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Touro College Manhattan Divisions

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THE INDEPENDENT

VOL. XXV. NO. 7.

THE VOICE OF TOURO COLLEGE, MANHATTAN DIVISIONS

SPRING 1997

WOMEN'S MINYAN ROCKS QUEENS

News Analysis

By MICHAL ARIELI

Hillcrest — a quiet, suburban neighborhood on the east side of Queens, where the streets are tree-lined with ranch style homes and freshly mowed lawns. If one would drive through the silent, pleasant roads of this upper to middle-class community, it would be difficult to detect the bitter controversy that is slowly gnawing away at the sturdy foundation that holds this community together. This strife has spilled over to the frum community at large, causing a major tumult between religious sects.

A group of women gather in a basement on Shabbos morning once a month. They daven, sing, and read from the Torah. These women are Orthodox, not Conservative or Reform. The reason that they formed this

exclusive minyan, they profess, is their inability to pray at a regular Shabbos morning prayer. They claim that they are unable to concentrate on their tefillos due to the excessive talking and noise. Moreover, they feel that they were not part of the Shabbos morning services since they were unable to participate, and thus felt like mere spectators.

Although their reasons appear valid, the motions taken by these women were far from appropriate. Nor were their actions in the spirit of Jewish tradition. There may be nothing halachically forbidden about conducting a women's minyan. However, halacha is not the issue

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A LANDMARK FOR TOURO

Corbett's Legacy

By ALISA SEPTIMUS

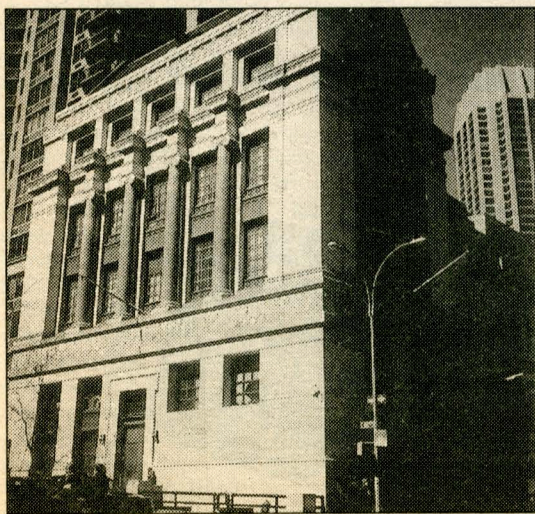
Like most of the buildings in the Big Apple, Touro College stands dutifully aligned with its army of neighbors along Lexington Avenue. Yet there is a distinguished aura to its obeying presence. It is refined; a vision of class and beauty lies in its humble dignity.

On January 11, 1977, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public meeting and declared that this site at 160 Lexington Avenue, as landmark (LP-0949). It was recognized as being both architecturally and historically unique. The architect, the building and its original students possess a distinguished history. If you listen closely to the walls and stare intently at the glass window panes toward sunset, you may see the shadows and hear the whispers of the talented women for whom this building was designed.

This may just be my warped romantic feeling, but there are uncanny similarities between the source and its heir. 160 Lexington Avenue was originally built in 1908 for the New York School of Applied Design for Women. The school, in existence since 1892, had been in rented quarters at 200 West 23rd street, ironically located just two blocks from today's Touro men's division.

The goal of the design school was that "...of affording to women instruction in areas such as book illustration which may enable them to earn a livelihood by employment of their taste and manual dexterity in the application of ornamental design to manufacture in the arts." [Landmarks Preservation Commission May, 10, 1977] The school fulfilled its

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The Touro Women's Division, at 160 Lexington Avenue.

Touro Students Reflect on Bosnia



Protest in Belgrade.

Jews Against Genocide

By DEVORAH KLAHR

Eileen Weiss is an actress, but she has another job: she is a member of The New York Committee to Save Bosnia, a subcommittee of Jews Against Genocide. The group started four years ago when Marlin Stone, a professor of twentieth-century fascism, gave a speech about the atrocities that were taking place in Bosnia. Afterwards, a few members of the audience decided to meet regularly for this cause. Their goal is to make New Yorkers aware of the situation, and to keep Bosnia alive as an issue. Typically, they set up demonstrations, lobby politicians, organize teach-ins and conferences and candle light vigils, and hand out thousands of fliers. Weiss, who had spent the rainy day walking up and down a street as she was filming a scene for a show for CBS, seemed to have a slight cold from her experience, but she is devoted to the cause, and so, at 8:30 p.m. she trekked uptown to the group's bimonthly meeting, this time in a studio apartment on the 3rd floor of the corner building at 76th and West End Avenue.

As the host hurried around the small room to place dip, a bowl of chips, and drinks onto a small table in the corner of the room, Weiss and the other attendees for this evening's meeting — a publicist, a money manager, an artist, and a family therapist — stood around and mingled. One member is using a pseudonym. Since his family is from Northern Croatia, he doesn't want to use his last name; he asked to be called Peter Carlson. He is a money manager, and his job comes in handy to the group. A while back he worked for a German bank. When the group asked him if he could make photocopies of fliers, he replied, "Sure." And so, one day at the bank he made 10,000 copies. For obvious reasons, he requested that the name of the bank "remain nameless."

