



The Yeshiva University

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New Faces in the Faculty of Stern College and Sy Syms

Sara Olson This fall, thirty new professors joined the ranks of Yeshiva University's faculty, bringing with them years of teaching experience and diverse professional and educational backgrounds. Around a dozen of the thirty will or have begun teaching at Stern College for Women and Sy Syms School of Business.

Joining the faculty of Sy Syms is Dr. Henry Huang, a prolific researcher in the interdisciplinary field of accounting, finance, and law. "I was motivated [to join the YU faculty] mainly by the people and the location," said Huang. "We have strong and fair-minded leaders, outstanding faculty members, and dedicated students in YU. With New York City being the heart of the global capital markets, it is an ideal place for researchers like me."

Dr. Huang's choice of career path combines several of his interests. "The importance of accounting was highlighted back in 2001 when a series of accounting scandals broke out, which led to the Sarbanes Oxley Act," he explained. "With my legal background, I was intrigued by how the U.S. legal system (including both public enforcement and private litigation) can punish the perpetrators and prevent such costly scandals."

Having held positions at the University of Houston, Butler University, and Prairie View A&M University, Huang brings years of experience to the business classroom. "My goals are to help students reach their professional goals," said Huang. "I hope my class will lead to improvements in students' analytic skills, breadth and depth of knowledge, and entrepreneurial skills."

To some students at the business school, Dr. Galit Ben-Joseph's name is perhaps a familiar one. Previously of the University of Berkeley, she had been an adjunct at YU for three years while working on her doctorate. She has now been hired full time, which is, as she put it, "a dream come true."

"[When I first came to YU] I was introduced to the Dean, and he referred me to the Management Chair," said Ben-Joseph. "I begged him [The Management Chair] to hire me as I

fell in love with YU in about ten seconds flat. It felt like home, like I belonged here."

Ben-Joseph's area of expertise is investment management, a career choice she has found very fulfilling. "I love the markets and trading. I love helping people and creating a path for them to be wealthy."

A particularly significant new hire is the new occupant of the Mel Harris Chair of Risk and Insurance at Sy Syms, Dr. Archishman Chakraborty. A graduate of Princeton University, Chakraborty gives credit to his past for influencing his career in economics and finance. "I come from a family of academics and consequently teaching and research were both highly valued within my family. I am sure my career choice had something to do with this. On top of it, during my education in India and later in the U.S., I was fortunate enough to be taught by some great minds who were also great teachers."

Chakraborty has become a successful teacher himself, having held positions at Baruch College CUNY in New York City and at York University in Toronto. "This year I will be teaching an advanced course in corporate finance and another course for the honors students. I have talked to some very bright students since I joined this summer and I look forward to meeting many more. In addition to teaching and departmental activities at Syms, I will be engaged in my usual pursuit, research. I am currently thinking about media bias and its role in shaping the outcome of democracies."

"It's an intellectually exciting time to be here [at YU]," he concluded.

Also in the field of economics, though teaching at Stern College and Yeshiva College, is Dr. Jasmina Spasojevic, previously of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. "I like economics because it is a discipline that offers many different career choices and career paths from academia to starting your own business," said Spasojevic. "After college, I wanted to pursue a Ph.D. in the U.S.; once I received my degree, I continued to teach in a college environment."

Spasojevic is teaching courses in macroeconomics and health economics, the latter being a topic of particular interest to her in her own research. "My students are curious [about the subject]," she continued. "I can see that

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Photo by Yeshiva University



The Passing of One of the Greatest Rabbis of Our Generation: Maran HaRav Ovadia Yosef

Elana Kook October 7, 2013 seemed like just an average Monday morning at SCW. Girls rushed to class, waited in line for coffee, and prepared for another regular school day. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, a reported 800,000 Jews crowded the streets to mourn the loss of one of the most prominent Rabbinical visionaries of our time. Although most known for his Halachik authority in the Sephardic community, Rav Yosef was also a political activist and humanitarian. Maran HaRav Ovadia Yosef was ninety-three years old when he passed away this past month.

The revered leader of Sephardic Jewry, Rav Yosef was born in Bagdad, Iraq in 1920, and moved with his family to Jerusalem four years later. At age 20, he received rabbinical ordination from Yeshiva Porat Yosef in the Old City of Jerusalem. He then spent time in Cairo, Egypt as the head of the Beit Din before returning to Israel to serve in the Beit Din of Petach Tikvah. With his extensive background in Halacha, Rav Yosef soon published several Seforim (Judaic works), such as Chazon Ovadia, a commentary on Pirkei Avot and on select parts of the Talmud, and a ten-volume



compilation of responsa titled Yabia Omer.

In 1954, Rav Yosef founded Yeshivat Ohr HaTorah, the first of the many Yeshivot that he established in his lifetime. Through his Yeshivot, R' Yosef sought to promote the Sephardic method of Torah study and to spark the emergence of a new generation of leaders which would continue his legacy of encouraging the Sephardic community to take pride in its own culture and rituals.

Between the years 1958 and 1965, Rav Yosef served as the Dayan, rabbinical judge, of the Beit Din of Jerusalem. He was later elected to the Supreme Rabbinical Court of Appeals in Jerusalem, and served both as the Chief Sephardic

Rabbi in Tel-Aviv and the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel.

For Rav Yosef, the plight of Sephardic Jews in Israel constituted one of the greatest unacknowledged challenges of the State. Indeed, the difficulties faced by Sephardim upon migrating to Israel were manifold; employment was hard to find and Ashkenazim dominated the social landscape. Financially

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Education in the Age of iPhones: Vice Provost Dr. Goldberg's Vision

Shalva Ginsparg While the search for the new provost and successor to current Provost Dr. Morton Lowengrub continues, Dr. Scott Goldberg was appointed Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning this summer. The position, which is brand new, seems an appropriate fit for Dr. Goldberg, who has many innovative ideas about the nature of education in the 21st century. As part of his role as Vice Provost, Dr. Goldberg is working closely with Dean Bacon to improve the educational experiences at Stern, often through a dynamic use of technology.

Before becoming Vice Provost, Dr. Goldberg served as the inaugural director of Yeshiva University's Institute for University-School Partnership, a resource which offers continuing education and support for Jewish Day Schools. Dr. Goldberg also previously taught at Stern and Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, and directed the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Division of Doctoral Studies. In his own research, Dr. Goldberg has focused on how students learn and the factors that influence learning, such as spiritual values and social media.

In his new role as Vice Provost, Dr. Goldberg is particularly interested in using technology to enhance the student learning at Stern College. "The space between technology and pedagogy has become almost nil," he remarked.

Though conscious of technology's power to distract, Dr. Goldberg believes that today's educators need to learn

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Scholarship, Censorship, and Sex: A Necessary Conversation

Editor-in-Chief
Hannah Dreyfus

Managing Editor
Yael Farzan

Layout
ST Schwartz

Web
Shira Hirschfeld

Business Manager
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News
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Elana Raskas

Science & Technology
Jackie Benayoun

Photography
Irit Greenboim

Hannah Dreyfus The tentative *Observer* headline read: "Breaking News: Stern Student Loses Scholarship over Sex Survey." The story had all the elements necessary to go viral: sex, censorship, and one unfortunate student caught in between. It was bound to garner attention among the Yeshiva University community and beyond. But the threats were rescinded. The scholarship was reinstated. And the draft of the *Observer* article was never published.

Dasha Sominski, Stern '14, posted a survey on Facebook on Monday, September 16th. The anonymous survey, entitled "YU Sex Ed and Questions of Acceptable Sexual Promiscuity," was intended to collect research for a Journalism course Sominski was taking. The survey posed questions about how students define sex and relate to the Orthodox community's stringent restrictions. The survey also included questions about sexual safety. Within twenty-four hours of posting the survey, the University Dean of Students contacted Sominski via email and phone informing her that her housing scholarship had been revoked. It appeared that the scholarship was intended for model Stern students, and Sominski no longer fit the description.

The Yeshiva University community found out about the administrative decision when Sominski posted about it on her Facebook wall. There was an outpouring of support for Sominski and an overwhelming sentiment of indignation aimed at the administrative decision. Even in its early stages, the incident fanned a spirit of defiance among the student body.

Sominski's story ended with an apology note to the university and the removal of the survey. "I have only to say that my intentions were genuine," wrote Sominski. "I wasn't looking to make an extravagant statement, rather, my status and the attached survey were intended as a beginning of an exploration of patterns ultimately seeking to assist my fellow students (as well as myself)

in establishing their personal safety and, perhaps additionally, gaining the ability to consistently make autonomous and educated decisions in the context of sexual affairs."

It is important to note that Stern does offer a course on Human Sexuality. The course, taught by Dr. DiLorenzo, is offered in the Psychology department during the spring semester. However, the course requires two psychology prerequisites, Lifespan and Introduction to Psychology, and is not offered to non-Psychology students as an elective.

This incident, and the significant backlash that was thankfully sidestepped, does not ameliorate the problem: sex needs to be talked about in schools and universities, openly and honestly. It is a problem that conversations of this nature are punished instead of being addressed. It is a problem that attempts to open up the conversation are treated as transgressions: It is a problem that the conversation is repeatedly condemned as inappropriate and sensationalistic. As long as the conversation about sex is treated as taboo, the topic will remain so.

This editorial is not meant to endorse the survey that was posted. There is substantial room to argue that the survey was inappropriate, misplaced, and in deep conflict with what Yeshiva University would like to promote as model behavior. More importantly, the survey was not administered in a context or fashion that promoted Sominski's aforementioned goals. A survey with the intention to start a productive conversation and educate students about sexual health and practices should not have been unceremoniously disseminated on Facebook. Rather, Sominski could have submitted her survey to the YU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review. It is the IRB's job to monitor and assist important research taking place on campus. In fact, Dr. DiLorenzo and Dr. Freyberg, another professor in the Psychology department, recently conducted a survey about sexual health practices among Stern women.

Unlike Sominski's survey, they focused exclusively on sexual health instead of on sexual practice. The survey found that there is a strong correlation between knowledge about sex and following sex-related health recommendations.

This research simply bolsters the original intentions behind Sominski's project: to promote a healthy sex-consciousness on campus. While Sominski's methodology was flawed, her goal was directly on target.

There is a conversation that needs to be started. It is time for Jewish day schools and high schools to start providing their students with mandatory sexual education courses. There is also clearly a need at Yeshiva University to create a forum to discuss these issues as well. One need only Google 'the importance of sex education' to find over a dozen academic articles supporting this notion. If and when we foster ignorance, we reap suspicion, fear and shame.

To those who worry that the conversation will breed promiscuity, education breeds nothing but educated choices. Sex education will neither encourage, nor prevent, premarital sex. Education about safe sex should be provided to students, *regardless* of religious views.

However, when an unofficial survey meant only to collect data garners such a significant response, a statement is being made. That statement, to those who do not have the time or patience for subtlety and finagling, is quite blunt: talking about sex is bad. Students who talk openly and candidly about sex deserve condemnation.

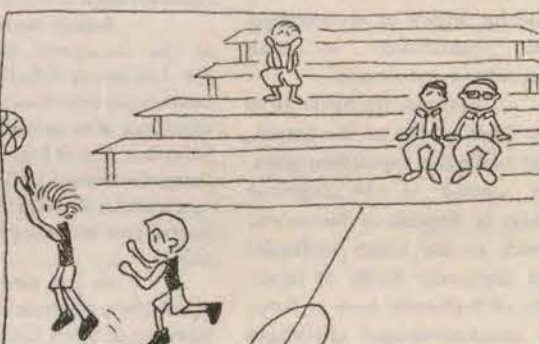
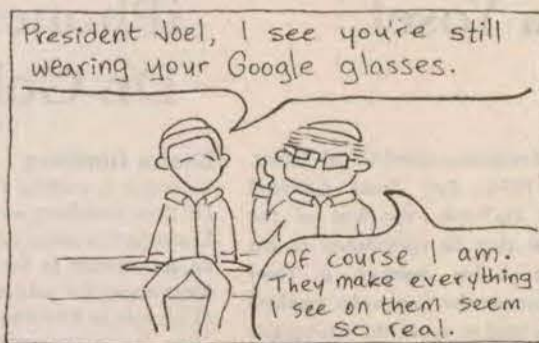
This is a message that neither advances nor accurately reflects the observant Jewish community's attitude towards sex. It is time that our educational institutions take the necessary steps towards debunking this negative, inaccurate and unfortunately pervasive misconception. If not, brewing frustrations and the uncomfortably widening gap between administration and students will only continue to grow.

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Cartoon by Alan Avitan and Rachel Miriam Rosenfeld

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Education in the Age of iPhones: Vice Provost Dr. Goldberg's Vision

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how to leverage technology while still maintaining a student-centered approach to education. "If a teacher lectures for two hours, and the same information could be heard or read in another forum, one has to question whether the knowledge should be conveyed in the lecture. Lecture might be the best format, but perhaps the lecture could be viewed online in smaller portions, allowing students to interact more with each other and the expert faculty member during class."

An example of Dr. Goldberg's unique educational vision is his efforts to integrate online courses into the Stern College curriculum. He is currently working closely with Dean Bacon to determine the role online courses could



play in developing the Computer Science department, and is supporting faculty developing an online Hebrew language lab for Stern College. A total of 45 online or blended (partly online and partly offline) courses are included in the undergraduate and graduate academic schedule this year, and Sy Syms is experimenting with a new classroom model with less "seat time" and more time spent in "a blended online environment."

This emphasis on online and blended courses is intended to facilitate the highest quality of student learning. "The methods of 'blended' learning are leading to great student outcomes when done well," Dr. Goldberg noted. "Courses are very much contingent on student-teacher interaction and are directly an outgrowth of what our students need. Whether through technology or other advancements, our goal is to support and improve faculty teaching and student learning."

Dr. Goldberg also hopes to achieve advances in student learning by bridging the distance between the two campuses

NEWS

**SHALVA GINSPARG
ADENA KLEINER
NEWS@YUOBSERVER.COM**

through online/blended courses. He is also exploring how to bring current YU programs and new ones to the global market.

Dr. Goldberg brings to his new position as Vice Provost an exciting educational vision and a commitment to improving the learning experience at Stern College. Students can learn more about his creative approaches to education in a TED-like talk he recently gave on the future of education— http://elitalks.org/yeah_but_what_if_future_education — and at the Al Pi Darko Shabbaton, October 25-26th, where he will be appearing as a guest lecturer.

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I will have many interesting discussions with them. With the great resources, faculty, and students at Yeshiva University, I am looking forward to a wonderful environment to study, learn, and work in."

