallying cry. Feminism has, and will always mean the striving for female equality and inclusion. It's time to restore the term to its proper place. It's time to reclaim the f-word.

Conservatism And Jewish Values: A Response To «A Case For Liberalism»

ZVI JOSHUA WIESENFELD The last issue of The Observer featured an article by Maddie Tavin arguing that young people in the YU community tend to be politically conservative, and that expressing liberal values has become "increasingly taboo." The article expressed the opinion that college-age Modern Orthodox Jews fail to see the plight of the less fortunate beyond their community's "bubble." The author also expressed "frustration and disappointment" at this alleged phenomenon, which she sees as contrary to the Jewish values of charity, sympathy, and understanding for those in need. I would like to rebut the author's assertions and demonstrate that conservatism is actually very much in line with traditional Jewish thought, that the liberal establishment as it exists today stands in opposition to these values, and that the political spectrum in YU is far more varied and heterogeneous than the author seems to think.

The author begins by claiming "many, especially young adults and teenagers, simply go along with what has become the 'cool' side—mainly, the conservative side." In my experience in YU, this has not been the case. While a strong conservative bloc certainly exists in YU, especially when compared to most other liberal arts schools, it is by no means the de facto voice of the student body. I knew as many liberal Democrats among the student body as I knew conservative Republicans. I also knew Libertarians, Communitarians, Socialists, and even a black-and-white-clad semicha student who identifies as Communist.

In my three years at YU, it seemed that the liberal students were far more outspoken about their beliefs and disdainful of those with whom they disagreed than were their conservative counterparts. In the classroom, I had more than one professor who encouraged, and at times participated in the ridicule and suppression of conservative students and their beliefs during lecture. I have never seen a conservative professor in YU engage in this behavior.

The author alleged that the debate in the Orthodox community is not about social issues or foreign policy, specifically in regards to Israel. I disagree with both points. I will forgo a discussion on gay marriage, as I believe it is too expansive in its complexity for the scope of this piece. I think the abortion debate, however, can be pared down more easily. While it is true that most of us do not align ourselves with as extreme a view on abortion as many religious Catholics do, this is true of the majority of American conservatives. Despite the attempts of the liberal media to portray the right half of the political spectrum as opposing abortion under any circumstance, the debate is not nearly so clear-cut. In general, social conservatives oppose abortion when there is no danger to the mother and the fetus is in an advanced stage of development. In contrast, many liberals maintain the extreme position of supporting partial-birth abortion. In fact, President Obama opposed a bill that prevented the killing of infants mistakenly left alive after an abortion attempt, a view hardly in line with the

Torah's teachings.

It is true that both major candidates in the recent election expressed support for Israel. In fact, the Democratic party remains by and large supportive of the state of Israel. Still, there is a significantly stronger bias against Israel within the Democratic party than there is in the Republican party, and the gap continues to widen. With respect to the conservative stance on economic policies, the author wrote: "However, conflating the decision to stick to the political right with a dedication to Jewish values is what upsets me the most." Conversely, it is this fundamental and widespread misunderstanding of conservative economic values that, perhaps, upsets me the most.

By and large, conservatives are supportive of welfare, unemployment, and other government programs that help those in need. This is in line with Judaism, which strongly promotes charity and helping others. What Judaism does not promote, and has never promoted, is the abuse of these programs to the point where they are on the verge of collapse, and thus cannot be of help to anyone. Nor has Judaism ever condoned a system that allows people who otherwise would not need help be supported by others. I believe Ronald Reagan summed this idea up most succinctly: "Too often the safety net becomes a hammock."

YU is an expensive school, certainly, but so is virtually every other private liberal arts college in the country. Yet, they are by and large comprised of liberal students, while YU has a large population of conservatives. Maybe

this is because so many of us have seen firsthand how our grandparents or great-grandparents came to this country with nothing – not even the ability to speak English – except their desire to build a life for themselves and their families. Most of them made it without the help of government programs geared toward people who "cannot be taught to fish so easily".

The economist Milton Friedman once said, "Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself." This, perhaps, underlies the conservative attitude toward how the economy should be run. In the conservative view, excessive government regulation of private business and excessive taxation of honestly earned money is an attack on freedom. Conservatives cherish the freedom to spend our money as we wish as the backbone of the American economy.

This does not, as the author implies, translate into greediness or lack of empathy for others. In fact, conservatives give significantly more money to charity than do liberals. They also volunteer more of their time and donate more blood. This is despite the fact that, on average, liberals earn more than conservatives. Conservatives recognize that value in giving charity of one's own volition – and not because the government dictated how much each person must give and to whom it will be distributed.

The author also seems to not understand that conservatives do not necessarily oppose universal healthcare; conservatives oppose Obamacare, specifically the clause that

unconstitutionally mandates the adoption of this healthcare program rather than private programs, on pain of paying a steep fine. Conservatives also oppose the clause that exempts the Obama family, the Cabinet, and members of Congress from this mandate.