Jim Andrews is a new attendee. He is an artist who spent the last eight months working as a humanitarian volunteer. He explained his experience to the group: "I taught art to children in Yugoslavia in refugee camps," he paused, and then continued, "the Politically Correct word is center, as in refugee centers—in case you didn't know—they all call them refugee centers." One of the founders of the

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A Visit to Belgrade

By CHAIM ESTULIN

Those simple yet immortal words that were spoken to the burning city of Los Angeles: "Can't we get along?" If only someone would have found it appropriate to have enlightened the warring factions of Yugoslavia with these words of Rodney King, during their heated battles of the first half of this decade. For four years, neighbors and friends fought on opposite sides, in a very fierce and bloody civil war, or, for some, a war for autonomy. History in this Balkan country is ever-present; what occurred five hundred years ago is as if it is happening now, and, in a sense, it is.

What surprised me first, upon arriving at Belgrade's central train station, on January 23 of this year, was how far this city was from the war. The pictures in the American press of burning cities and broken people were not of this capital city. Although its brothers and sons were drafted into the army, the city itself survived quite well; cafes still served coffee, night clubs still played gyrating music and beggars still roamed the dirty streets. Underlying the superficial

normalcy, though, was the unease that, although a peace treaty has been signed at Dayton, the war has not resolved anything and, any day, the horror of the previous years will return. Also, there were massive protests going on twenty-four hours a day against the government.

For five days I had an opportunity to meet the natives, and feel the pain they are going through, recovering from the disastrous mental and economic effects from the war and the sanctions that the UN imposed because of it. For some, this is a time for the nation to grow up, to look forward, to merge with the western world so that the next generation may live in a peaceful environment that for the first time in centuries will not need to send its children to war.

"I fought against the Nazis, my father fought against the Austrians," one elderly gentleman noted, "my son had Tito and my grandson needed to run to Australia to escape from the fighting in Bosnia." There are 40,000 Serb youths who have left the

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RABBI AND REBBITZEN MEIR AND TICA STIMLER

An Appreciation

BY DEAN LUCHINS

"Show me Your face" Moses pleads with the Creator. "You may not see My face," the Lord answers, "but only My back." (From the Shabbat Chol haMoed Torah reading, the first we read after Rav Stimler's passing.)

The Rabbis explain this strange dialogue in striking allegorical fashion. Moshe Rabbeinu, the law giver, certainly understood that even he could not see the infinite. Rather, he was asking, in the wake of the Golden Calf tragedy, to be allowed to understand the flow and logic of human history as directed by the Divine Hand. "Show me your face," he begs, "let me understand the inexplicable and appreciate even the reasons for the unthinkable."

Rabbi Yissachar Frand notes that if what you see is the back of a magnificent needlepoint, all you see is a jumble of threads in illogical fashion. If you turn it around you gaze on a thing of beauty whose message is easily grasped.

So too as Moshe asks to be shown the front of the Divine Plan - the final needlework of the human dialectic - the Almighty counters with the message that the best even a Moses can achieve is to see the back of the Divine needlepoint - the jumble of seemingly unrelated and often contradictory threads - knowing that they are somehow essential to a meaningful final picture.

The Touro family has borne the pain of two terrible losses. Twice, less than five months apart, we gathered in tears to bid farewell to two extraordinary individuals whose dignity,

courage and love touched so many of our lives.

Rabbi Meir Stimler came back to Touro 12 years ago. Came back - because he was a founding member of the Touro kollel in the early 1970's before he embarked on a career in the Rabbinate in Chattanooga, Trenton and, since 1981, Pelham Parkway, where he became our family's local Rav, our community's peerless mentor, and one of our school's most inspiring Torah personalities.

At first he taught a halacha class in the Women's Division. Then it was two classes. And then two of halacha and two of hashkafa. And such courses. Soaring tours of the Ramchal and Maharal. Advanced Choshen Mishpat classes. A grasp for students that left them excited and sharing his contagious enthusiasm for the Torah he loved so deeply. The Torah that took him from Kingsbridge to Rav Moshe Feinstein's Beit Medrash on the Lower East Side to the Touro Men's Division, where his historic role was cut short, far too soon. He had a vision and dream for the Men's Division. The men of Touro knew he cared about them. And they reciprocated with a respect and affection that bordered on reverence.

And then there was Tica. The vital brio of her Greek ancestry blended with the passion of a loving mother, the skill of a master teacher and the loyalty of an exceptional friend. Childhood sweethearts, partners in so many ways. It was hard to imagine one of them without the other - and now they are together again - this time forever.

How do you take the measure of majesty? How do you begin to translate into words a legacy that by its very nature was subtle yet firm, sublime yet ever so lasting?

The anguished calls. The Touro graduates refusing to believe the news. The students telling of the teacher who cared so deeply for them. The memories of a vibrant Shabbat table. The unanswered questions. The aching void.

But let us wipe away the tears and celebrate all that Hashem gave us. The lessons. The inspiration. The friendship. The children (and how fortunate we are at the Women's Division to be graced with Elisheva, who combines her mother's understated nobility with her father's unstinting personal integrity).

Let us wipe away the tears and remember what Rabbi Meir Stimler said at Tica's funeral: "If Hashem had only granted me one Sheva Brochot with my wife before He took her back, I would have no claims on His justice - but only profound thanks for His kindness."

Yes it hurts to realize they are both gone. But what better way to accept the seemingly unacceptable but to affirm, as he did so movingly, our thanks for the gifts we were given.

Maybe, just maybe, the jumble of threads on the back of the needlepoint may be what holds our attention, but as we look deeply into ourselves and remember how they touched our lives, perhaps the face begins to become clearer as well.

"Hashem has given, Hashem has taken, may His name be Blessed."

The staff of
The Independent extends
its heartfelt condolences
to the Stimler family
on the untimely passing of
our beloved teacher and Rebbe
RABBI MEIR STIMLER ZT"l

*Hamakom y'nachem
osom b'soch sha'ar
aveilei tziyon v'yrushalayim*

CHESSED: HOOKED ON HELPING

By DIDI MANDELBAUM

Imagine waking up in the morning knowing you are forced to spend the day in bed. You can not sit up by yourself. Your range of movement does not even include being able to feed yourself without spilling. You are sensitive to sunshine. How could you possibly attempt to be happy in such a situation?