After bidding farewell to several English department faculty members last spring, the department's national search roped Dr. Seamus O'Malley, a Jersey City native with a PhD in Modern British Literature from CUNY. "Growing up in the New York area, I had always heard of Yeshiva," said O'Malley, "so when I saw the opportunity to join a highly competitive school I did not hesitate."

O'Malley has previously held positions at Hunter College and NYU. In both teaching posts, as well as here at Stern College, he brings to his students a sincere passion for English literature. "I love English literature because of the way it provides so many different experiences from my own," said O'Malley. "My mind can read across time and space just through language, and that's very exciting."

"My classroom goal," he continued, "is to understand the strengths and needs of my students. I always run my classes via discussion so I can get to know everybody."

In addition to teaching Survey of British literature, English composition, and the freshman honors seminar, O'Malley continues to further his academic pursuits. "I'm finishing a book and have a June deadline. Students should take solace that professors deal with looming deadlines as well!" he quipped.

The Mathematic Sciences department welcomes Dr. Marian Gidea, who will be teaching multi-variable calculus and probability theory at Stern College as well as courses uptown. "[Mathematics is] my calling," said Gidea. "I found in the world of mathematics a marvelous combination of precision and creativity, of abstract thinking and concrete applications."

Dr. Gidea's educational philosophy combines the classroom and outside academic pursuits. "I have recently started to study the mathematics of climate change, and I would like to introduce students to this field," he said. "I am also pursuing research in some other exciting areas, including mathematical physics, celestial mechanics, mathematical biology, and I would also like to involve students in related projects. I am interested, of course, in pursuing collaborations with other faculty members," he added.

Gidea has held positions at Loyola University of Chicago, Northwestern University in Evanston, and Northeastern Illinois University; he now adds Yeshiva University to his extensive teaching career.

"Yeshiva University has an outstanding tradition in mathematics and sciences, with numerous personalities that graduated from its programs or served as their faculty," said Gidea. "In particular, the PhD program in Mathematics was one of

the strongest in the U.S. some decades ago. I feel very honored and humbled to [join the faculty of] a university with such an impressive academic profile. I also feel very excited to give my best contribution to the development and growth of the recently re-opened PhD program in mathematics."

Students in both the business school and in SCW have been extremely welcoming towards the new faculty members and look forward to the new opportunities they provide both inside and outside the classroom.

Photo by Yeshiva University



Pondering the Political: The Straus Center Undergraduate Fellowship

Adena Kleiner This fall, nineteen students from Yeshiva College, Stern College for Women, and the Syms School of Business were accepted into the newest project of the Zahava and Moshe Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, The Straus Center Undergraduate Fellowship. Straus Center director, Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik, leads the fellowship, and Assistant Director, Dr. Stu Halpern, coordinates it.

The fellowship is a multi-faceted program with an extensive and rich list of renowned scholars who are participating in its various programs. The first aspect of the fellowship consists of private monthly gatherings with authors of prominent new books. Not only is this an opportunity for the fellows to learn and engage in these new works, but it is a unique opportunity for them to meet and converse with some of the young and most gifted political thinkers of the current generation. Most recently, the fellows heard from former Deputy Secretary of United States Department of Health and Human Services, Tevi Troy, regarding his new book, *What Jefferson Read, Ike Watched, and Obama Tweeted: 200 Years of Popular Culture in the White House*, and his experiences as Orthodox Jew in the White House. Later this year, the fellows will meet with American political analyst and journalist, Yuval Levin, to discuss his new book, *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Left and Right*.

The next component of the fellowship involves the fellows learning with Rabbi Soloveichik and Straus Center Resident Scholar, Professor Matthew Holbreich, an expert on Tocqueville. Lastly, the fellows will be invited to smaller gatherings before larger public Straus Center events. There, they will meet and learn with the various public figures the Straus Center hosts. Such speakers include United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and Douglas J. Feith, the former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy for United States President George W. Bush. All events will be paired with preparatory and follow-up sessions.

In an interview with *The Observer*, Rabbi Soloveichik explained the purpose of the fellowship within the context of the



greater mission of the Straus Center. "The goal of the Straus Center is to help create a student body which is even more engaged in the world of ideas, engaged as Americans and as Jews. We are meant to be a nation as a part of the world." He continued, "With this fellowship, the goal is more specific to expose the students to important new works, and political thinkers commenting on world affairs, and to connect that to their identities as Jews, the body of Jewish wisdom, as well as some of the classical works of political thought, specifically Tocqueville's commentary on America."

Many of the fellows have participated in previous Straus Center classes and events with Rabbi Soloveichik. Tali Ausbel, SCW '15, explained that she applied to the fellowship "because I really enjoyed Clubburah with Rabbi Soloveichik as well as other Straus Center events. I love the thinking and discussions involved which typify Torah u'Maddah. The fellowship is a great way to be part of an intellectual cohort that is focused on Judaism,

American society and democracy and the interplay between the two."

Many of the fellows have expressed similar sentiments and are extremely enthusiastic and impressed with the program. Adam Rosenberg, SSB '15, commented, "While I have studied American politics extensively throughout my life, the Straus Fellowship has taken my understanding to a whole new level. This program, which has provided me and my colleagues with the special opportunity to delve into the underpinnings and philosophies that have shaped this nation over the past two hundred plus years, has likewise taught me how those principles blend in with an even more venerable set of even statutes: those of Jewish Law. As observant Jews, it is imperative that we understand the moral code of our religion, and as a citizen of society, it is our duty to immerse myself in our country and her laws. I look forward to many more intellectual discussions, scholarly mentorship, and most importantly, synthesizing the Torah aspect of my life with its Maddah counterpart."

Most of the fellowship events are held at Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. Founded in 1654, it was the first Jewish congregation established in North America. Rabbi Soloveichik currently serves as the congregation's rabbi, and it is no coincidence that the events are held in such a historic building. Rabbi Soloveichik explained, "The fellowship is one of the many ways in which my work at the Synagogue and in the Straus Center dovetail directly. The Synagogue embodies the history of Jews in America and believes in the deep link between Judaism and the American idea. One cannot help but feel this when you walk through the walls, especially the walls of the small synagogue. So to be doing a Straus Center initiative about Jews in America and to have events in the Synagogue is an incredible synthesis of two parts of my life."

As of now, there are no concrete answers regarding the future of the program. However, the Straus Center is delighted by the success of the fellowship thus far, and is extremely hopeful about its growth.

The Passing of One of the Greatest Rabbis of Our Generation: Maran HaRav Ovadia Yosef



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disempowered, socially marginalized, and ashamed of their customs, many Sephardim abandoned religious observance. In response, Rav Yosef reinvigorated the Sephardic community and encouraged Sephardim to take pride in their unique religious practices. He is credited with starting the outreach movement, *Lehachzir Atara Leyoshna*, literally "to return the crown to its former glory," which was responsible for spreading awareness about lost Sephardic practices and restoring lost inspiration to Jews all over the world. In addition, Rav Yosef established the Shas party

in order to further advocate for Sephardic Jews in Israel.

Rav Yosef is also known for several groundbreaking halachik decisions. For example, after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Rav Yosef released women from their halachik status as *Agunot* if their husbands did not return from war on the basis of partial testimony or evidence of the soldier's death. In another famous ruling opposed by some members of the Ashkenazic Hareidi rabbinat, R' Yosef deemed it permissible to eat produce on the sabbatical year if the land had been symbolically sold to a non-Jew, otherwise known as the *heter mechira*. Other notable halachik rulings dealt with women's hair covering, the recitation of Hallel on Yom Ha'atzmaut, and co-ed

education.

Rav Yosef's health began to decline after he suffered a stroke in January of 2013, and he had been in the hospital for two weeks prior to his passing. When his death was announced from the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital early Monday morning, police did anticipate a large attendance at the funeral, but, the number of people that crowded the streets was unprecedented: police say it was the largest funeral in Israel's history.

Leaders of the State of Israel have expressed their condolences and admiration for Rav Yosef. "The Jewish people have lost one of the wisest men of this generation... Rabbi Ovadia was a giant in Torah and Jewish law and a teacher for tens of thousands," commented Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Additionally, President Shimon Peres, who had been by Rav Yosef's side not long before he passed, noted, "When I pressed his hand, I felt I was touching history...and when I kissed his head, it was as though I kissed the very greatness of Israel."

The immense sense of loss in the wake of Rav Yosef's passing continues to reverberate around the globe and sweep across the religious and political spectrum. At Stern College, Roshei Yeshiva and students alike struggle to absorb the enormity of the news. In a lecture given at Stern College the night of Rav Yosef's passing, Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Mordechai Willig, who directly corresponded with Rav Yosef about the status of women left as *Agunot* in the aftermath of September 11th, described his personal feelings of loss. He also stressed the warmth Rav Yosef expressed towards the Ashkenazic community, whom Rav Yosef often referred to as "acheinu ha'ashkenazim" – our brothers, the Ashkenazim.

SCW student and president of Stern's Sephardi club, Moran Yazdani, reflects on the impact Rav Ovadia Yosef had on the Sephardic community: "Hacham Ovadia Yosef can be characterized by his great knowledge of Torah and the legacy he left to the Sephardic Jews... From strongly observant to less affiliated Jews, people in the Sephardic community were truly influenced by his outstanding way of validating the Sephardic tradition."

Yeshiva University's GPATS Program Continues to Flourish

Elana Kook If you ever wander into the Stern Beit Midrash, you may find yourself pondering a few questions: who are these women fervently arguing over a Tosfot in Masechet Ketubot? Why are they always in Stern learning Torah every day? And, what motivates these women to inhabit the Beit Midrash more than the average SCW student?

The answer is that these ambitious women are participating in Yeshiva University's M.A. Program in Biblical and Talmudic Interpretation at Stern College for Women, previously known as GPATS. The program serves as a juncture for post-B.A. women who exhibit strong ambition and textual skills in Talmud and Halacha, and provides them with an opportunity to hone their skills in a two-year rigorous academic graduate program.

The program is the first of its kind, and is unique in that it provides a multi-faceted curriculum, which includes in-depth study of Halacha and Talmud. Furthermore, as a part of the completion of their M.A., participants in the program are required to take classes at the Bernard Revel School of Jewish Studies, which fulfills the biblical component of the program. Since its origin, the program has taken significant strides, both in size and in promoting professional opportunities and learning initiatives for the participants beyond the program.

Recently, the program has developed a B.A.-M.A. program which allows for qualified B.A. students in Stern to begin the program starting their senior year. Although these women currently participate as part-time students in the program, many plan to continue as full-time students once they graduate. This year there are 18 students in the program, 13 of whom are full-time participants. However, despite the growth in size, the program has not increased the number of stipends given to participants. At this time, students who are still considered undergraduates in SCW are not granted stipends.

In addition to the growth in size, the program now offers a stronger co-curricular element that is sponsored by the CJF. Once a week, different Jewish professionals speak with the students about leadership positions within their respective fields. That this year's lecture theme is focused on pedagogy is no surprise, as many of the participants plan on using their studies to become teachers and leaders within the Jewish community. So far this year, Rabbi JJ Shachter spoke about using research tools

to develop Shiurim, and Chayyim Angel spoke about teaching Tanach. Additionally, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Dean of the CJF, spoke to the participants about the M.A. program's goals, issues, and plans for the future.

Rachel Weber Leshaw, a first-year participant in the program and an SCW graduate '13, is enthusiastic about the growth, and attributes it to the increased seriousness SCW students exhibit towards their Judaic Studies education.

"I think it's a very positive development to see that more students are enrolled in GPATS this year than in previous years. It speaks to the fact that more Stern students don't see their undergraduate courses as the end of their Judaic learning and are interested in pursuing a higher level of learning. I think this is directly connected to the fact that GPATS is located in the Stern Beit Midrash, and undergraduates are slowly becoming more aware of the unique program taking place on their own campus."

However, Leshaw wishes that the M.A. program offered participants opportunities to interact with the SCW students more, as many students in Stern are still unaware of the program. Although the M.A. program is not restricted to SCW graduates, as of now, the option for seniors to participate in the program is only available to Stern students.

As part of the greater emphasis on the co-curricular aspect of the program, the CJF provides opportunities for the participants to intern or act as scholar-in-residences in various communities. These roles encourage the students to develop their textual skills in the context of becoming community leaders. When asked about her plans after the program, Leshaw noted the helpful opportunities the CJF provides in directing the students in their future endeavors.

"One thing I love about GPATS is that the CJF helps coordinate internships for students at Shuls around the country. This year I'm interning at United Orthodox Synagogues in Houston, Texas. I spend one Shabbat a month there, giving Shiurim, speaking, and running a Women's Beit Midrash Program. It's an incredible opportunity for me to gain experience teaching Torah in a communal setting, and that's something most twenty-two year olds, male or female, aren't given the chance to do."

After she completes the program, Leshaw hopes to

ultimately teach Judaic Studies, and plans on taking her endeavors to the next step by participating in the Yoetzet Halacha program in Nishmat.

Sarit Bendavid, SCW '12 and a second-year participant in the program, commented that although the program has grown in size this year, the curriculum has not changed. She also added that Natalie Taylor, who used to work for the CJF and acted as a liaison for the women for the non-curricular elements of the program, is no longer a staff member. Bendavid notes that her presence is missed in the Beit Midrash, as she took time to get to know the women personally and also was the one who organized many aspects of the program, including the logistics of shuttles and the scheduling of lunch-and-learns and scholar-in-residencies. Her position has yet to be replaced.

However, in regards to the influx of new students, she comments, "It is exciting for me that this year has brought such a large group of women into the program. I would say that the only downside about the increase is that during Halacha class, when we are all together in one Shiur, there is not enough room for all of us to sit around the tables!"

As to the future growth of the program, director of the program, Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel commented, "Future growth and development depend to a great extent on student interest and preparation. The reality is that there are not very many programs of this type and level throughout the Jewish world. Our goal is to be responsive to student interest, while maintaining the lofty goals and high quality of the program. This is one of SCW's significant contributions to the larger Jewish community."

The recent expansion of SCW's Program in Biblical and Talmudic Interpretation is indicative of the greater push to further women's learning initiatives within the Orthodox community, something which many credit the M.A. program for pioneering. The growth further emphasizes the need for high-level learning programs for women throughout the Jewish community. As many Stern students have vocalized, the notion that serious "Ishma" learning peaks during seminary and then comes to a halt is both frustrating and wrong. The participants in the Biblical and Talmudic Interpretation Program set a precedent for long-term intensive Torah studies for women both at SCW and in the greater Orthodox community.