Furthermore, the White House has conceded that Obama's small business plan is a failure, and that it has done more to hurt small business than help.

A fundamental Jewish value is to stubbornly pursue emeth, the ultimate truth. The liberal establishment of today has demonstrated time and again that they care far more about upholding their "progressive" agenda than pursuing the truth. In 2006, Harvard University forced its president, Lawrence Summers, to resign from his post for saying in a speech that men might have more of an aptitude in math and science than women. In 2010, NPR fired Juan Williams, a Black man who has authored books on civil rights, for stating he reflexively gets nervous on planes when seeing people in Muslim garb. In 2009, the Democrat-controlled Congress barred Lord Christopher Monckton, a climate change skeptic, from testifying alongside Al Gore.

"A Case for Liberalism" describes conservatism as the liberal media wishes it to be – a portrayal that is severely distorted and lacks a fundamental understanding of what most American conservatives stand for. I believe that conservative values are far more in accordance with traditional Judaism – the ideals of truth, justice, charity, and hard work – than contemporary liberal values.

Silver Linings Playbook: A Review

MICHAL KAPLAN NADEL Most movies are considered great because of their special effects, over the top romantic gestures, or other departures from reality. "Silver Linings Playbook" is great in an opposite way- by its raw and accurate portrayal of real life and life people.

"Silver Linings Playbook" opens with main character Pat Solitano (Bradley Cooper) being picked up by his mom and moving back into his parent's home after an 8 month stint in a mental institution. He suffers from bipolar disorder and a particular violent episode landed him in the institution and caused him to lose his job and most importantly, his wife. Still in love with her, he is desperate to win her back, despite the restraining order she took out against him. As Pat transitions back into his "normal" life, he must figure out how to negotiate life with his mental illness, and he is surrounded by family and friends who play a crucial

role in the navigation of this journey.

What brings this movie to life though is not the storyline, but rather the characters who take the storyline and run with it, creating a movie that is a whirlwind of emotions. Pat himself is a volatile, unstable character, who can be found jogging on the streets wearing a garbage bag or waking his parents with an outburst about a Hemingway novel at 4 am. His father, Pat Sr. (Robert De Niro) is a superstitious Philadelphia Eagles Fan with OCD tendencies whose primary concern about his son is whether he is watching the Eagles games. Pat's best friend, Ronnie (John Ortiz) struggles with a dominating wife in a marriage that is sucking the life out of him. But the most poignant and

captivating character is certainly Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence), who is a recent widow who is broken from the death of her husband yet is quirky, passionate, and holds her own against anyone who criticizes her. Pat and Tiffany are both fiercely determined

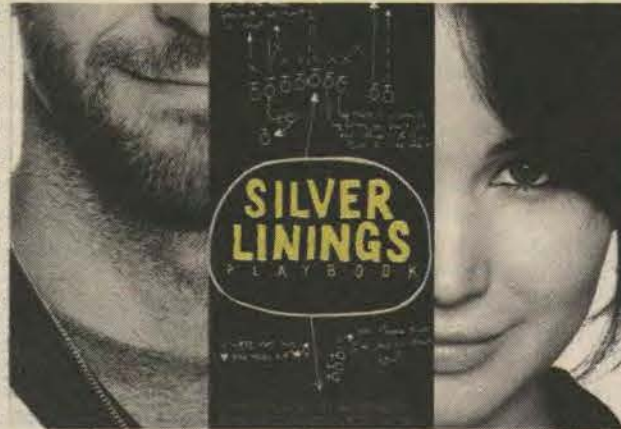
this, forming an instant and explosive friendship. This friendship leads them to enter a dance competition, and the time they spend rehearsing brings them closer to each other and further away from their emotional and mental instabilities.

The characters of "Silver Linings Playbook", which is based on the book by Matthew Quick and directed by David O. Russell, are all complex and multi-dimensional. They each have their issues they are dealing with, yet they are all determined to find laughter and happiness in their lives. Each character is unapologetically true to themselves- they laugh, shout, and cry whenever they feel like it. This leads to a roller coaster of emotions that draws in the viewer to take that ride

with them. And while there is the potential for the movie to take a turn towards the dark and depressing, the characters and thus the viewers instead find the humor in the missteps of life and the good qualities in people that exist beneath the rough exterior.

"Silver Linings Playbook" works because the writer and director have taken characters and topics that are difficult and created a story that is at times humorous, at times emotional, and at times uplifting. What results is a very raw and real portrayal of life. There are no huge romantic gestures, and no moment of epiphany where life suddenly all makes sense.