Dora lives this kind of life. She is happy, so happy that when I watch her I learn about joy.

It began with a phone call. My cousin Channie needed a partner. She volunteered at the Jewish Geriatric Center, feeding patients breakfast. I was in a slump at the time, and thought to myself, "What what better way to jump-start my day than with a mitzvah." I figured it was a good way to get myself out of bed early in the morning, so why not give it a shot. I bounded out

of my house at six thirty AM ready to make my mark on the world. I felt full of myself. I got up early. My cousin and I arrived at the Geriatric Hospital at seven thirty.

As we entered the first room, I braced myself for an annoyed reaction from the patient, Dora. There she lay, a soundly sleeping eighty-five year old woman in her hospital bed. We were basically coming into her room and waking her up for breakfast. I know that if someone barged into my quarters in the morning, I would be put off. But as soon as this woman opened her eyes, her face lit up in recognition and she exclaimed "Channelleh!" We adjusted her bed to a sitting position, and Channie went through the motions. Dora was

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Introducing Touro's VERY OWN LITERARY JOURNAL

The Stonehendge

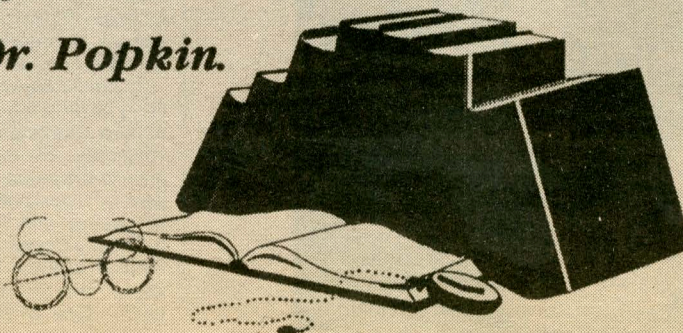
We are offering four \$25 prizes to the best poems or short stories submitted by the end of the semester.

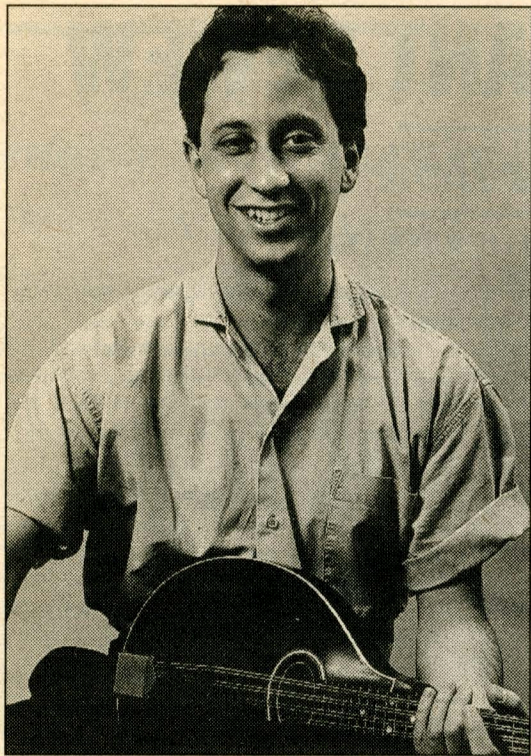
Give entries to Judy Blau or Dr. Popkin.

If you don't see either of us

put it in Dr. Popkin's Box.

Good Luck!





Jeff Warschauer

THE SOUL OF KLEZMER MUSIC

Carrying on a Tradition

BY AMBER KISSELL

Surveying the Touro student community regarding klezmer music produces one of two basic responses: either the bewildered "Huh, what's klezmer?" or the highly enthusiastic "Oh, I love klezmer!"

For the bewildered few out there, you don't know what you've been missing! Those who have yet to encounter this rich and unique form of musical expression will embark on a new and wondrous adventure.

In the course of my research on klezmer, I had the privilege of speaking to Jeff Warschauer, an internationally renowned master of klezmer mandolin and Yiddish song. He has toured throughout Western Europe, Poland, Czech Republic, the former Soviet Union, Australia and New Zealand. You can find him performing with Itzak Perlman in the Emmy-award winning documentary, "In the Fiddler's House," a special presentation of klezmer and its origins, or on his fabulous new compact disc, "The Singing Waltz: Klezmer Guitar and Mandolin."

Mr. Warschauer explained to me that the root of the Yiddish word "klezmer" comes from the Hebrew "kley-zemer" which means "instruments of song." The essence of this word far transcends its literal interpretation. The word "instruments" refers to the musicians themselves, meaning that the true klezmer musician becomes a vessel of musical expression. Klezmer music is intricately linked to neshoma, as an essential aspect of the spirit of dancing, rejoicing, and celebrating for a variety of occasions. It is traditionally played at weddings, bringing people together to dance and rejoice in this highlight of one's life.

Roots of klezmer are in Eastern Europe and through the events of history it has undergone major transformations. Sadly, many of the older Eastern European styles have disappeared deep into the mists of time, as these melodies were never written down but shared amongst musicians. The source of inspiration was a charismatic gift that had to be lived rather than taught.