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The Out-Of-Town Advantage

Shira Leff My grandfather used to say: "Provincialism is the inability to imagine that there is something beyond one's locale. And there is nothing more provincial than a New Yorker." Until recently, I unashamedly fit into both those categories—and proudly, to boot. I was thus somewhat chagrined when I arrived at Stern and found that students hailed from many of the fifty states, including Alaska, and from countries spanning every continent except Antarctica. But as my knowledge of geography expanded, my perspective broadened as well,

resulting in a chink in my armor of New-York-centrism and pride. There are definite advantages to being from out-of-town. As both a second-generation New Yorker who lives at home and commutes to school, I set out to discover the advantages that out-of-towners have at Stern.

Out-of-towners appreciate the independence that comes from living too far for parental pampering. Elisheva Dorfman, a sophomore at Stern, believes this independence played a key role in her life. As a true freshman, she got engaged and married at the young age of nineteen. She believes that she only had the maturity to take this monumental step because she was living on her own, far from her hometown of Boston. This independence extends to the academic realm as well. Esther O'Campo, a junior hailing from Anchorage, Alaska, explains that being from out-of-town "forces you to take complete responsibility

for your academic success." Said O'Campo, "Although everyone has to figure out what works for them in terms of their course-load and study habits and sleep schedule, I think for out-of-towners it's more intense because unless you tell your parents about that stuff, they don't know. They won't see you on Shabbos and notice that you're dozing off in your soup and ask if you've been sleeping."

Out-of-towners also tend to be physically in Stern more often than students who live nearby. Campus life becomes home. Ariella Sieger, a junior from Los Angeles, views staying in for Shabbos as a plus: "You can really take advantage of being part of the Stern community since there's no pressure to return home for Shabbos and weekends."

When not staying in for Shabbat, having to make weekend plans every can be a source of tension for out-of-town students. Mrs. Shoshana Schechter, Judaic Studies teacher at Stern and director of the Mechina program, cautions: "It's not easy being far from home, and even more so if one is not part of the Orthodox

New York Jewish communal network. Students at Stern are constantly running around the world to reach out to people, Jews and non-Jews. Be sensitive to reach out to your fellow students down the hall, in your class, or in the elevator, and invite them for Shabbat." This, she says, benefits in-town hosts as much as the out-of-town guests: "Out-of-towners feel cared about and welcomed. For locals, the diversity expands their network beyond what they know, and enhances their own college experiences. It's a win-win situation."

According to the Office of Institutional Research, students from outside the New York area comprise almost half of the Stern student body, with 575 in-towners to 524 out-of-towners. But the contributions they make to the New-York-grounded Stern College are felt far beyond their numbers. Aside from the cool hometowns and even cooler accents, out-of-towners bring a host of new perspectives to the community.

From Hasid to Hipster

Makena Owens Most people have heard of the retailer American Apparel – maybe for their knee-grazing pencil skirts or their ubiquitous brightly colored fleece sweatshirts. Sweatshop-free production, a rainbow of tees and hoodies, and unisex garb are in part what make the brand so attractive to both alternative dressers and common-folk alike. Yet despite the more basic nature of the brand's clothing, American Apparel's advertising methods are far from adjectives such as "boring" or "inoffensive." Much brouhaha has surrounded their advertisements, with one particular gem banned in the UK, and another debated for its provocative positioning of a potentially under-age model. Peruse the American Apparel Tumblr page and prepare for some explicit content: most advertisements feature practically nude models, both male and female, posing provocatively in sheer garments. However, recently, it seems that CEO and fellow Member of the Tribe Dov Charney was feeling like the brand was short on controversy—so he hired a Hassid.

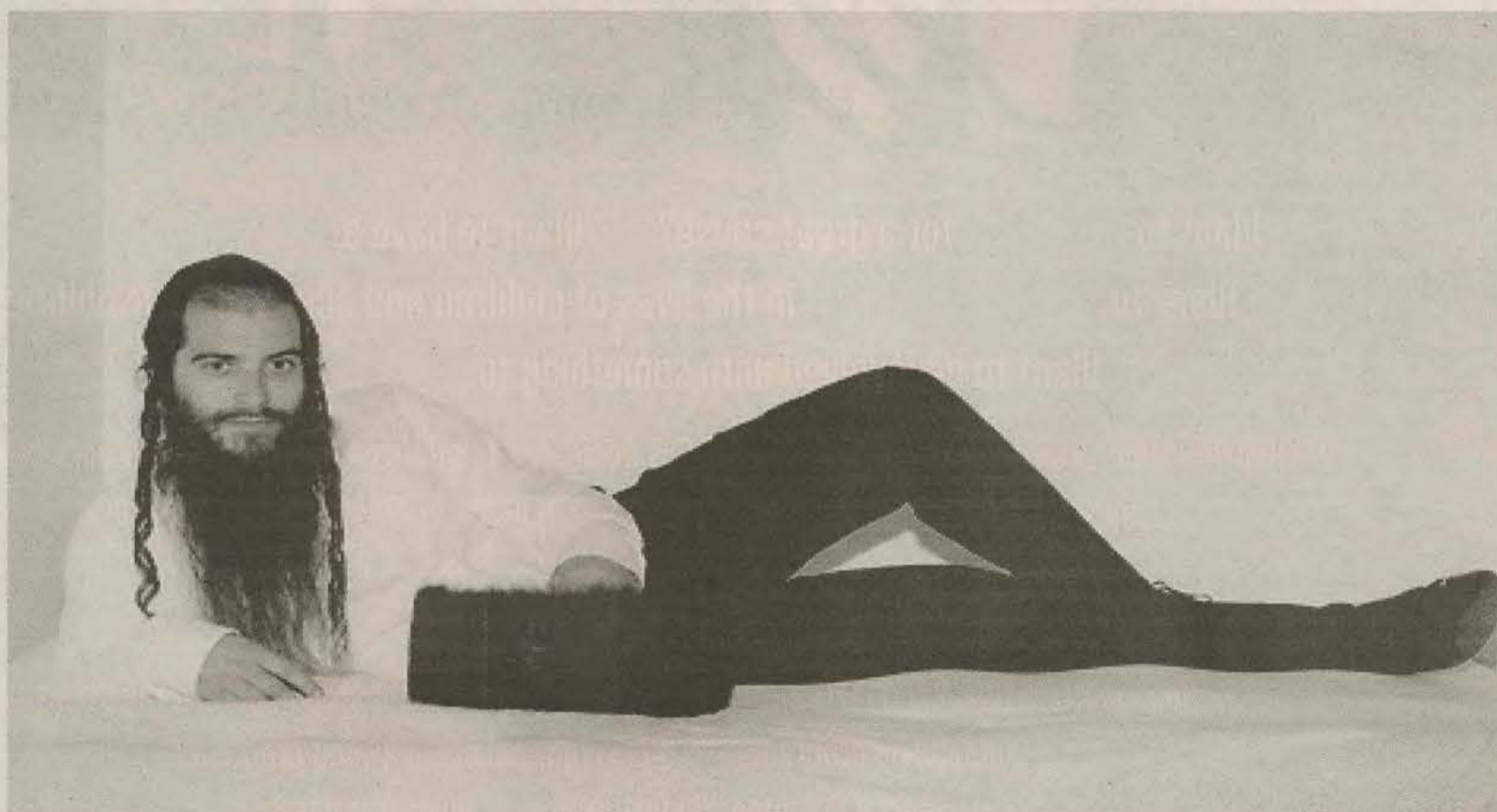
Fearlessly donning the traditional Hassidic garb – white button down, black slacks, and even a streimel (not sold by American Apparel) – Yiddish speaking Yoel Weisshaus is the newest and latest face of the brand. An admitted fan of the brand, his featured photos are simple and have a playful appearance.

The Williamsburg native explains that his motivation for auditioning for the photo shoot was to combat the stereotype that religious Jewish communities are isolated and detached from contemporary society.

So how does the Williamsburg community feel about one of their own stepping outside of the insulated neighborhood? One

would expect some outrage or at least an appalled response to Weisshaus's decision to endorse a brand that so blatantly disregards modesty. Apparently, those opinions are none of Weisshaus's concern. According to an interview with The Daily Beast, he says, "I like the controversy, I enjoy the conversation, I like to get people talking with this stuff going on."

The photos can be seen on the American Apparel website featured amongst its varied other advertisements depicting scantily dressed men and women. Weisshaus makes the issue appear as stark as the garments in his picture. "It's just a photo (The Daily Beast)," he says.



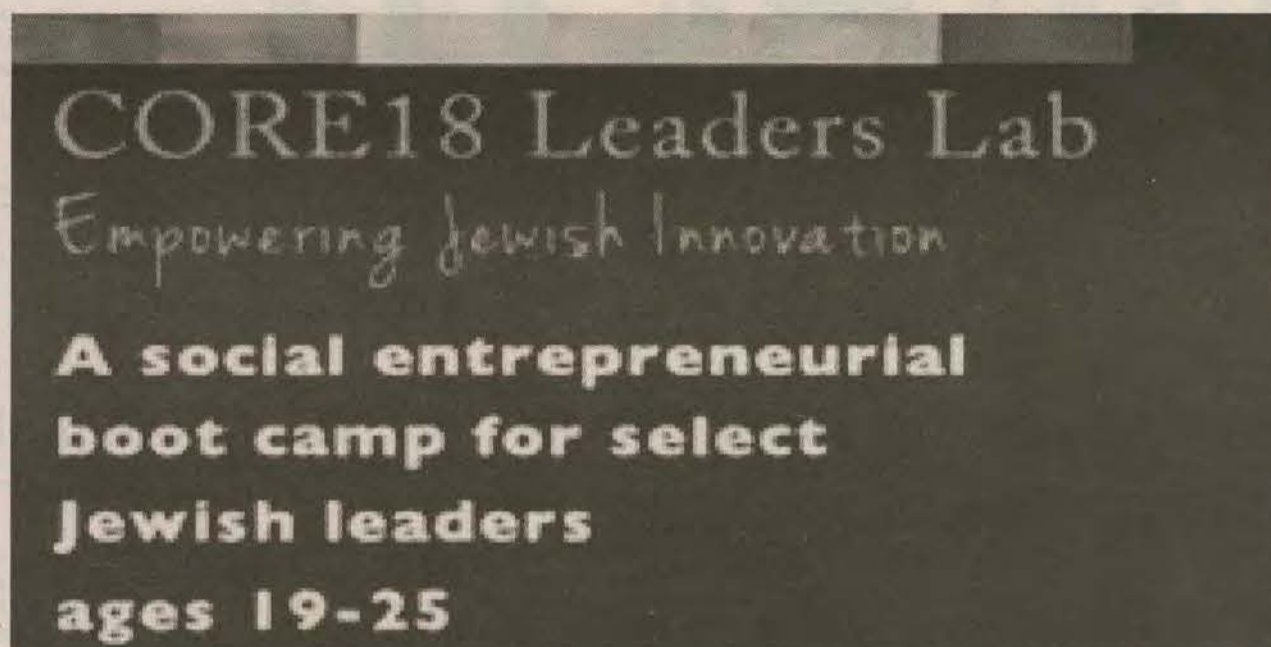
CORE18- A New Opportunity for Jewish Student Leaders

Shira Kaye Mayim Bialik, a Jewish actress with a Ph.D. in neuroscience, is known for her role as Amy Farrah Fowler on the popular television series, *The Big Bang Theory*. Another Jewish person in the limelight, Rabbi Chief Lord Jonathan Sacks, served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth for the last twenty-three years and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth herself. Though one may not think these two famous Jews would cross paths, they've joined forces as co-chairs of a new Jewish leadership-training fellowship that begins this year: CORE18 Leaders Lab.

Rabbi Sacks and Bialik, along with the third co-chair, Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar, renowned author and former lecturer on positive psychology at Harvard University, view the program as an opportunity to build a strong Jewish future in global ethical leadership. The program is designed to prepare the next generation of Jewish leaders for the many problems facing the Jewish nation today and to further the Jewish ideal of *tikkun olam*, the obligation to show the world the ethical way to live and lead.

The program is divided into two parts, phase one and phase two. During the first phase, from January through May 2014, all thirty-six fellows, aged 19-25, will attend a weekly webinar where they will participate in a wide array of discussions ranging from issues in the modern Jewish world to the ethics of leadership. The three co-chairs and other prominent Jewish leaders, including Alan Dershowitz and Natan Sharansky, will lead these webinars. Each fellow will also participate in an independent research project in which he/she will learn how to create successful enterprises. There will also be regional and national conferences where participants from America, Canada, Israel, and Britain will get a chance to meet one another. Then, beginning in June, participants will be placed in a one-month internship in Israel. During their seven-week stay, they will be given a series of lectures by prominent Israeli businesspeople and political scientists, spend time learning in the Beit Midrash, meet members of Knesset, and organize a public symposium on an international Jewish issue.

Phase two of the fellowship is for selected fellows who wish to realize an idea for a social venture. Starting in



September 2014 and continuing through the next nine months, they will be given access to mentors, seed capital, and networking opportunities. Additionally, in December 2014 they will visit Eastern Europe to learn about Jewish heritage and national responsibility.

This enriching program is geared towards students from all over the country and globe, with a range of Jewish backgrounds. According to the website, one must only be Jewish, have demonstrated leadership, and be passionate about doing good in order to apply. Melanie Miller, an MMY alumnus and political science major at the University of Florida, is involved in a diverse array of activities, from Jewish life to student government, and is applying for the CORE18 fellowship this October. She

believes that the program "will give me the tools to develop my leadership and social entrepreneur skills with a focus on helping the Jewish community and will be intellectually stimulating as well as practical." Regarding the prospect of learning from Rabbi Sacks and other major Jewish figures, she believes that "the opportunity to interact on a professional and hopefully personal level with these leaders will be very enlightening."

Miller's drive and desire to help both the Jewish population and the world at large, along with so many others like her applying to CORE18, will undeniably make this program a great success. As the website proclaims, "Everyone has a unique purpose; the world is waiting for you to reveal yours."

Living on the EDge: Helping Students Get Ahead

Shayna Darling As we find ourselves acclimating once again to college life, it's easy to forget what brought us here: that arduous process of college applications. Yet, as difficult of a process as it was, it is perhaps a greater challenge for many of New York's young adults who are not surrounded by a support system that constantly encourages their academic growth and pursuits. All that changed through College EDge.