What "Playbook" makes clear is precisely that life usually does not make sense- it can be difficult, painful, and frustrating. But its worth it to hang in there because as Pat's mantra dictates, "if you do everything you can and you stay positive you have a shot at a silver lining".



bichficks.com

The Hour That Went Right

JOANNA ROSS TASH Recounting the events of one of America's most celebrated military defeats of the past decade is no easy feat. In director Kathryn Bigelow's Zero Dark Thirty, Maya, a C.I.A investigator played by the Jessica Chastain, works tirelessly towards a singular goal: to take down America's number one enemy. The opening scene begins where it all began, 9/11, with black screen and phone calls heard from the burning building. The plot moves to the years following that dark day, to the difficult pursuit of the Osama Bin Ladin. Maya, first seen as a junior officer following Dan played by, Jason Clarke, through violent interrogation scenes in Pakistan. While interrogating a detainee named Ammar, revealed



boingboing.net

information about a man named Abu Ahmed, a possible courier to Bin Ladin, is uncovered.

Through Maya's persistence and diligence to the case, she postulates that Bin Ladin cannot communicate with Al Qaeda through any kind of technological means, therefore he must use a courier system. Maya, obsessed, undistracted with any kind of personal life, uses the lead of Abu Ahmed to hunting down Bin Ladin. Even when new information tells upper officials that this man died in 2001, Maya concludes that this dead man is his brother, not Abu Ahmed. She jumps through hoops, but eventually is able to identify this man, following him to a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The months following, the compound undergoes heavy surveillance. It comes down to a decision. Some officials state that there is a 60% chance that Bin Ladin is there. Maya assesses confidently that she is 100% sure Bin Ladin lives in Abbottabad.

On May 2, 2011, a team of Naval SEALs are sent to the compound. Twenty-five minutes of stellar cinematography ensue, displaying one pilot's less than easy landing, the fighting inside the compound, and the eventual killing of Osama Bin Ladin.

The film focuses on the great accomplishment of the few. Maya's co-analyst Jessica, played by Jennifer Ehle, states, "Here's to the big breaks, and the little people that make 'em happen." This line perfectly sums up the intention of the film. Just weeks before I saw Zero Dark Thirty I was privileged to see the documentary Killing Bin Laden. The documentary does a stellar job of fleshing out the details of the whole story, allowing the audience to comprehend the magnitude and risks involved in carrying out the operation.

The Hollywood film does not have the time nor the focus to fully explain details that the documentary is able to provide. Both films demonstrate the challenges of the situation. While the documentary provides details of the decision, the aircraft, and the many people involved, Zero Dark Thirty focuses on the experience of one woman's determination and conviction in finding Bin Ladin. Most Americans only know the result of the operation, and are unaware of the background of the case.

By seeing the documentary first, I was able to fill in the gaps of the story missing from the film. I noticed my mind filling in some of the details missing from the film in order to explain certain

aspects shown in the film. I suggest one should see both films.

Last week, Jessica Chastain won Best Actress at the Golden Globes for her portrayal of Maya. In her acceptance speech Chastain thanks and addresses director Bigelow for creating, "... powerful, fearless women that allow their expert work to stand before them. You've said that film making for you is not about breaking gender roles, but when you make a film that allows your character to disobey the conventions of hollywood you've done more for women in cinema than you take credit for."

Zero Dark Thirty serves as a congratulatory nod to women and men that fought for years to take down a powerful enemy. It may surprise many out there that women played an important role in the research and execution of this mission. While the documentary provides the solid details of the case, Zero Dark Thirty shows the perseverance of the little people behind the scene, working to accomplish something larger than themselves.

Link to watch the documentary online:
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xivopi_killing-bin-laden-documentary_shortfilms#.UPiIjHGSou

Walking Tours: The Pseudo-Hipster Guide To Williamsburg

AIMEE RUBENSTEEN Brooklyn is a largely underrated - and underexplored - territory for Manhattanites; however, the borough is truly something to be thankful for, and should be travelled.

Start your morning in Williamsburg's quaint coffee shop, Bakeri, where waiters will serve you in fantastic blue jumpsuits (available for purchase if you're feeling hipster enough). The lattes are served in assorted mugs with a cube of brown sugar to spruce up your mood.



Bakeribrooklyn.com

Bakeri is located at 150 WYTHE AVENUE.



Bakeribrooklyn.com

Then head to Buffalo Exchange, where you can actually sell your own clothes, swap them for new ones, or just buy some great attire for any occasion. The prices are pretty reasonable, even if you aren't interested in flipping labels.

Buffalo Exchange is near 504 Driggs Avenue. Make sure to go to the junk store next door to Buffalo Exchange. They have anything and everything; my experience was scavenging through trendy bridesmaid dresses, adorable miniature corks, thousands of old photographs,



Buffalo Exchange

and an incredible velvet blazer.

Then simply explore! I recommend finding the nearby flower shop and garden or walking toward the water and enjoying the famous skyline from across the water.

Before you leave, head to the make-your-own-jewelry shop. Brooklyn Charm Shop has metal,

plastic, ceramic, and feather charms. They also have crazy-cool handmade jewelry made by the staff.

Brooklyn Charm Shop is located at 145 Bedford Avenue.



shopikon.com

Jump back on the train and admit that as much as you love Williamsburg, you could never get enough of Manhattan. Stay tuned for more tours around the Brooklyn area!