American-Jewish professionals through the 50's and 60's have revived many styles and have

fused certain melodies with American Jazz and Dixieland styles, but the pure European klezmer tradition has been vividly recreated by the older generation of European-born musicians whose hearts were intricately linked to the klezmer tradition. Instruments used generally include violin, clarinet, accordion, bass, and piano. The trumpet, drums, saxophone, or mandolin are often added. There is a lot of glissando, or "schmaltsy stuff," and wide expressive vibrato identified with the violin parts as they carry the rapturous melodies. Percussion instruments such as the drums and piano generally have a continuous stream of notes in a variety of fast rhythms to give the music that vibrant flair central to its character. Klezmer can be played solo, as a duet, or even as a large band.

In an interview with the legendary klezmer violinist, Leon Schwartz, caught on the film, "A Jumpin' Night in the Garden of Eden," something subtle and profound came across. One could see in this old-timer's eyes that what he experienced could never be communicated in words to the eager young American musician interviewing him. The essence of this art is something that one must experience for oneself. Mr. Schwartz is one of the klezmer musicians who kept its spirit alive in his memory and, once settled in America, began revitalizing a musical world. When he plays klezmer on his violin, one can see in the youthful sparkle in his eyes that he is reliving those special moments of his past.

Anyone who has had classical training and has unleashed themselves into its savage-like competitiveness, should appreciate that klezmer is an example of what is often missing in classical music. The essence of klezmer is to rejoice and feel the pride of community and participating in an exceptional ancestry. In fact, one can't really experience the true klezmer heights without dancing. It brings together a people and a history they share. When I asked Mr. Warschauer what attracted him to the wondrous world of klezmer music, he shared with me the strong bond he has to klezmer, which is a

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AN EXHIBIT ON THE HOLOCAUST AT THE NEW SCHOOL

A Memorial

BY RICKY WEINREICH

The streets of Manhattan bustle with the activity and noise of multitudes of people. At The New School, located at 65 Fifth Avenue, there were people — but no noise. Large, silent crowds gathered to view the memorial exhibition commemorating the death of the more than 11,400 French children whose lives were brutally snuffed out by the Nazis during World War II.

The exhibit, "French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial," ran from February 3rd to March 6th, 1997. Based on a book called French Children of the Holocaust by Serge Klarsfeld, it focused on the lives of Jewish children in France during the Holocaust. Klarsfeld found more than 2,500 photographs of these lost children, merely a fraction of the 11,402 youths deported from France between 1942 and 1944. Photographs and various artifacts from these deportees constituted the core of the exhibit.

People from all walks of life, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, solemnly walked past the large

photographs of smiling children. Each photograph was placed on a large translucent screen and illuminated by a fluorescent light. Under each picture of a deceptively happy young boy or girl was his or her name, address, birthdate, and the number of the deportation convoy.

One of the first pictures at the exhibit was of two little babies, not old enough even to stand, with their faces pressed against the barbed wire of the Vichy camp in the city of Gur. This particular image gave a powerful suggestion of the horrors of that time and place. Further along there were school portraits of children ages ten, eleven and twelve, with familiar names like Rachel, Frida, Solomon and David. The dates of their deaths were there as a haunting reminder of the abrupt finality of their short lives. Paul Gobert posed for a picture on his Bar Mitzvah day, standing proudly in his new clothes. He was deported in convoy 16 on August 7, 1942,

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COMMUTING

BY MIKHAL STERN

At the crack of dawn I awake to the comforting aroma of coffee percolating. The quiet at 6:00 a.m. is a tranquil prelude to what awaits me outside my front door. From the moment I open that door and the biting chill of winter pierces my skin, I am like Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, dizzy from a whirlwind of activity, until I am seated on my bus, being whisked away from the picket fences and friendly neighbors of my suburban world. I close my still weary eyes and let a sigh of relief escape my lips. "I made it," I muse as the lull of the bus puts me to sleep.

I open my eyes. We are in the Lincoln Tunnel. Everyone's smile fades as we erect our invisible walls of armor to battle off the brutality of "The City." It seems as though everything is grey and cold, loud and mean. My stop approaches all too quickly. I feel I must gather my wit and strength along with my belongings to face the streets of Manhattan.

At the same time, Esther Israel is making her way to school from her home in Brooklyn. She waits on a lonely, cold subway platform for the first of three trains she must take to arrive at Touro, hopefully, on time. For Esther, riding the train can sometimes turn her into a good Samaritan. Just the other day she noticed a blind woman with a seeing-eye dog. Esther realized that the woman's dog was having difficulty maneuvering her onto the train. It walked her into the wall a few times before finding the doorway. Esther quickly guided the woman to an adjacent empty seat. Their ensuing conversation was pleasant, and as Esther's stop approached, she got up to leave. "See you later," she cheerfully remarked. Then it hit her — her words may not have been in the best of taste. While Esther fumbled for a way to extract her foot from her mouth, the blind woman good naturedly replied "Not likely" with a broad smile across her face.

On that very same day, Yosepha Unger is running a bit late. She makes a mad dash for the bus as it begins to slowly roll away from the curb. Yosepha's good friend Amber Kissell quickly sums up the situation and jumps in front of the bus, waving her hands frantically to signal the driver to wait. As Yosepha boards the bus and pays her fare, the driver looks at her and exclaims, "Now, that's a good friend."

Just as all that goes up must come down, so too all that goes in must come out. The commute home

is easier said than done for some Touro students. Leora Weiss lives in Washington Heights. She is lucky enough to have a friend with whom to travel home. On this particular occasion, that friend is not so lucky. Both girls are from out-of-town, thus they are weary of subway stations and have not yet become at ease with the general clientele of the New York City transit system. While waiting for the train, a "less fortunate soul" is trying to raise funds by performing magic tricks. In an attempt to attract the two girls' attention (read: money), the "magician" approaches Leora and "magically" removes a ball from behind her ear. Trying to escape this madman, Leora frantically pushes her friend in the other direction without realizing how close she is to the edge of the platform. Her friend loses her balance and falls onto the subway tracks. Needless to say, these girls will now look for any sort of alternative transportation.