Many Yeshiva University students have brought awareness and assistance to underrepresented students through College EDge. College EDge was founded in 2010 by a Yeshiva College student, Yonah Rubin, on the premise that many students don't have the proper access to the knowledge and services that are so essential to the college application process. College EDge specifically targets public high school students attending YABC (Young Adult Borough Center) programs, which are designed to help students who are behind in credit or at risk of dropping out of school altogether. College EDge is heavily involved with the George Washington chapter due to its location in Washington Heights. Recently, it was granted non-profit status, which will provide many benefits to the organization.

College EDge offers a variety of year-round activities to local public high school students, ranging from intimate to large scale. One such event, Design Your Future, is run with support from the YU Career Center. It offers workshops and other vital information about post-secondary options for high school students. However, one of the most integral and successful parts of College EDge is its Mentorship Program. The Mentorship

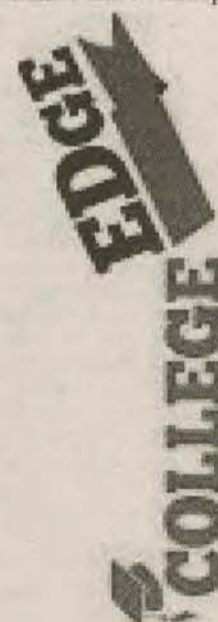
Program matches students attending Yeshiva College and Stern with YABC high school students. The program creates a comfortable environment where the high school students can ask and receive important assistance regarding college applications and everyday life. Elianne Neuman, a Junior at Stern who is the director of the Mentoring Program for College EDge, said "what is exemplary about College EDge mentorship is that we work with the schools and with the students to figure out what they need." She adds that College EDge is "willing to tailor [our] programming to fit the needs of the YABCs and their students." Such an approach creates a successful environment that properly addresses the needs of students and helps them achieve their goals.

A new extension of the College EDge Mentoring Program, the Five-On-Five program, will begin this year. The Five-On-Five Program will match five YU students with five student leaders from the George Washington YABC. This will ultimately create a more personalized mentoring experience and provide students with specific advice regarding their respective situations. In addition to the Five-On-Five Program, another tentative initiative set to begin this year is the Adopt-A-School Program, which will pair local YABC chapters with local universities, to create a cooperative relationship that will help aid students in their pursuit of higher education.

Once a year, College EDge offers its largest event, the Annual Seminar and Fair Day. College EDge members contact YABC affiliated schools and public high school students from all

over the state in order to bring in students who can most benefit from the event. The program provides seminars and workshops on topics such as college admissions and financial aid, as well as the opportunity to explore a variety of post-high school options. Last year's event brought in at least two hundred students and thirty colleges.

In its short existence, College EDge has grown and become more successful each year. It will undoubtedly continue to expand thanks to its new non-profit status. When asked how this status will benefit the club, current College EDge president Ryan Fiter said, "it will create a real sense of legitimacy and continuity." He added that, "[College EDge] is trying to really expand and become a recognized non-profit organization, rather than solely a college club." Indeed, College Edge can expect to remain an important part of both the YU and larger New York community.



HEALTH CORNER

An Exercise Mentality

Julie Wasserman We've all said it: "This summer, I'm going to hit the gym and lose 10 pounds." And then, to the doubtful mother/sister/friend's eye roll: "No really! I mean it!"

Don't sweat it; most people have made that claim before, be it to our friends or to ourselves. And most of the time, we make those claims with sincere, high hopes that this time, this time!, we'll get rid of that extra weight.

Now that the summer's over, though, here's the annoying follow-up question...Did we?

It bites to have to face the truth. Why weren't we able to lose the weight?

To exercise successfully, three components are crucial: 1. Realistic Goals: Setting real goals for yourself calls for honesty. You need to have a little chat with yourself to think about your goals and aspirations. Get real. Set your ego aside and assess your capabilities. If you are not a born marathon runner—no problem! You can get there if you start from a place that's reasonable for where you are right now. If you try to become a marathon runner overnight—you'll be disappointed. You need to dream big and then set aside your ego. Map out the tiniest baby steps to reach your dreams.

The Connections Paradigm states that a person is made up of a body and soul, each with its own wants and needs. To succeed in this world, the body and soul need to connect and have a healthy relationship. The body is your body, but the soul is your dreamer.

Setting aside your ego doesn't mean setting aside your dreams. But it may mean grounding them in realism. If you are someone who has no problem accepting where you are and just need help moving further, try leaving your comfort zone in your workout for just a moment or two. Having the courage to try something new, even just once, will make it much easier to try it again.

2. Positive Self-Talk: Once you've mapped out a sensible plan, you'll need positive self-talk to get you through it.

If you want to succeed, you need to speak to yourself in an encouraging and positive tone. Tell yourself lines like: "I'm going to rock this workout," and "I have X amount of time, let's make the most of it."

Adopt optimistic mantras to encourage yourself. You could also draw on your achievements in your workout thus far to draw strength: "Look at you! You're doing great-keep it going!" or "Look at how far you've come!" Be kind to yourself, but be firm.

3. Desire to Exercise. The final and perhaps most crucial element of exercise is knowing that you want to do it!

Exercising on a half-empty tank of morale can be torturous. If you don't really want to be doing it, you're going to feel like a prisoner of war. Truthfully, many of us don't want to get off the couch and work out. But we have a choice: we can go with the voice that says "nahh, exercise isn't for me," or we can tune into the voice that says "I want to achieve my goals!" If you want success, you have to decide that this is what you want.

That will fuel you to hit the ground running—literally.

The Making of Champions

Ruthie Heller It is a beautiful early morning to be running along the boardwalk in New York City. The sun is shimmering on the ocean water; men are fishing for their first catch of the day; a soft breeze is blowing. But the serenity of these distractions only makes me more conscious of my own body's lack of serenity. My heartbeat pounds, faster and faster, louder and louder. My legs are tired, but strong. My brain tells them to keep moving—pain makes the champion. I look at my teammates; they look calm, but I know they are pushing too. Two miles down, five more to go—nothing matters but this run. Yesterday's ten-mile run doesn't matter; tomorrow's seven-mile run doesn't matter either. Our job is to make this run the best.

This year's Yeshiva University Cross Country team met with Coach Steven Begley at Pre-season 2013 up in the Catskills. We spent a week conditioning together with Captain Sarah Mizrahi, Stephanie Greenberg, Talia Rhodes, Sarah Lazarus, Corrie Mathias, Rena Thomas and Ruthie Heller, along with the boys' team of Dov Levine, Natan K, Moshe Blockman, Shmooz Weinstein, Yossi Lipton and Yitzi Markel. Together we tackled 45-50 miles for the entire week. We trained as hard as we could, setting the bar as high as possible for our fall season. By the end of pre-season, we all realized that we had the potential to be even better than the past YU XC teams.

Fall began and we welcomed new runners to the team. Now that our team was complete, our captains lead morning workouts every day, six out of seven days of the week. Wake-

up time ranged from 5:30-6:30am so that teams can get back to campus in time to daven and make it to shiur or class. Our daily routine has revolved around running, and our daily schedules are determined by when we get our runs in. As a team we do a minimum of five to thirteen miles a day, forty to fifty miles a week.

The first race, a 5k (3.10 mi), was a remarkable beginning for YU's Cross Country team, especially because we, a Division III team, were competing against a Division I. The girls tied first place, the boys won second, and multiple teammates beat their personal records. It was a course none of us ran, and a defeat we will never forget. The top 5 teammates from girls averaged around a seven-minute mile, while the boys averaged around a 5-minute mile. It was a fantastic beginning.

I believe our teams' success stems from our focus on pushing ourselves to be better, as opposed to our focus on winning. Many of our current runners achieve success by competing against themselves to shave off time from their runs. Stephanie has decreased her time by three minutes and Rena Thomas by over four minutes. This might not sound like a lot, but to a competitive runner it could mean making championships and winning first place. Even as we runners push ourselves to be better, we try not to dwell the past. Our focus is on the present run and the future run. With this in mind, we look ahead to the next meet as a challenge.



Outsider or Insider at New York Fashion Week?

Shoshana Bachrach Ever since I was twelve, I had dreamed of going to New York Fashion Week. In my young, out-of-town naïveté, I imagined myself as a plucky *Lucky* intern, darting in between taxis just in time to slide into a front-row seat at Cynthia Steffe, or, as I got older and more ambitious, comparing notes with *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour as we left the runway of Rodarte. Alas, this dream never materialized.



Frum fashion blogger, Fashion-isha, turned out for the designer displays.

Suddenly, here I was at the brink of senior year in New York City, having never attended one Fashion Week. This year, I decided, was the year. Enough obsessively stalking Style.com for runway coverage and endlessly cataloguing the best of street style. True, it wasn't the same world as it had been when I was 12; fashion had lost a fair bit of its whimsy and cheek, in its stead came commercial elitism. Nevertheless, I owed it to my younger self to at least see it from afar. I was an outsider after all; it would be foolish to assume that I'd somehow find myself inside the great Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week sans invite. But I soon discovered that the fashion world, though still very glittery and very expensive, wasn't as

aloof as it seemed to be.

There's something very fleeting about the fashion world—not transient, but fast-paced. Of course, this is counter-balanced by the immense thought and time required to create an issue of a magazine or a collection. But inspiration and opportunity strike suddenly like lightning, and my Fashion Week adventure was no exception: I found myself one Tuesday evening loitering outside of Lincoln Center, eating fro-yo with a fashion week article friend in the sweltering heat. The last stragglers were coming two-by-two down the stairs from the last show, comparing notes and looking up restaurants on their iPhones. All I had wanted to know was which show they were leaving. But suddenly my phone had a new contact called Demonte, a young model-booker with a penchant for fur, who had promised me that we would try to get tickets for Nanette Lepore.

We did not get tickets to Nanette Lepore. We couldn't finagle a spot at Rachel Zoe either. That wasn't really the point for me anyway; I had come to people-watch, to see some of my idols, to really observe the phenomenon that was fashion. I wanted to know if fashion had really changed: was it now the hobby of the 1%, an art that could only be enjoyed by the who's-who of Condé Nast and the like? Would I be sneered at as a no-name, brand-less college student? Demonte and I gleefully collected the various free items and publications and gawked at garish fashions. I met the Orthodox blogger Fashion-Isha, and Demonte extolled the virtues of fur with a pair of statuesque, stone-faced stylists and a perky blogger. Reporters and bloggers hunched over laptops everywhere, two plainly-dressed moms discussed intimate details of a soon-to-be-announced merger. Slowly it dawned on me that no one was sneering at anyone. In fact, everyone was acting positively...geeky.

It was then that I realized that Fashion Week is nothing more than a sartorial Comic-Con. Clicking through pictures of magazine-editor style, or reading the musings of a too-cool blogger makes it seem like fashion is an untouchable thing for

ARTS & CULTURE

CHANA SHESTACK-BRAUSER
YAELE LASSON
ARTS@YUOBSERVER.COM

only the most chic. But seeing them all there, in their supposed glory, just made me, well, laugh. For all of their supposed chicness, they also get really, really excited to see someone rocking the latest trend of holographic shoes. They poke each other when they see the supremely well-spoken former *Marie Claire* Editor-in-Chief Miranda Coles, or, if they're so lucky enough to be leaving the same show, sidle up next to her. They also take pictures of everything and everyone and let their mouths drop over the audacity of a crazy print or the sheer fabulousness of a full lame skirt. Those pictures of giraffe-tall girls in floppy hats and combat boots, coolly texting? Those are posed—and those girls are pretty pumped to be photographed too. Looking around, I found myself not as an outsider, but an insider: We were all geeks. Fashion geeks, but geeks nonetheless—after all, who else would get so excited about clothes?

In a way, this version of Fashion Week was far better than twelve-year-old me had dreamed. Yes, the slick insider world I had imagined was exciting. But Fashion Week reminded me that fashion still is an art to be enjoyed by the masses, still full of quirk and whimsy at its core. Tall, short, thin, fat, religious, young, old, foreign—there was no uniformity among the crowd other than an abiding love of fashion. So, after two years in New York, I was not a *Lucky* intern, nor Anna Wintour's confidante—but not an outsider after all.

“Rain Room,” an Experiential Drought

Mia Guttman One of the most prominent exhibits in New York was featured at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) this summer. The exhibit, entitled “Rain Room,” was an installation developed by a contemporary art group known as Random International. The piece was exhibited in a large black room with a single light shining from the back wall. The meat of the artwork was an inner square of rain. Inside the “Rain Room,” patrons are invited to step into the rain. There they can feel the moisture in the air, see the rain rushing past them and hear the sound of it trickling, but as the viewer moves, the sensors in the immediate vicinity sense the motion, and the rain around you ceases.

The exhibit drew thousands of curious patrons; the wait on an average weekday ranged from four to six hours. While there was no official time restraint within the exhibit, MoMA requested that visitors be courteous to other patrons by only staying in the exhibit for 10 minutes. Clearly, the exhibit was a huge draw for the museum and most likely a financial success, but was it art? Or perhaps the more pressing question is, was it good art?

The standards of art are complicated, convoluted and even elitist, so I will not try to impose them on this piece. But bear with me in understanding the shortcomings of this experience. “Rain Room” was an endearing idea, allowing viewers to feel as though they were in control of the rain. Random International wanted to play with the imaginations and desires of the participants, to let them feel in control of the uncontrollable. Where the “Rain Room” failed, however, was in the execution of the experience, which should have been the most integral part of the installation.

“Rain Room” was treated as a backdrop to a cool Instagram moment #RainRoom #MoMA #Instagood. Imagine a room full of people standing around taking selfies, and you can understand why the piece had little to no impact. The flashing of cameras and tourists asking for you to take their photo contributed to an experience that felt posed. At one point during the exhibition, a couple got engaged in the “Rain Room,” officially marking the piece as a gimmick rather than a serious

experiential installation. Ultimately the piece was a tourist attraction, leaving viewers with nothing more than a contrived and plastic experience. It would have benefited the exhibit greatly if the MoMA had made a no-camera policy in order to preserve the integrity of the exhibit. The situation seemed analogous to trying to look at a painting within a museum, but because of a crowd of people all equipped with cameras, being unable to get a good view.

Perhaps we just live in an age where to experience anything, including art, we have to do so through our phones. One patron, Jordana Burstein, suggested that perhaps “Rain Room” “became perverted through human interaction. But that's not necessarily a bad thing, it's more like showing the truth of our society.” Art evolves within the context in which it is exhibited, especially when a piece relies on the viewer's participation. Even so, I would suggest that if you want to play in the rain without getting wet, just buy an umbrella and wait for a storm.