Unfortunately, there is no other form of transportation for myself. In order to arrive home in time for work, I must catch a 4:30 p.m. bus at 42nd Street and 5th Avenue. My last class officially ends at 4:15 p.m., which would leave me precisely enough time to walk to the bus stop. Problem is (and problems do tend to be), my professor usually loses track of time and continues lecturing for at least ten minutes beyond the scheduled time.

I have accepted the fact that I am unable to hear the end of each lecture and I leave class at 4:20 p.m. I run down seven flights of stairs, not having enough time to wait for the infamously slow Touro elevator, wave a quick good-bye to Frank, the security guard, and run to 42nd Street and 5th Avenue. At the end of this sprint, being out of shape and bogged down with scores of textbooks, my heart races, my ears burn from the wind, and I am completely out of breath. Just moments after I arrive, the bus pulls up to the stop. I climb aboard, hand the driver my ticket, and hope I find an unoccupied seat. I look down the rows and spot a vacancy. Removing my coat and placing my bag on the floor beside me, I let out a long sigh. "I made it," I muse. I sit down and the lull of the bus soon puts me to sleep.

When I open my eyes, I see familiar picket fences and friendly neighbors. My suburban world welcomes me home yet again.

Some Observations From A Denizen of Law School

BY ZACH ABEND

Law School is both a frustrating and rewarding experience. It brings out many sides of people, usually their more unpleasant and avaricious sides. It involves much hard work, much stress, and an opportunity to emerge with a marketable and quite formidable skill.

One of the most frustrating aspects of a legal education is the mandatory curve regulating the number of As, Bs, and Cs given by the professors. Grades are determined on a relative basis. The quality of one's individual performance is weighed and

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Finding My Favorite Shul

BY
MALKA HONEYMAN

My transition into a Baalas Teshuva involved a seemingly paradoxical shift away from Jewish institutions. United Synagogue Youth, the Jewish community Center swimming pool, and my parent's "chavura" study group were not congruent with my new set of values. The hardest thing to let go of was my shul. It was located in Orange, Connecticut, about 20 minutes (by car, of course) from our house in New Haven. I attended services there for ten years. My two sisters and I were all Bas Mitzvah-ed there. The congregantes witnessed and marked my childhood milestones, such as beginning Hebrew High School and becoming youth group president. They also witnessed my adolescent decision to stop attending. This was a halachic triumph, and a great spiritual defeat.

I found the shul in Manhattan purely by accident. The first day I moved into the dorm, I happened upon it while searching for an elusive Fairway. It was in a tiny building, with two large doors and a showcase

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Profile: Alex Jones

By DEVORAH KLAHR

After hosting two hours on National Public Radio, Alex Jones can sometimes be found standing in the ready room, listening to music from the 1940's, or gazing at a painting on the wall, as though he were in the midst of appreciating something magnificent. He is the kind of person who will tell you how last night, while eating dinner, he saw the most beautiful sunset. The show's production can sometimes be frenetic — guests who are late, guests who never show up, bad phone lines — but Jones is always calm. Perhaps this comes from experience: he was a reporter for *The New York Times* for nine years, won a Pulitzer prize, and wrote a book that was on *Business Week's* top ten list. Because he comes from a fourth-generation newspaper family, his career as a journalist may have seemed predestined, but it wasn't. Growing up in Athens, Tennessee, he knew there was one thing he did not want to be: a journalist.

"People today are so much more focused," Jones says. "And often people in their early 20's aren't mature enough to know what to do. And I certainly fell into that category." After school he went to the Navy, and that was where he found what he really enjoyed doing. "The experience I had in the Navy was very educational, very maturing." Assigned to an aircraft carrier at the Gulf of Tonkin, he had to stand watch — it was work he found terribly boring. To amuse himself he started a small newspaper on the ship.

Then, a tragedy occurred: an Australian aircraft carrier collided with an American destroyer. Jones tells the details with a pained face: "The American destroyer ran over the aircraft carrier and cut it in two." He demonstrates the accident with his hands in the air: one hand is the aircraft carrier, and the other is the destroyer. His hands crash into each other. "The bow sank, and 70 men died. People from the aircraft carrier were jumping off the flight deck into the water trying to save people." Because of his involvement in the ship's paper, he was assigned by the Admiral to cover the tragedy. For 24 hours he was the liaison between the Navy and the world press. While covering the story, he realized how much he enjoyed reporting. "I mean, I just loved it. Something quickened in me about journalism at that moment. It was like a war horse. I knew then that this was what I wanted to do."

Jones made plans to attend Columbia Journalism School. He never went. Instead, he traveled across Africa. "I tried to tie up all the loose ends of my life," Jones remembers. "I called my parents and told them that I love them and said good-bye to them, and I wrote a letter to my girlfriend. I went out and got a hat, and got myself inoculated for malaria. I gathered myself as fully as I could and I effectively cut off all the ties of my life, and headed into a complete unknown. It was one of the most incredibly joyous moments of my life. It was the great adventure of my life." As he traveled he sent weekly dispatches to his family newspaper, *The Greeneville Sun*. "That's one of the advantages of having a family paper — they'll take your column," he says with a light laugh.

Jones speaks with a friendly Southern twang. He has a way with words; he describes things vividly, and makes his images come alive. When he speaks of being at the top of Africa with plans to reach the tip, he says he remembers feeling like "an ant about to approach a giant wedding cake." And when he describes — with great detail — watching the stars from the Sahara desert, the sky seems so real that I have to keep my head from looking up to where he is pointing. Perhaps the sound effects — the "swoosh!" he makes when he describes a shooting star — helps.

After his trip, he began working on his family newspaper. "Everything I learned about journalistic ethics and journalistic practices I learned there," he says.

In 1983, he started working as a press reporter for *The New York Times*. The beginning was difficult. "I would stand outside of *The New York Times* building the first few months I was there," he says, "and my stomach would turn." He had been an editor

at *The Greeneville Sun*, but he wasn't fully prepared to work on a major paper such as the *Times*. He was told that there is a steep learning curve at the paper, and the ones that don't learn would not last; it was a stressful time. The *Times* had a different way of doing things.

Jones remembers his first feature story. "That assignment I'll never forget. I was assigned to a story and I worked on it like mad. I turned it in and the deputy business editor came over to my desk after he read it and said, 'We've got problems with your piece.'" He then explained how the article needed to be changed. "And I listened very carefully," Jones remembers. "And so I rewrote it from top to bottom, and I tried to incorporate what he told me. And I turned it in again. He came over to my desk — and knelt beside my desk — and he had the story in his hand. He looked at me with this sort of pained look and said, 'We don't seem to be getting any closer.'" "Puchhh!" Jones forms his hand into the shape of a gun and points it at his head. "I wanted to kill myself." He laughs very hard. It is the laugh only a person who is now successful can afford, as he looks back at the beginning of his career.

"I did finally figure out how to do those kind of things. You just have to figure out what the rules are," he explains.

The Bingham, a prominent newspaper family in Louisville who had for generations devoted their lives to their newspapers, *The Courier Journal* and the *Times*, announced they would sell their papers. This was news. Jones wrote a long article about the family that appeared on the front page of Sunday's business section. In 1987, he won a Pulitzer prize for his coverage of the Bingham, and was approached to write a book. *The Patriarch, the Rise and Fall of the Bingham Dynasty*, which he co-authored with his wife, Susan Tiff, was soon published; it is a detailed biography of the family's success and loss with their family newspaper.

Jones then wanted to write a biography of another newspaper family, the Sulzbergers, the owners of *The New York Times*. But he couldn't stay at the *Times* while writing a book about the owner; it would be a conflict of interest. He had to resign. "That was a very difficult decision for me because I cherished my time at the *Times*. I felt honored to be in that company, and I think it's the greatest newspaper in the world." He approached Punch Sulzberger with the idea. "How personal would this be?" the owner wanted to know. "Well, we are not out to write a salacious book — that's not our object — but we're going to write a truthful book. We would report what we find," Jones replied. "Well," Sulzberger said, "how far would it go?" He was interested in the question of succession; he wanted the book to end with 1992, and not to discuss the issue of who would take over. "We told him we could not do that," Jones says. "He said to me 'Thank you very much — Good-bye.'" A few days later Jones was sitting at his desk on the third floor of the *Times* when he got a call from a secretary, "Punch wants to see you." He went up the 14th floor and walked into Sulzberger's office. "Are you sure you want to do this?" Sulzberger asked. "Does that mean yes?" Jones replied. "Yes," Jones and his wife are currently working on the book.

In the Spring of 1993, he got a phone call from Judy Blank at radio station WNYC. She was producing a media analysis show, *On the Media*, and was looking for a host. Jones got the job. Every Sunday, he moderates a roundtable discussion of reporters and professors of journalism about how the media cover the news, and how that changes our perception of the issues. It boasts a panoply of guests — Peter Jennings, Gloria Steinem, Mike Wallace. *On the Media* quickly grew in popularity, and has since gone nation-wide on National Public Radio.

Now, journalists across the country look to Jones for guidance. Often when reporters are invited to be guests on the broadcast, they exclaim, "Oh, that's Alex's show!" So it wasn't surprising when the producers of a PBS program, who wanted to create a

show analyzing the media, contacted Jones. Soon after the meeting, he was hired as the host of the broadcast, "Media Matters." "Whether a story tends to make liberals happy or conservatives or labor happy — that's of no consequence to me. I feel like the role of the journalist is to be the honest broker of information," he explains.

Jones is proud of his family. His father is the owner, his brother is the editor, and his other brother is a writer at *The Greeneville Sun*. Growing up in a newspaper family affected his understanding of the business. "I don't want to make this sound overblown," he says. "But a newspaper is like a calling. It is a responsibility to a community." He remembers how his father would get phone calls during supper to come settle something at the paper; he remembers spending summers working with the machinery at the paper — it's a part of him.

"I can't imagine driving into that town and not having that newspaper there. Maybe it's a lack of imagination on my part. We should want to sell our newspaper; we would get money for it. But so what? What would it do? My family might have more money from it, but they wouldn't be happier. Why would you exchange the life of the newspaper for money?"

Spoken like a true fourth-generation newspaperman.

Devorah Klahr was an intern for *On the Media* with National Public Radio, and worked with Alex Jones from the Summer of 1996 to Winter 1997.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Va Bene

By ESTHER ISRAEL

What does Va Bene mean in Italian? The owner, Mr. Pippo Lattanzi, says it means "It's going very well." Most of the clientele would agree with this definition. "The proof is in the pudding," or Tiramisu (an Italian dessert). Customers flock from all over the world to sample their dishes. Zagat's restaurant guide describes Va Bene as "so good you won't notice it's kosher!"