As Far As the Eye Can See: New York Comic Con

Hannah Rozenblat Every year, tens of thousands of fans fill the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center for the annual New York Comic Con (NYCC), an event that began only in 2006 but has rapidly gained a loyal following. A fan convention dedicated to all forms of entertainment, New York Comic Con is organized by ReedPOP and attracts people from all over the world, its attendance numbers jumping higher with every year. What started as a convention with 33,000 people grew over the years into a four-day convention that attracted 116,000 fans last year, with an ever-expanding space.

Every year, NYCC brings in a number of notable guests for the convention, including in the past Joss Whedon, Kevin Smith and Stan Lee, among many others. This year, notable names included James Cosmo and Jerome Flynn of *Game of Thrones*, Gillian Anderson from the *X-Files*, John Morton, R. L. Stine, David Duchovny, Kevin Bacon, Lev Grossman and more. The center was divided into three levels: the Main Stage and panel rooms, Artist Alley where artists displayed and sold their works, and the main Show Floor where most of the action took place.

Although it is easy to get carried away with excitement when considering one's options for a full day at Comic Con,

there is a significant drawback: despite paying a considerable sum for admission, more money must be shelled out at the event if one would like to get autographs from big-name guests. The vendors and exhibitors at Comic Con are also quite tempting, but unfortunately pricey.

There was an overabundance of free entertainment as well, though, ranging from panels, screenings and autograph opportunities to wandering around the huge Javits Center and seeing all of the costumes that fans had come up with. Although Comic Con is mainly for adults, activities geared towards children included a panel with the creators of the popular series *Arthur*.

As an English major, I gravitated towards literary events, and one of the highlights of Sunday's Comic Con schedule for me was a panel titled "The Magic of Storytelling," led by M.D. Payne and featuring Lemony Snicket (*Series of Unfortunate Events*), David Lubar (*Weenies* series), Matthew Cody (*Will in Scarlet*), Shannon Hale (*Austenland*), George O'Connor (*Olympians*) and Scott Campell (*If*

Dogs Run Free). The writers discussed their writing process, brainstorming ideas, channeling their inner child for children's fiction, and creating believable characters that come to life on the page.

Following the panel, the authors were available for a free meet and greet, which gave me the opportunity to chat with Shannon Hale, whose book (*Austenland*) was recently released as a movie, about her book's perspective on the Jane Austen fandom. Meeting Lemony Snicket (aka Daniel Handler), the most popular of the panelists, was, quite honestly, unforgettable. Remaining true to his mysterious reputation, every word he spoke had a degree of jest to it, and when he took photos with fans, it was with his face towards them with a half-frightened expression instead of smiling at the camera. This did give fans the ability to stare into his eyes though – until I realized that his hand was reaching out to play with the feathers and veil on my headband.

Perhaps the best part of Comic Con is the creativity of the fans, who turn up by the thousands in elaborate costumes and makeup. It is easy to get swept up in the crowd, feeding off of each other's enthusiasm and showing appreciation for others' costumes and efforts. And when the day is over and Comic Con is closing, there is a feeling of solidarity in seeing other costumed people walking around the streets of New York. Even if they are complete strangers, you might smile at them as if to say, *That was pretty awesome, wasn't it?*



Jew in the City

Yael Farzan As many of us know, New York boasts the largest percentage of Jews in America. But were you also aware that New York is the second-largest Jewish area in the world, coming in only after Tel-Aviv? Yup.

Knowing that, it's easy to see why New York City is home to so many Jewish hot-spots. If you ever have a free afternoon or morning, you'd be remiss not to check out a few of these fascinating, culturally significant museums that are simply saturated with Jewish history. And out-of-town seniors: make sure to visit at least one of these historic sites before you graduate!

Ellis Island Immigration Museum: My personal favorite, Ellis Island is a must-see—if you haven't been there yet already. Famous for being the gateway to America for 12 million immigrants, many of your ancestors probably stepped foot here. At times chilling, moving, and fascinating, Ellis Island could be a full-day trip (and many tourists combine it with the Statue of Liberty visit on Liberty Island). Highlights include the Registry Room in the Immigrant Inspection Station, the Flag of Faces, and the Wall of Honor.

There is no admission fee for the museum, but you'll need to pay for the ferry there and back. Statue Cruises provides ferry transportation to Ellis Island from Battery Park in New York and Liberty State Park in New Jersey from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.

(212) 363-6307
Adults: \$8
Children (3-17): \$3

Lower East Side Tenement Museum: The Lower East Side became the home of Ashkenazic Jewry in the late 1800s. The

Tenement Museum is a renovated apartment building, so you'll walk through rooms that have practically been untouched since that time. Different tours, such as "Hard Times," "Sweatshop Workers," and "Shop Life" reveal the inside stories and struggles of our nation's first immigrants. Nearby, on 400 Grand St., the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy also offers walking tours of the street areas.

103 Orchard St, New York, NY 10002
(212) 982-8420
Adults: \$22
Students: \$17
("Shop Life" tours are \$3 extra)

Museum of Jewish Heritage: Located in Battery Park, the Museum of Jewish Heritage is committed to preserving the history of Jewish life in Europe before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions now include "Against the Odds: American Jews & the Rescue of Europe's Refugees, 1933-1941" and "Hava Nagila: A Song for the People," on view through April 22, 2014. Serving as memorial to the millions who tragically were murdered, the museum also features permanent exhibitions year-round, and makes for a meaningful visit on Tisha B'av or Yom HaShoah (Day of Holocaust Remembrance). There's free admission every Wednesday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

36 Battery Pl New York, NY 10280
(646) 437-4202
Adults \$12
Students: \$7
Children 12 and under are admitted for free.

The Jewish Museum: Founded in 1904 in the Warburg mansion

on New York's Museum Mile, just three blocks away from the Guggenheim, the Jewish Museum highlights art and Jewish culture. There are currently 25,000 findings and artifacts for history-lovers to revel in, but its permanent exhibition, "Culture and Continuity: The Jewish Journey," is offered year round, and tells the story of the Jews through different forms of art and media. Currently, a special, never-before-shown exhibition featuring artwork by famed Jewish artist Marc Chagall on the topic of "Love, War, and Exile" can be viewed through February 2014. On Thursday evenings from five to 8:30, it's "Pay-what-you-wish."

1109 5th Ave New York, NY 10128
(212) 423-3200
Adults: \$15
Students: \$7.50
18 and under: Free

The Anne Frank Center USA: Though the Franks' real old house still exists on Frankfurt am Main, Germany, this museum was founded in 1977 by Anne's own father Otto Frank. Here, the famous author of *Diary of a Young Girl* is revealed through interactive exhibits that draw on excerpts from Anne's diary as well as stories and pictures of her and the people who hid with her. In one room, with life-sized photography of Anne's old bedroom, viewers can listen to parts of Anne's diary being read aloud, as well as ambient noise in the foreground.

4 Park Place
New York, NY 10007
Tel: 212 431 7993
Adults: \$8
Students and seniors: \$5

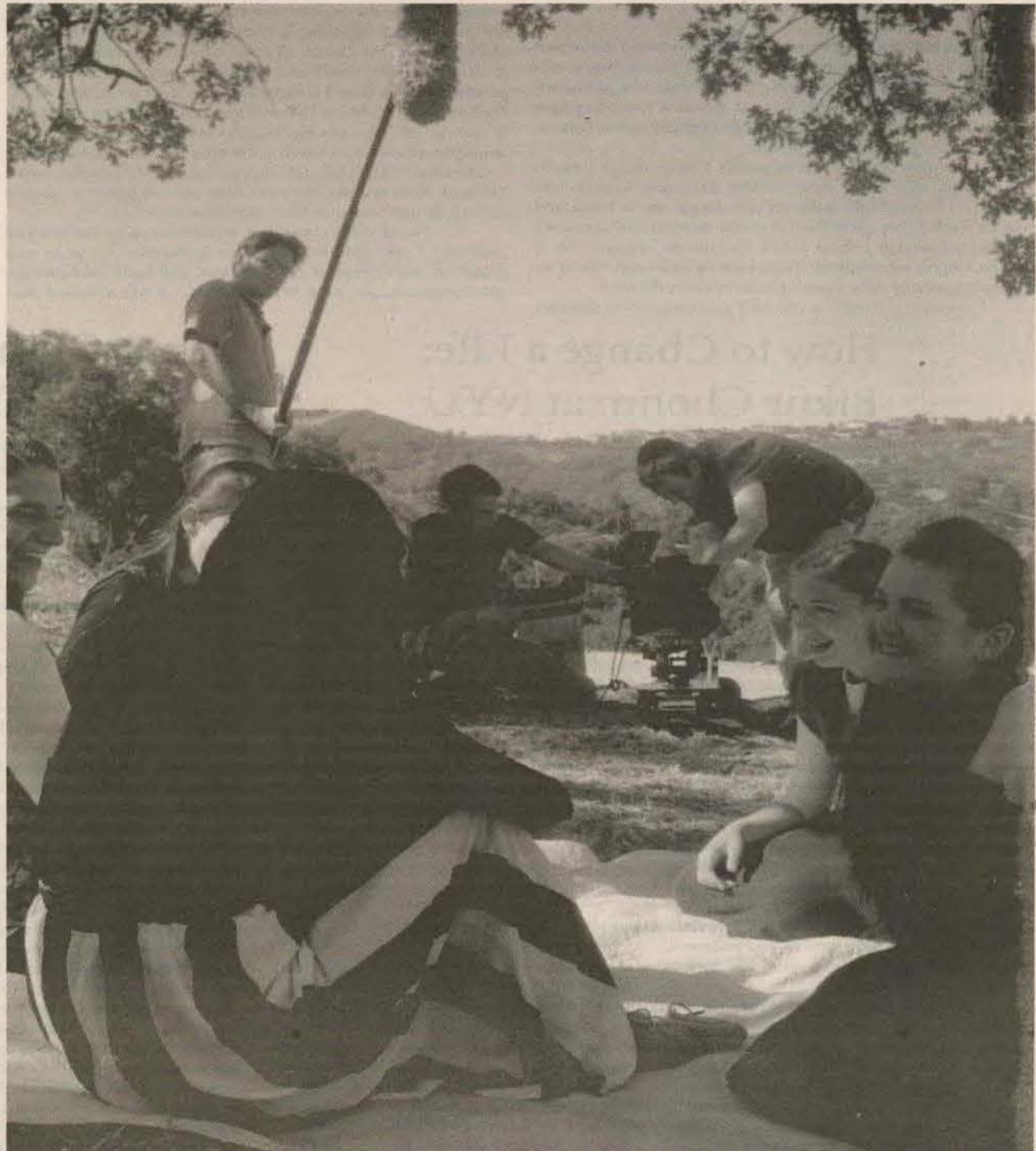
Film Talk: Operation Candlelight

Carmelle Danneman The crew is setting up for the first exterior shot of the school building. The techno-crane is completely extended, and the gaffer is adjusting the lighting. The producer, Leah Gottfried, a senior at Stern, is making sure everything is going according to schedule. Orthodox cinematographer Daron Keet is framing the first shot. I've been waiting for the chance to use my G-d given talents without compromising my faith, and it is finally here.

This past summer, I had the incredible opportunity of starring in my first film, *Operation Candlelight*, with Orthodox Jewish filmmaker and director Robin Garbose. Torah Academy, an elite boarding school for Jewish girls situated in the affluent community of Hidden Hills, CA, provides the backdrop for this action adventure film for women and girls. *Operation: Candlelight* tells the story of how a band of misfits, seemingly the rejects of the school production, become unlikely heroes when an unexpected criminal encounter rocks their world.

I have struggled my whole life to find a professional, kosher outlet for acting. Robin Garbose has created such an outlet that allows me to act while being shomer Shabbos, dressing tzniusly, and eating kosher food on set. Robin started off in her early twenties directing theater productions in New York and later moved to Los Angeles to continue a career in film. While in Los Angeles, she directed the television show *Head of the Class*. Garbose then became a baal teshuva and directed the television show *America's Most Wanted*. After her eight-year stint of directing *America's Most Wanted*, she opened up Kol Neshama, a production company dedicated to providing Jewish girls and women the ability to express their artistic voice through film and stage productions.

Garbose had previously produced musicals (*A Light for Greytowers* and *The Heart That Sings*) but wanted to move into a new genre. After finding the ironic location of an all-boys' yeshiva boarding school surrounded by gated celebrity and affluent communities, Garbose settled on the story. She explained "a story born out of irony is what makes a movie exciting. The unlikely have to be in an unlikely situation." Because of her experience directing *America's Most Wanted*, she was able to incorporate exciting and thrilling elements into



the film.

Garbose has been directing for more than 30 years now, and each time a project comes along, she faces difficulties. Of course, there are the usual difficulties an average filmmaker faces, the largest of which is finances. Garbose said, "Once you have the experience, the knowledge, the craft, and the stories you want to sell, it's only about the money." She explained that she has several movies she would like to create, but the issue is funding. Garbose also encounters certain obstacles endemic to Orthodox Jewish filmmakers. "The biggest challenge is finding your hashgafic comfort zone and feeling you can grow spiritually, as well as not compromising your work." Not wanting to deal with any controversy about dress, she therefore created characters who wore uniforms. Garbose explains that she wanted to address tznius while also staying away from the tendency to label people according to their dress.

The film will be premiering in L.A., N.Y., London, and Jerusalem. It won't be shown in traditional theaters because it is restricted to women and girls; however, the directors and producers will be renting out various theaters to show screenings of the film. Different from her other films,

Operation Candlelight "walks the edge of being a Hollywood film and an indie (independent) film at the same time," Robin said. Robin adds that for "frum audiences, girls who may feel a little insecure about themselves can feel inspired and empowered by it." Secular audiences will get a chance to view the intriguing world of a Jewish girls' boarding school and see the significant values these girls are committed to. The action of this film will keep both audiences at the edge of their seats.

As for the future of female filmmakers and artists, Garbose believes the prospect is bright. According to Garbose, this is the time for women to explore their G-d-given talents and embrace their own uniqueness as Jewish women. Women need to take their ideas, create them, and make them happen. And on that note, Garbose already has another project slated for production later this year—*The Spark*—a script she co-wrote that was selected for the Sundance Institute Writers Lab.

You can see the trailer for *Operation Candlelight* at www.kolneshama.org, which stars Stern's Carmelle Danneman, Leah Gottfried, and graduate Rivka Siegel.

OPINIONS

RACHEL RENZ
ELANA RASKAS
OPINIONS@YUOBSERVER.COM

The Perks of Being a Super Senior

enroll in seven courses per semester. As upperclassmen can attest, and new students are surely discovering, seven simultaneous courses generate an incredibly heavy workload. While running from class to class, preparing a presentation in between, studying for a test afterwards and attempting to write a paper—that's due tomorrow, actually enjoying those classes and devoting time to each becomes exceedingly difficult. If a student knows she has more time on her hands, she will likely significantly reduce her course load per semester.

Once classes and work become more manageable, students have more opportunity to become involved in student life on campus. Running a club, planning events, editing a newspaper and the like are all time-consuming endeavors. Many students find that involvement and investment in student life greatly improves their YU experience. As SCW senior and Al-Pi-Darko club-head Alyssa Greenberg puts it, "taking an active role in student life helps me feel that I'm not only gaining from the atmosphere here but involved in creating and building it. Seeking involvement in Stern has definitely enriched my experience here." The more time one has, the more time one can invest in campus life and, in turn, enhance one's own experience.

For all those concerned with finishing up and starting "real life," I say, why the rush? This is the time for us to take classes we enjoy, explore new interests, and build relationships with professors and peers. When else can we take a history class

that piques our interest, or a math class we had never considered before? Now, more than ever before, we have the opportunity to take advantage of the phase of life psychologist Jeffrey Arnett calls "emerging adulthood," a phenomenon sweeping the nation. Twenty-somethings are taking time to explore different paths, rather than rush into the one job they will occupy until retirement. Arnett claims, "American emerging adults value the freedom and independence of the stage of life and seek to make the most of it." Adulthood will come, and most of us will settle down in the course of time—why not enjoy the benefits of college life while we can?

It is no surprise, then, that friends tell me, longingly, how lucky I am to still be in college. Many of them have begun working or studying in graduate school and miss their college days already. They say, half-jokingly, "Never graduate!" YU even has a fifth-year scholarship fund specifically for this purpose, "to ease the financial burden of a fourth year on campus after Israel in a way that encourages planning for the best use of four full years on campus." New students can seriously improve their college experience from the get-go by choosing this plan, and senior students can prolong growing up for a little while longer. Just consider this: looking back on your life in 40, maybe 50 years down the line, will you wish you had spent one more year working, or one more year learning, growing, and enjoying the freedoms of your college experience?

Elana Raskas The most common refrain I've heard in the past few weeks sounds something like this: "You're so lucky you're still in Stern!" The line stems primarily from friends who graduated last May; although we entered Stern at the same time, they have since left the walls of Stern College while I remain inside. I am, as the expression goes, a "super senior."

Within my first year of studies I realized that I would not be graduating at the expected May 2013 date. I could have done so—I received full credits for spending a year in Israel, and was on track to complete the 128-credit requirement necessary for graduation—but I chose not to. For anyone in Stern, this is a route I highly recommend. If you went to Israel and intend on graduating in only three years—pause for just a moment.

In Stern, there is a standard expectation that students

How to Change a Life: Bikur Cholim at NYU

Rivky Weiss and Tova Kutner As we walked into the room, the strong scent of hospital food filled our nostrils. The rhythmic beeping of the heart monitor permeated the tense atmosphere in the room, disrupting the lonely patient's effort to get a good night's sleep. The only indication that Shabbat had arrived was a pair of flickering electric Shabbat lights standing on the windowsill overlooking the East River.

This scenario is a typical Friday night for many Jews who are forced to spend Shabbat in the hospital. Due to unfortunate circumstances, their health has prevented many of these people from spending Shabbat in the comfort of their own homes with loved ones. It is easy to take Shabbat for granted. Having a Kiddush setup, two challot, and a nice home-cooked meal are staples of a normal Friday night. When one has to spend Shabbat in the hospital, though, the atmosphere is very different. Aside from lacking a home-cooked meal, many of these patients spend the entire Shabbat alone. The physical structure of a hospital further strains the Shabbat atmosphere. Navigating the labyrinth of electric doors, motion sensors, and automatic hand cleansers can make keeping the laws of Shabbat very challenging.

As volunteers for the Bikur Cholim of NYU Langone Medical Center, our job is to bring the spirit of Shabbat to our Jewish brothers and sisters. We leave the Stern campus before Shabbat begins and make our way to NYU's Bikur Cholim room. This room is stocked with Shabbat food, snacks, beverages, magazines, and the like for patients and their families. Along with electric candles, we gather a compilation of various goods provided by the Bikur Cholim room and make our way to the

patients' rooms in order to distribute these items (although we put away the candle once Shabbat actually begins). The patients are always elated to see fellow Jews when they expected to spend Shabbat alone, with just the beeping of the heart monitors to keep them company. We often sing Shalom Aleichem and recite Kiddush for the patients who are unable to do so themselves. Many times we sit with the patients for a while, talking, laughing, and playing with the pediatric patients. We take the place of their loved ones who are not able to be there.

The patients we visit never cease to thank us for our efforts. Many of them cannot even fathom who would take the time out of their usual weekend plans in order to visit the sick. Many of our patients enter Shabbat only hoping that they will have the strength and ability to make it through the difficult weekend with their health in tact. Throughout our several bikur cholim experiences, we have met Jews from all walks of life, each one exuberantly grateful for the comfort a visit provides.

Volunteering at NYU has not only impacted the patients we visit, but it has changed our lives as well. We have learned how far a simple smile and words of encouragement can go. We have learned what it means not to take things for granted such as family, friends, or a home-cooked Shabbat meal. We only hope that our Shabbatot can continue to be a source of inspiration. The patients at NYU could always use more smiles. If you're interested in getting involved with visiting patients as a Bikur Cholim volunteer, we would love to have you join us.

To find out how to get more involved, please contact the authors of this article at Tkutner16@gmail.com or rivkiweiss@gmail.com

Meta-Opinions: An Opinion About Opinions Pieces

Rachel Renz Though the Observer is already onto its second issue of the year, I want to take this opportunity to share a bit about what, in my opinion, makes or breaks an Opinions piece. Entering my final year of undergraduate study, I have had ample opportunity to write for a variety of publications. Serving as a Jewish sections editor on the Beacon magazine, as well as a staff writer on the Commentator, I've had the privilege of writing, reading, editing, and considering a variety of writing forums and styles. As a student of literary theory who possesses a particular interest in not only the content that is written but the form in which it is conveyed, I have spent much time reflecting on what "makes" a piece of writing succeed in its goals. This article is intended both for prospective Opinions contributors as well as for those who wish to refute an Opinions piece.

It is crucial for an Opinions writer to include, either introductorily or subsequently, their self-contextualization, an acknowledgement of their background, context, influences, and qualifications, before beginning to express an opinion. The recognition that one's writing is a piece of opinion is crucial not only in terms of establishing humility (and popularity) with one's readership, but also for the purpose of creating a division between various journalistic components. While I would argue the primary purpose in current formal journalism is the dissemination of information, the primary purpose for opinions pieces is the dissemination of personal attitudes towards information, and therefore mustn't pose as information itself. An opinion is something that utilizes objective information, synthesizing it in order to create a unique perspective.

An Opinions piece should also provide the reader with bare-bones information. Research substantiates the proposed attitudes and beliefs and assists the reader in finding a basis in reality for the writer's views. By not accurately or entirely considering the multiplicity of factors that influence any given event, statement, or position, one does a disservice both to the reader, but also to

oneself, as the writer invalidates his own claims without grounding them in reality. As the New York Times Opinions guidelines read, "It is a common mistake to believe that columns and editorials, unlike news articles, do not need to be thoughtful and measured. In truth, writing a column or editorial takes more reporting, not less."

Perhaps the sorest spot an Opinions writer must come to terms with is the mandatory acknowledgement of a counterargument. It is quite easy to try and avoid including a counterargument. Only a weak response to one's counterargument would run the risk of gaining dissidents. A clear understanding of possible objections and counterarguments voiced only gains a writer credibility and the compliment that he's actually not an ignoramus, whatever his opinions may be. A strong counterargument, responded to with a strong opinion founded in a basis in reality, is absolutely crucial to a piece one desires to be considered legitimate.

Finally, make sure your opinion is of consequence. Unless your point is to mock the futility of pointless opinion articles, your opinion is not worth publication if it does not express a sincere desire for others to accept it. Prove it is of consequence, and not necessarily in the grandiose terms of preventing world hunger or bringing world salvation, but even on the basis that refuting it is ignorant or anti-intellectual. Whatever the case may be, one's opinion has to be made explicitly worthwhile to the reader.

These tips and guidelines are meant to serve not only in one's writing of Opinions pieces (thought that is, of course, of primary concern), but also in the equally crucial task as a reader, of deciphering and evaluating an opinion piece, checking its validity, reliability, and creating one's own opinion in response to it. Remember to question everything you read, of any form of journalism. But Opinions pieces perhaps beg that of the reader most vehemently, and are the product of such questioning most obviously.



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What is #GivingTuesday?

#GivingTuesday is a national movement transforming the way people think and talk about participate in philanthropy.

This Hanukkah support YU by giving the gift of scholarship.

Be part of the movement on December 3.

For more information and to pledge your gift today contact: studentshelpingstudents@yu.edu



#GIVINGTUESDAY

Who Cares About Syria?

Abigail Bachrach It is unfortunate that the question posed as the title of this piece should exist at all. Some may even find it offensive; I know I would. The words have not, as you may suggest, been taken out of context, nor is their perpetrator a cold and heartless human being. They are merely words of a Stern College student, a response elicited when asked if she had “heard about what’s going in Syria.” She is not an anomaly, nor an abnormality, she is just another member of the student body who, when asked to elaborate her thought process, explains that she is simply disinterested in discussing what is called ‘hard news’. Hard news is the media term for a subject matter that many of us know colloquially as ‘current events’. It is a discussion of serious topics of widespread significance. It can concern politics, business, or foreign affairs, natural disasters, or particularly horrible crimes—Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombing, and George Zimmerman’s acquittal are all examples.

The truth of the matter is, many at Stern speak more about whatever video is trending than about topics that qualify as hard news. Discussion and debate involve SNL skits instead of shootings in Capitol Hill, “twerking” at the VMAs to Twitter’s upcoming IPO, the Kanye-Kardashian baby to North Korea’s human rights abuses. When we do discuss such topics, our

conversations are brief and often short on detail. The recent government shutdown is on the figurative tongues that are our Facebook statuses, but when asked, seven out of the eight posters admitted to not knowing who Ted Cruz is (he is the senator whose filibuster prompted the shutdown). Five out of those seven could not identify John Boehner, the current Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Six could not differentiate Obamacare from the Affordable Care Act (they are the same thing) and all eight hesitated before responding.

If hard news is not the topic of discussion, then what is? The answer is never-ending and covers a vast array of responses. Popular contenders include something interesting learned in class, a d’var torah of particular note, class schedules, midterms and finals, and (duh) our homework. We gossip about new couples, engagements and imminent marriages, dating, potential shidduchim and break-ups, and all that such topics encompass. We complain about how tired or hungry or stressed we are, consider weekend plans, and compare dorms and notes and what we did over break. We discuss work (or the lack thereof), NCSY, HASC, internships, and the other projects we take on. A picture on Instagram you “haave to see,” Buzzfeed articles, the episode of How I Met Your Mother that happened last night, and current

events in Israel comprise even more. And then maybe, just maybe, we touch on the headlines we glanced at that morning, or listen to that lone friend share her opinion on a piece of hard news.

While discussions held in the caf and lounge seem to suggest that hard news is not of great importance to students at Stern College, this is incorrect. Many of us do care about Syria, and many of these students are reading the news. The vast majority of the twenty-odd students polled stated that they do scan the headlines of a large media outlet such as CNN, Fox, The Jerusalem Post, The Wall Street Journal, Huffington Post, or The New York Times. In fact, some students read one, two, or even more of these newspapers and/or sites. However, this awareness of current events seems not to translate to actual discussions.

Whether we like it or not, Stern College students are not speaking up about the news. This fact may extend to Yeshiva College, other college students, and far beyond the scope of this article’s reach. Why we do or do not talk about hard news is a matter for another place and another time. But the next time a member of your lunch table posse talks about current events, think about the fact that someone out there, does, in fact, care very much about Syria.

Let’s Transform The Cave: A Proactive Response to “Feeling Marginalized Uptown”

Sarina Miller I can’t change mehitzot or create a co-ed Beit Midrash. But I have some good news for the women of Stern College who feel marginalized uptown.

I, too, have ventured to Wilf for an event only to seek an escape from awkward encounters, have waited for a shuttle in Morg while some life-or-death sports game is on TV, and have searched desperately for a safe space for minhah.

That is, until I was let in on a secret—one that I am nervous to share lest it become invaded suddenly by the men of Wilf. It is a place I refer to fondly as The Cave. It is an abandoned locker room that sits unassumingly near the ladies room in the Heights Lounge—abandoned, except for the Stern women who seem to be davening minhah there at any given hour amidst suitcases, backpacks, and purses left trustingly to fend for themselves.

The men must think it haunted. One by one, the women descend the few stairs to The Cave—“to the restroom,” the men must think—only to never return. The Cave has even intrigued our fellow Stern women, with some speculating that it might be the destination of a hidden portal residing on the mysterious 245 Lexington Floor 2M, built as an initiative of YUConnects (see February 2013 issue of The Observer). Whatever purpose The Cave was initially intended to serve, the men are oblivious to its existence, and we were probably better off with that being the case. But I risk their awareness of it now because there is one

thing I’d like to change. And that is... must it really remain a cave? Why not transform it into—dare I say it? —a women’s lounge uptown!

Let’s gut it of the brown lifeless lockers (except for maybe a few usable ones to protect the stranded luggage). Replace the two pink chairs that sink too low when you sit— instead put in some couches, or tables, or we could go all out and order carpeting and bean bags. Rid it of the hanger-less coatrack supporting only siddurim (placed atop it by some knowing individual for the frequent daveners) and build some bookshelves! Why not create a women’s-only Beit Midrash, Margot-Reinstein-style (see August 2012 issue of The Observer)?