Mr. Paolo Lattanzi, the chef of Va Bene and brother to Pippo, has put together an impressive menu. The dishes are traditional, simple, and very Italian. The difference between the food at Va Bene and many other dairy Italian restaurants is that the food is always fresh and delicious. All their sauces, pastas, and breads are homemade. Mr. Paolo Lattanzi turns out the sort of food that one dreams of, the sort of food that can only exist in paradise. Ordinary dishes are transformed into a medley of flavor, color, and texture that entices all the senses.

The meal begins with paper thin bread that is grilled and brushed with olive oil, as well as a more conventional homemade bread. During busy evening hours, when the waiters are bustling about, the service is a bit slower but still remains reliable. This is due to the fact that everything is prepared as soon as the chef receives a customer's order, as opposed to preparing the food in advance.

Antipastis include thinly sliced fresh tuna, capers, red pepper, leeks and greens that make up Carpaccio freddo di tonno all' aroma (\$10.95); showing the chef's sure hand at combining different flavors and textures. A floweret shaped serving of artichoke hearts, sautéed with olive oil and garlic, brings out the gentle artichoke flavor in Carciofi alla giudia (\$8.95). The freshly diced vegetables that constitute the Minestrone dell' ortolano (\$6.95), is earthy and satisfying. A simple mixed greens salad, Insalata del dietologo (\$7.95) comes with a choice of dressings and is crisp and tangy.

Va Bene is located on the ground floor of their upper east side location. There is a bar stocked with an array of Baron Herzog wines, as well as cocktails and beers. There is a wine cellar in the basement for the customers' viewing pleasure. The atmosphere is warm and relaxed, with the tinkling of plates and glasses. Sometimes the popular music in the background is discordant with the atmosphere that dictates soft Italian or Classical music. The window in front of the restaurant looks out on the street, while the back of the restaurant contains an alcove that provides more intimacy. The general ambiance is peaceful and relaxing and is enhanced by the dark paneled walls and crisp

white tablecloths that transport you away from the bustling city.

Among the main courses, several dishes stand out. The Tortelloni d' funghi (17.95), a mushroom filled tortelli, is truly exquisite. In fact, it is this dish that motivated me to do this restaurant review in hopes that I would get the recipe. (I did.) Another recommended pasta dish is Ravioli verdi (16.95), which is green ravioli filled with spinach, ricotta and mozzarella cheese, and is served in a hearty tomato sauce. Another delicious pasta dish is Ravioli del marinaio (16.95), stuffed with a variety of fresh fish (red snapper, salmon and sole) and served in a pink sauce. Among the fresh fish dishes is Salmone incipollato (21.95), salmon that still tastes of the icy waters, and sautéed in white wine, garlic, and pearl onions. Tonno all'aceto balsamico (23.95), is Tuna dressed with balsamic vinegar. Waiters are always at hand to offer freshly ground pepper with every course.

Va Bene offers a variety of fish and pasta dishes, cooked Italian style. A perfect finale to a flavorful meal at Va Bene would be their Tiramisu (6.95), an Italian dessert composed of a layering of lady fingers, cream, espresso, and chocolate. Chocolate ice cream with chunks of chocolate called Tartufo (6.95) and Chocolate mousse (6.95) are Dolci recommended for the serious chocolate lover.

Va Bene

1589 Second Avenue, Manhattan, (212) 517-4448.

Atmosphere: Warm and friendly.

Service: Everything is fresh, and prepared when you order, so that there is a short waiting period. It is advisable to order an Antipasti which will come almost immediately. Dolci is also served promptly.

Recommended dishes: Carpaccio freddo di tonno all' aroma, Timballo di melanzane e zucchini, Carciofi alla giudia, Minestrone dell' ortolano, Zuppe di fagioli, Fettucine al salmone, Fettucine Alfredo, Ravioli verdi, Salmone incipollato, Napoleon, Tartufo, Tiramisu.

Wine list: Only kosher wines, no bargains.

Price range: Minimum twenty five dollars per person.

Hours: Monday through Thursday - Noon till 3:00 and 5:30 till 10:00 pm. Sunday - 2:00 till 10:00 pm. Saturday - 1 hour after sundown.

Credit cards: Only American Express.

Wheelchair accessibility: Two steps up to the dining room.

Poetry

Faces

By
AYELET PENKOWER

I look around the room and see beauty.

All different types.

Innocent faces, yearning for knowledge.

Deep faces, who've known many hardships.

So deep I can't penetrate them.

Others are sleeping, or are waking up from their slumber.

I can see the pink on their faces.

They've been far away in a dream world,

where no one can touch them.

Oh, to be the dreamer that dreams a thousand dreams!

What wonders to be found there!

Instead of being in this dismal reality .

I look around the room and see beauty.

The Touro Journal

The Fax of Senator Moynihan's Office

By YOSEPHA UNGER

Here is the quintessential article that promises to add a totally new dimension to your comprehension of what constitutes a summer internship. There are phone calls to answer, and xeroxes to be made within the course of five minutes, while keeping a level head and an even cooler smile. Not to mention the ever-present desire to please everyone that you come into contact with while you are answering those phone calls and xeroxing those pages. Sound difficult? Nah, it's a snap!

This summer, I had the privilege of interning at the offices of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY). As I am a political science major I looked forward to this internship with much excitement. The chance to work in a Senator's office seemed like a wonderful opportunity as well as a great challenge. To tell you the truth, I didn't know what to expect. But have no fear, fellow collegians, your government is hard at work - and they know what they are doing (at least most of the time).