And, lest you think this vision farfetched, I’d like to introduce Dr. Chaim Nissel, University Dean of Students. In a meet-and-greet with Stern RA’s and GA’s during their training preceding Fall Orientation, Dr. Nissel asked the University Housing and Residence Life staff what they most loved and disliked about our university. Many RA’s saw the valuable opportunity in an audience who might constructively use their feedback for the better, and a lively discussion quickly ensued involving experiences Stern women face when spending time on the Wilf campus. Present at the meeting was RA Hadassah Tirschwell, who voiced that “the Yeshiva University campus should be a place where all students, male and female, should feel comfortable.” The popularity of RA Michal Schechter’s

recent article “Feeling Marginalized Uptown: A Stern Student’s Perspective”— with 140 current likes on Facebook—reflects a widespread feeling that the Wilf campus has much room for improvement by way of accommodating Stern women’s needs. Sitting before our very own Dean of Students with the support of a roomful of RA’s and GA’s was the prime opportunity to speak of the potential of our humble Cave as a stepping stone to greater women’s comfort on the men’s campus. So I spoke. And I left that meeting hopeful.

Dr. Nissel took notes on the location of The Cave, considered the potential to revamp it as a women’s lounge, and subsequently journeyed down the steps to The Cave to see the space himself. In a recent email correspondence with Dr. Nissel on October 7th, Dr. Nissel confirmed that he mentioned the idea to Vice President Jeff Rosengarten, who oversees facilities, and amazingly enough, they will be removing the lockers and securing furniture for the creation of ...drumroll please... a women’s only lounge, uptown.

I know nothing of the new design—whether there will be bean bags, or couches, or bookshelves for sefarim, but I know that the receptivity of our administration to a new kind of space, a women’s space, is a good thing. I await the day when The Cave becomes a space with so much women’s



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

JACKIE BENAYOUN
SCIENCE@YUOBSERVER.COM

The Science of Food

Ahava Muskat Many Stern girls can tell you a plethora of facts about various foods. Many Stern girls can tell you about the field of science. However, few Stern students know anything about the science of food. Food science, loosely defined as “the application of biological and physical sciences and engineering to food systems,” is a discipline of which few people have even heard. While this field may seem fairly specific, food science is as extensive as many other fields in the broader scientific world.

One aspect of food science is known as food microbiology. This crucial field deals with the pathogens, including bacteria, fungi and viruses that penetrate the food that we consume regularly. Food microbiology works like the human immune system in learning how to rid and slow down harmful agents. Scientists that work in this field have the vital job of keeping the food we ingest sterile and uninfected.

Another department under the larger umbrella of food science is food engineering and processing. This area is as complex as its description. The ultimate goal of a food engineer or processor is to learn how to manipulate different ingredients in food that affect its texture, taste, longevity, and appearance. For example, High Pressure Processing (HPP) or “cold pasteurization”, a technique which consists of subjecting food to a high level of hydrostatic pressure for a few minutes, falls under this category. HPP has the same effect as subjecting the food to an astounding ocean depth of roughly 37 miles deep, and is an environmentally-friendly process that helps maintain fresh food characteristics like flavor and nutrients. This relatively modern process kills bacteria without spoiling the food itself, and is a safe alternative to traditional thermal and chemical treatments. Plant innovation is a related field that is gaining popularity. Recently, the New York Times published an article about how plant innovation is progressing in the search to create a better tasting, better looking and more healthy tomato.

Nutrition is obviously central in food

science. Food engineers often strive to create delicious food that are both low in calorie and fat, but will satisfy the consumer. Similarly, nutritionists study how to integrate proteins and fiber into food and how to decrease caloric content in natural ingredients. Food scientists constantly work with the growing vitamin and nutrient deficiency that is common in the population. To insert vitamin blends and raw nutrients requires extensive research, tremendous creativity, and specialization. For instance, nutritionists have recently discovered that heating tomatoes raises the level of lycopene in the body, which is a cancer-fighting phytochemical. No complaints —this kind of research gives consumers a good excuse to eat pizza!

Agricultural scientists have a pretty hands-on job. The purpose of their job is pure research. This may take place in a classic laboratory or office, or sometimes even out in the “wild”. Many agricultural scientists study live animals or crops in their natural environment to learn how to best process and package foods to ensure food safety, quality and convenience. Some food science researchers focus on ecology and how all organisms interact with each other. This is imperative, for example, in the study of water filtration.

Another fascinating area of food science is sensory analysis. According to the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, sensory analysis “uses human senses to consistently measure such food characteristics as taste, texture, smell, and appearance in a controlled environment.” In a nutshell, this area consists of controlled experiments with real-life consumers surveying what they would choose to eat and buy. Basically, sensory food scientists are the final stop in consumption creation. These scientists take all the information gathered by other scientists and determine how they affect the sensory components of food. Essentially, they make our food taste, feel, and smell appealing.

There are many other people that work in the food industry, such as agricultural managers, food technicians, flavor chemists, and package designers—to name a few. According to California Polytechnic University, “the demand for food science graduates exceeds the number of degrees awarded”; a consideration for students in today’s economy. Nate Armbrust, a Product Development Specialist of Pacific Foods of Oregon, described his job: “I get to do new things every day at work. I might do chemical and micro lab work, tests on new enzymes, nutritional analysis for labeling, or maybe set up a sensory test. The best part of my job is the satisfaction of seeing a new product through from start to finish.” As of September 2013, the median salary for food scientists was \$64,837—not too shabby to be working with food all day long! Food science is the way of the future, so throw away your books, grab a chocolate bar and research it as your new academic goal for the upcoming semester!



Prenatal Whole Genome Sequencing: an Ethical Dilemma

Allison Tawil The age-old axiom “time will tell” may not be so true anymore. Thanks to the growing technology of human genome sequencing and its shrinking price, it is becoming easier than ever to know one’s genetic “future.”

As the price of whole genome sequencing continues to fall, DNA screenings are becoming readily available to people who require it, such as those who are pre-disposed to fatal diseases. At the same time, experts are becoming increasingly skeptical about some of the uses of genome sequencing. Last summer, the New York Times reported that the first prenatal human genome was sequenced. Although this is a major step for couples at risk of having a child with genetic diseases, critics argue that it is a completely uncalled-for technique that will harm society rather than help it.

Until now, the technology of diagnosing disease in a fetus was limited to screening for specific genes that would immediately affect the fetus. However, with prenatal whole genome sequencing, information that is arguably unnecessary for the immediate welfare of the parents and the child is revealed. When sequencing a genome, there are known genes that code for carrier genes and predisposition genes, and there are still many genes that are not completely understood or related to observed traits. A predisposition gene can be helpful for adults that have a documented family history of a cancer and want to check their own likelihood of contracting it. Yet experts worry that because there are so many lethal genes in each person’s DNA, if parents are

told that their child has certain predisposition or carrier genes, or even a gene that is linked to aggressive behavior; the parents may immediately panic from the overwhelming information and choose to abort a normal fetus. Most human genomes do contain mutations and a degree of lethality, but to the average layperson, this information is worrisome.

Another objection to whole genome sequencing of a fetus is that an unborn child will lose his or her “right to know” and future autonomy. A person will know his/her susceptibility to develop late onset conditions which can cause anxiety as this child grows up. Therefore, some argue that the only information parents should be given is only that which will have an immediate impact on their lives or their child’s life. Of course, the issue of what should be included in this delicate category is one laden with deep ethical questions and ramifications, and must be studied further and codified.

If prenatal genome sequencing would become a common practice for every expecting couple, the fear of some sort of “eugenics” would also arise. Eugenics, or the theory of improving the genetic quality of the population by promoting the reproduction of people with desired traits, was a popular theory in Nazi Germany. In recent times, the issue of eugenics became relevant when experts were considering pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD). PGD is a process that is not dissimilar to whole genome sequencing. PGD is done during in vitro fertilization as a means to diagnose embryos before they are selected and implanted. After an egg is fertilized in the laboratory, it grows

into an embryo with more cells. Once the embryo is a couple of days old, a cell is removed from the embryo and its DNA is tested. If the cell’s DNA is found to be problematic, that embryo will not be implanted into the mother. The process can be used for diagnosing heritable diseases, such as Huntington’s disease. It is specific to the mutations that the doctor and researchers search for.

PGD has also been used to choose the gender of an embryo before it is implanted. Some worry that this technology would lead to a skewed ratio of men to women. For example, in Israel, to assure that this sex selection does not cause a skewed population, there is a rigorous process to get preapproved for sex selection. Each couple requesting sex selection must get their request approved by a specially appointed board. This board determines case-by-case if the sex selection should be permitted. The skepticism that surrounds the possible negative outcomes of PGD—such as a skewed population and eugenics—is indicative of the opposition that accompanies pre-natal whole genome sequencing, a more extensive and informative process.

Although technology is advancing rapidly, it is important for parents to carefully consider and analyze the benefits and risks of deciding whether or not to sequence a genome prenatally. Undoubtedly, the affordability of such a technique is exciting to some but is an ethical question that must be challenged. As more and more cutting-edge technologies become available to our generation, we have to realize that great responsibility should always accompany knowledge.

Guide to Pre-Health Extracurricular Activities

Jackie Benayoun If you’re new to campus or merely unsure of all the pre-health, science-friendly opportunities that Stern has to offer; keep reading. As you may already know, Stern has more biology majors than food options in the Caf. That being said, you may think that you’re just like every other science student, right? Wrong! I mean maybe you are, but if you want to distinguish yourself and gain some practical work experience there are many ways to get involved. Here’s a compilation of available extracurricular activities available at Stern and in the NYC area:

Research: Even if it’s your first semester taking a lab class, it’s never too early to start getting your hands wet, literally. Wet lab and clinical research is a valuable asset of being a pre-health student, and it’s as easy as emailing a professor. All major laboratories, universities, and hospitals conduct research year-round so it may be worth contacting someone and getting your lab coat ready. From biology to physics labs, lab work is useful in delving into a deeper area of science and in exploring original work.

Tutoring: There are many opportunities to tutor underprivileged students in the city, which is a huge chesed in and of itself. Subjects range from history to biology, and many of these programs are initiated and run by YU students. Some of the schools are located as close as 33rd Street while some are in the Heights. Programs include START science, the Height’s Initiative, Norman Thomas Tutors, Helping Hands, and peer tutoring right here on campus.

Hospitals: Whether you’re looking for a candy striper job, a clerical position, or want to work as an intern in an Emergency department, there are many ways to gain experience in a hospital setting. If you plan on becoming a nurse, OT, or doctor, this may be related to your future career and it would most definitely be worthwhile to get a position. Hospitals like NYU Langone, Beth Israel, Montefiore, St. Lukes and Sloan Kettering all have volunteer departments and applications are available on their websites. If you are on-campus for Shabbat, you can also visit sick patients at NYU Langone through the Bikur Cholim

program. There’s also TEACH (Together Educating All Children in Hospitals), a program where students design and implement a series of science and humanities modules for patients and their siblings in different hospital.

Summer/Winter-Break Programs: Different departments in Stern run programs that appeal to students, and certainly to pre-Health students. For example, the CJF runs Torah Tours as well as summer and winter missions to Israel and to different parts of the U.S. and South America. There are many programs that the CJF runs, so stop by their office for brochures (the building next to 245 Lex) or look out for their emails. Other summer/winter programs that are run more exclusively for science majors include the Bar Ilan summer program, Roth, SERC, Hackensack University summer internship Program, and winter-break internships for sophomores.

Clubs: There are more clubs in Stern than it’s possible to keep track of, which makes it easy to get involved. Some clubs

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The Brain: Not Just Interesting to Zombies Anymore

Yael Horvath The ambiguities of the brain have been studied over the years, as researchers search for the secrets of its operation. One such research project has recently culminated in a revolutionary technological breakthrough, with implications for both the vast, unexplored territory of neuroscience and the field of medical ethics. Medical ethics has delved into alternative reproductive techniques with vigor, but it is possible that the new wave of neuro-scientific technologies will avert the attention of skeptics, primarily because of its newness.

Rajesh Rao, engineer of the brain-interfacing apparatus, sat in his lab on August 12, 2013, wearing a cap with electrodes hooked up to a machine that measures electrical activity in the brain. Stocco, the other research participant, sat in his own laboratory across campus, wearing a purple swim cap with a magnetic stimulation coil that was placed directly over the part of the brain that controls hand movement—the motor cortex.

Rao began the brain interfacing process by looking at a computer screen and playing a video game—but only with his mind. When he was supposed to fire cannon at a target, he only imagined moving his right hand hitting the “fire” button with the cursor. Almost instantaneously, Stocco, who wore noise-canceling ear buds and wasn’t even looking at a computer screen, involuntarily moved his right index finger to push the space bar in front of him, as if he were firing the cannon in Rao’s game.

How can this unnatural phenomenon be explained? Though this may seem the stuff of sci-fi relics, a ground-breaking discovery was made this past August when researchers at the University of Washington performed the first noninvasive human to human brain interface. During the interface, one researcher sent brain signals to control the hand motions of another researcher in a separate room via the internet.

According to Stocco, this groundbreaking technology shows a major progression in the use of technology. “...The internet was a way to connect computers, and now it can be a way to connect brain. We want to take the knowledge of the brain and transmit it directly from brain to brain.”

The mechanism behind this technique is actually rooted in machines that are used on a daily basis by medical professionals. Both Electroencephalography (EEG) and Transcranial magnetic

different neurons will activate and produce a due response. In this case, the coil was placed directly over the brain region that controls a person’s right hand, which is why Stocco’s brain automatically registered the stimulation and commanded a response to move his right hand.

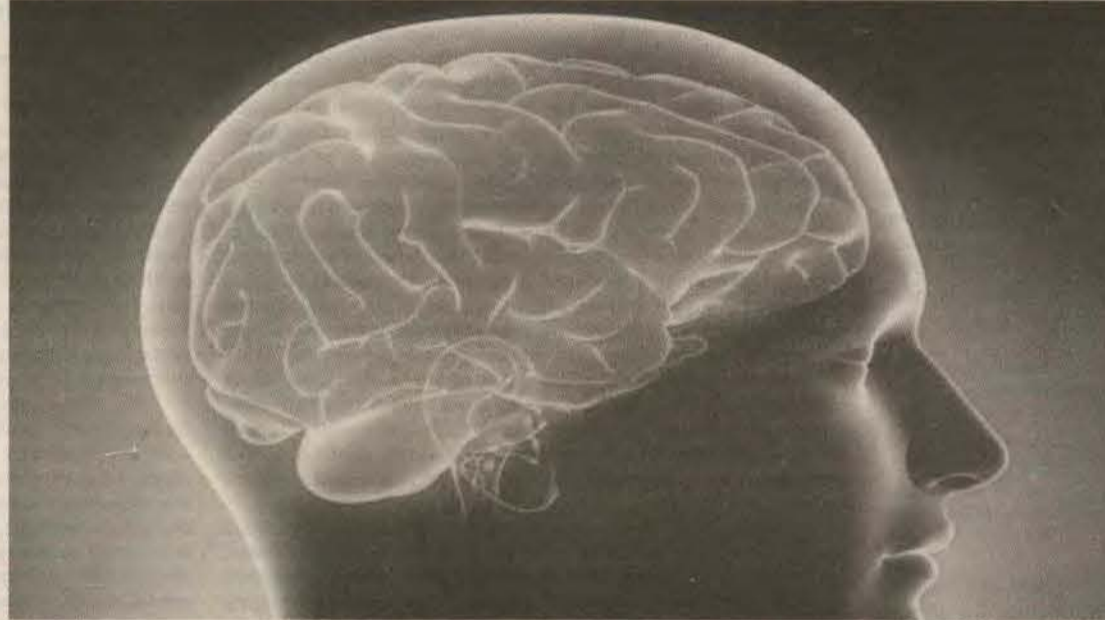
Though brain-to-brain interfacing has never been accomplished until now, researchers at Duke University have demonstrated brain communication between two rats, while researchers at Harvard were able to show interfacing between a human and a rat. Still, Stocco and Rao’s technology can only read certain kinds of brain signals—and not a person’s thoughts.

Should a tentative “yet” be punctuated at the end of that sentence? Will there come a day in the near future when esoteric, intangible thoughts will be coded into data? Will researchers be able to quantify and manipulate our thoughts and find a way to form brain communication involving not just motor actions, but also the simulation of certain feelings? Even memories?

According to Juan Enriquez, founding director of the Harvard Business school life-sciences project, the answer is an emphatic yes. He says that researchers at MIT are currently attempting to tag a retrovirus with fluorescent markers to map out the exact pathways that are stimulated when a mouse sees, feels, touches, remembers, and loves. These emotions can be imaged in two colors, meaning that they can actually download this information as binary code directly into a computer.

He believes that it’s not inconceivable that someday people will be able to download their own memories, perhaps even into a different body. And that maybe, people will be able to upload other people’s memories as well.

Even President Obama is willing to invest in projects that are this... well, cool. He’s announced a one-billion dollar effort to unlock the mysteries of the human brain.



stimulation (TMS) are already well-known and used routinely by clinicians and researchers—EEG is used to record brain activity from the scalp, and TMS is a way of delivering stimulation to the brain to elicit a response. Both processes are noninvasive.

The surface layer of the brain, the cerebral cortex, is divided into sections that are each responsible for a specific function. By placing the TMS coil on different parts of the brain,

Substance Addiction: A Lost Cause?

Dahlia Pasik A friend of mine was casually Skyping with a friend in the wee hours of the night when one of her apartment-mates stepped through the door, tipsy and knocking things over. This girl hadn’t even made it past the doormat when she irrepressibly vomited all over the floor. My friend, of course, was quite taken-aback. She quickly ended the Skype call and began to clean up after her roommate, who literally just bared it all after having a little too much fun at a party.

I was pretty disgusted when I heard this story. I knew alcohol consumption was widespread in most universities and among teens, but I hadn’t really expected to hear stories of it going on at Stern. Although this may have (hopefully) been a singular event, it is common knowledge that substance addiction is not. In fact, scientists have studied the matter closely and concluded that intoxication and drug abuse causes the consumer to experience a release of pleasure-inducing-chemicals in the brain, called endorphins. Because drugs and alcohol can have such a powerful physiological grip on a person, my question then became whether drinking was purely attributed to social pressure. And if that’s the case, is there any hope for substance addicts or are they a lost cause?

As reported by the CDC, an estimated one million teenagers abuse drugs or alcohol, and more than 695,000 are addicted to tobacco. During 2010-2011, the agency found that around 4 percent of teens were dependent on or abused alcohol. Around 5 percent of teens had an illicit drug use disorder in the past year. Additionally, the amount of drug intake, as well as the type of drug used, varied with age. Among teens ages 12 to 13, 1.3 percent used marijuana, compared with 6.7 percent of 14- to 15-year-olds and 15.1 percent of 16- to 17-year-olds.

The early stages of alcoholism can include a range of symptoms. Warning signs of the addictive disorder include frequent intoxication coupled with an established pattern of heavy drinking even in dangerous situations (i.e. driving). Other signs of alcoholism include black-out drinking or a drastic change in

demeanor while drinking, typically escalating in rage or violence. Obviously, there is an insurmountable amount of societal damage that alcoholics as well as drug abusers cause on a daily basis. On average, in every 53 minutes, someone is killed in a drunk driving crash. In 2011 alone, an estimated 9,878 people were killed by drunk driving. Additionally, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the people involved in the following crimes tested positive for drugs: Burglary, forgery, weapons, public disturbance, homicide, prostitution, destruction of property, and sexual offenses.

Furthermore, alcohol and drug abusers commonly suffer from serious diseases. Cigarettes contribute to the death toll from cancer and heart disease. The needles used to inject heroin and cocaine are spreading AIDS. Directly or indirectly, addiction to drugs and alcohol is thought to account for a third of all hospital admissions, a quarter of all deaths, and a majority of serious crimes. In the U.S. alone, the combined medical and social costs of drug abuse are believed to exceed \$240 billion! Based on the debilitating symptoms that addicts suffer and the accompanying damage that they cause it seems rather obvious that alcohol and drug abusers must seek a cure. However, before exploring the ways in which these confirmed addicts seek help, there is a more pulling question. And that is, why start with the alleged poison in the first place?

There is published evidence that the surge of dopamine in addicts’ brains is what triggers the “high” experienced by drug abusers and alcoholics alike. Chemically speaking, the molecule dopamine is a neurotransmitter that transports messages from one neuron within the brain to another and is directly associated with feelings of elevation and bliss. Dopamine levels in the brain can be elevated by things ranging from a friendly hug to a good test grade; as well as by the potent high that come from drugs and alcohol. Scientists believe that dopamine is the master molecule behind addiction.

Now that the reason behind the allurements of addiction

is understood, the obvious follow-up is methods of treatment. Unfortunately, patients entering into clinical care for their addictive behaviors are often seen as “lost causes” by physicians. Dr. David Lewis, the director of the Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies at Brown University School of Medicine, states, “By relying so heavily on a criminalized approach, we’ve only added to the stigma of drug abuse and prevented high-quality medical care.” Because of this stigmatized approach in treatment of the addiction, only one third of the \$15 billion the U.S. assigns for the war on drugs goes to prevention and treatment.

Interestingly, when treatment is prescribed, the recovery process normally does not involve any type of medication. Current research suggests that the biochemical abnormalities associated with addiction can be primarily reversed through learning. Therefore, physicians should encourage psychosocial interventions, ranging from psychotherapy to 12-step programs; treatments that are proven to help.

So, after sifting through a good amount of research on alcohol and drug addiction, I realized that my former reaction of disgust to the occurrence of alcohol at Stern needed a complete reversal. It is precisely the narrow-minded approach that I previously had that causes the stigmatization of alcoholics. The “lost cause” approach as well as the “failure to society” label does more harm than good. I know that the extremely wasted Stern girl was most probably not a singular event—and I am fairly certain that alcohol consumption is even more rampant at the YU dorms. However, I realize now that these addicts are screaming for our help. If we change the way we view these addicts, unknowingly self-destructing their lives, the number of them will decrease and the well-being and maintenance of society will be restored. By starting small—i.e., the YU population—perhaps the sincere, non-judgmental mindset can spread to a larger scale. And hopefully, I won’t be hearing any further stories of collapsing, vomiting Stern girls anytime soon.

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that may be of interest to science majors include the biology, chemistry, psychology, neuroscience, genetics, and physics clubs. Clubs that may be of interest specifically for pre-health students are: pre-med, pre-dent, pre-optometry, OT, PT, speech and hearing, nursing, and P.A. clubs. Other clubs of general interest: nutrition, environmental society, public health, active minds, blood drive, global health, health & fitness, pre-engineering, recycle4sick, sharsheret (raising breast cancer awareness), public health, and the Medical Ethics Society.

Chessed: Chessed is a great thing to do, well, because it's chessed. There are various ways to help out, many of which are familiar and not Stern-specific, but just as a refresher, here goes the list: Yachad, Ohel, and Mishkan run programs for people with special needs. Camps Simcha, HASC, Chai Lifeline, and Kaylie also help special needs or sick children. Challah4hunger and the Agunah aAdvocacy club are YU affiliated. Marathons to raise money for worthy causes take place at regular intervals of the year as well.

Published work: This is something graduate schools are looking for regardless of your field, and there's recently been an increasing emphasis for those entering science professions. Science related publications and presentations include: Derech hateva, Women in Science, the Undergraduate Research Abstract Journal, SURGE, the poster competition, and drumroll please.....the Sci-Tech section of the Observer :)

With all of that being said, here are some general tips for surviving the rigorous Pre-health education at Stern:

1) Reach out to people, no matter how important they are. If you really like a professor's class or enjoyed a lecture given at an event, get in touch with the professor/lecturer for further opportunities. Maybe they have an available position in their lab or are seeking interns for a project; you never know. And one thing is for sure—it never hurts to ask.

2) Get on Dr. Lowey's pre-health list and take advantage of YuCareerlink. The pre-health list-serve is intended for all pre-health students and is a useful resource for hearing about job fairs, internships, and lectures.

3) Take advantage of being in school in NYC. Not many students are as privileged as we are to be in school in NYC, so it's definitely worth taking full advantage of. Besides for being a social hotspot, many top hospitals and labs are located here. From volunteering at a soup kitchen to getting more involved in environmentalism, there are many opportunities to explore. With NYC's diverse population, the city is a great place to learn and grow as a future health provider. Now that I've personally advertised for every hospital, club, and program out there; just remember one thing—this is your opportunity to make a difference!

Should we be Worried about GMOs?

Naamah Plotzker Food shopping is somewhat more inconvenient and particularly more expensive for those who opt for organic food over conventionally-grown foods (grown using pesticides). For those who don't demand organic, they are advised to at least wash their produce thoroughly before eating to prevent ingestion of the pesticides on the surface of the food. It is unknown whether ingesting pesticides from food is dangerous in the long-term, but it is known that their application during growing can cause damage to both the environment and workers. The question for many of those who cannot afford organic comes down to this: Is there another way? Can food grown safely and environmentally-friendly also be plentiful and affordable?

Biotechnology, an area of science that uses natural processes found in living organisms in innovative ways, seeks to make more options available not only to relatively wealthy consumers in first-world countries, but also to the hungriest, poorest people in third-world countries. What changes in the food-growing process can biotechnology implement to increase the affordability of food? One of biotechnology's major innovations is the process of genetic engineering. Developed in the 1970s, genetic engineering is the process of locating useful genes in one organism, such as a species of bacteria, and inserting these genes into other organisms that do not have them naturally to transform their biological activity. A gene that has been added to a new organism in such a way is called a transgene, and an organism that has been genetically engineered is called a genetically modified organism (GMO). Agricultural biotechnology is one of the most significant applications of genetic engineering, in which crops grown for mass consumption, such as soy, maize, cotton, and rice, are genetically modified (GM) to exhibit traits that are agriculturally useful. Such traits include the ability to resist the relatively safe and environmentally-friendly herbicide Roundup*, produce toxins that act as insecticides to harmful insect pests, and produce vitamin A.

Another GM crop that can be extremely beneficial to human health is Golden Rice, still under development. In Golden Rice, the b-carotene metabolic pathway is altered to cause the rice to produce vitamin A, which is frequently deficient in the populations of many poor countries. Vitamin A deficiency leads to blindness and sometimes even death, so its intake is essential. Decreased use of harmful herbicides, decreased pesticide use, a reduction in the number of people suffering from vitamin A deficiency, and the promise of many more possibilities to come—all of these biotechnological innovations sound great, right?

Maybe. Since GM crops are relatively new and their commercial cultivation only began in the mid-1990, there is much concern and skepticism over unknown consequences,

especially on humans. Some of the questions that plague researchers include whether GM crops have sufficient nutritional quality and are truly safe to consume. Scientists also wonder whether Roundup* is indeed safer than other herbicides and if insect-resistant crops may unintentionally harm unintended populations of species. Most importantly, there is a possibility that GM crops can hybridize uncontrollably with wild-type varieties to form invincible "super weeds" which can lead to the production of "super bugs", thus altering species and potentially the delicate ecological balance.

War wages in the scientific community among those studying GMOs. While most research has found little cause for concern, some studies have shown GM crops to have negative effects on species that consume them or on the environment around them. Some long-term or multi-generational studies have shown differences between animals fed GM crops and those not fed GM crops and include differences in cell morphology, biochemical composition and activity, nutritional consumption, and organ size. Other studies demonstrated harmful effects on non-target insects by insect-resistant GM crops. Due to these serious concerns about the side effects of GM crops, more than 60 countries around the world, including Australia, Japan, and most European countries, place significant restrictions or outright bans on the production and sale of GMOs. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the government has approved GMOs based on scientific studies, many of which are conducted by the corporations that created GMOS and profit from their sale. Furthermore, in the U.S. as much as 80% of conventional processed foods contain GMOs. Therefore, Americans are becoming cautious about the consumption of GMOs and petitioning for mandatory labeling, and stronger regulations.

Most scientists seem to be in favor of GM produce, finding scientifically insignificant differences between the nutritional quality and toxicology of GM versus non-GM crops. Overall, these studies have been widely criticized by the scientific community as having faulty methodology not up to industry standards, and proponents of GM products feel that it is unfair to stigmatize them when they can be a tremendous force for good, based on a few poor studies. On the other hand, are the voices of those researchers who may have found genuine concerns being silenced due to the biases of most scientists? Or rather, the biases of the billion dollar companies, like Monsanto, which finance GM produce?

One reason that agricultural biotechnology stirs up so much controversy is that nature as we know it will never be the same. Hybridization of GM plants with non-GM plants cannot truly be controlled, and as a result, transgenes will continue to increase and spread. In 30 years, we may find ourselves living on an alien planet, a planet whose fruits and vegetables are so unrecognizable, it almost seems unnatural.

NEXT MONTH IN STERN...

November 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Parshas Toldos
3	4 SCW Midterms	5 SCW Midterms	6 SCW Midterms	7 SCW Midterms	8	9 Parshas Vayetzei
10 Beren Campus Open House	11	12	13	14	15	16 Parshas Vayishlach
17 Wilf Campus Open House	18	19	20	21	22	23 Parshas Vayeshev
24	25	26	27	28 ThanksgivingBreak Chanukah	29 ThanksgivingBreak Chanukah	30 Parshas Miketz Chanukah

RAQUEL MILLER