When I began my internship I had no idea how much of an effect our government had on our daily lives. Once we got a call from a man who wanted to voice his support of the Senator's opinion on the issue of building a new baseball field for the New York Yankees. This was the first time that this avid Yankee fan had a clue that government financial support for new athletic stadiums was the force that was making all these new stadiums possible. Oh sure, I knew the functions of the government from school, but I never associated any of that with real government. To tell you the truth I never realized how much our government could do for all its citizens. If nothing else, that is one lesson that I constantly learned throughout the summer. From calls of support for the Senator to constituents' problems, there was never a dull moment. Each situation reiterated the importance of having a voice. So much can be accomplished if a person takes the time to make his voice heard, and does so in a respectful and understandable manner. That is the only way you'll be heard.

To illustrate the importance of having a voice, let me tell you about the time that an urgent fax requesting a meeting on behalf of the Senator failed to get through. Now in most circumstances it would have been okay, but this was an urgent fax, with an urgent agenda that needed to be in the hands of the appointed official by ten AM Israeli time. So I tried to call the phone number, but it was a fax machine. And so after spending the entire day (and I mean the entire day) attempting to fax the letter, and getting absolutely nowhere, I finally decided to give up. A co-worker, having much sympathy for me offered to fax the letter first thing in the morning. "Okay," I said. The next morning thinking that all was fine, I walked into her office to hear that the fax didn't go through - not once or twice, but seven consecutive times. "Yosepha, I think you have the wrong number," she said. "No, it can't be," I said, "but I'll call Israel just in case." When I called Israel I asked to speak to the woman to whom the fax was addressed. Much to my chagrin she was not available because she was at the meeting that the letter was requesting. I then pointed out to the person with whom I was speaking that I was calling from the Senator's office and I had been trying since nine-thirty AM the day before to fax the letter. I then asked for the fax number and when I was given the number I realized that two digits had been confused. I kindly thanked the lady and told her to expect a fax within minutes. I must point out to you that this conversation was all in Hebrew. Since the original conversation was in English, and the woman who had given me the fax number had insisted in speaking in English, but had put the digits in the order used in Hebrew, the fax number had gotten garbled. Being bilingual can be a blessing in disguise. Not everyday was like this, just most of them!

All in all I must say that my internship this past summer broadened my understanding of the political world. And I could never have possibly learned all that I did without the wonderful staff people that call Senator Moynihan's office home.

AN EXHIBIT ON THE HOLOCAUST AT THE NEW SCHOOL

A Memorial

continued from page 3

at 14 years of age. The smiling family portraits look so normal, aside from the yellow stars pinned neatly on the lapels of each garment, the word "Jude" indiscriminately branding each member for death.

George Andre Kohn was twelve years old when he was arrested for being born a Jew. He was deported on train number 1697 and selected to be one of 20 children saved for pseudo-medical experiments. He was hanged on April 20, 1945. Helene and Ellie Magler, eleven and ten years old respectively, hold hands in front of the Eiffel Tower. It could have been only days later that they were deported on convoy 20, August 17, 1942.

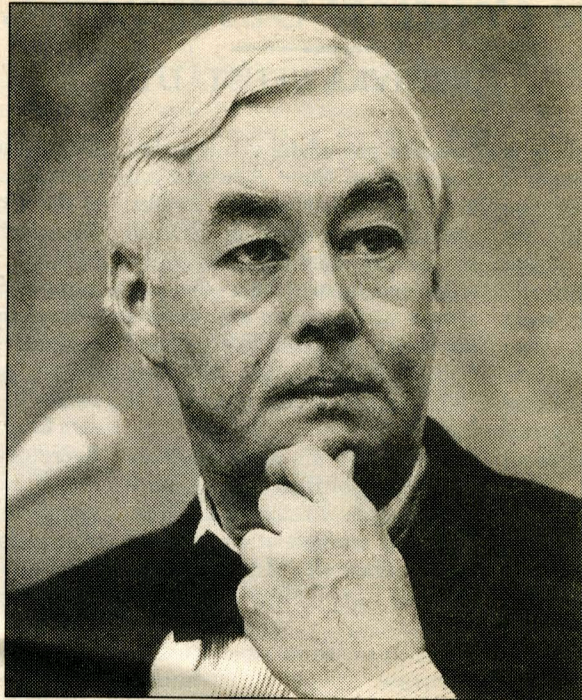
The list and pictures of these children go on and on, but their biographies are brief because their lives were brief.

Many people at the exhibit had tears in their eyes as they encountered the faces of worlds cut short by the cruelest of enemies. I watched them, wondering how many of them had been there themselves. How many had parents or grandparents that were left behind, killed in the Holocaust?

I left the exhibit and headed out to the noisy streets of the city. I was struck by the disparity between the outside bustle of daily routines, and the quiet yet emotionally charged tone inside. Suddenly, the words memorializing George Andre Kohn at his former school in France came to mind.

"When you stand here be silent.

When you leave here be not silent."



Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Doing "The Write Thing" in Seattle

By TZVIA BARASHI

The Council of Jewish Federations, the umbrella body serving 200 federations in North America, held its annual General Assembly in Seattle, Washington, in November. The General Assembly drew over 3000 participants. Meeting simultaneously with the General Assembly was "Do the Write Thing" - the Seventh Annual conference for Campus Jewish Media.

Campus editors, writers, communications and journalism majors from California to New York, from Texas to Calgary, Iowa, Ohio, and Washington gathered to discuss issues regarding Israel, World Jewry, and the media.

On an overcast yet mildly warm Wednesday morning, I arrived in Seattle on a flight from Newark airport with over 50 General Assembly delegates. Enjoying the lush green scenery, which reminded me of my hometown Monticello, I arrived at my hotel in downtown Seattle. After taking advantage of the complimentary Washington apples the hotel had to offer, I excitedly and hastily went to the Convention Center - home of the General Assembly for the next three days.

A sea of people, networking and talking to old acquaintances, cluttered the way to the Exhibition Hall. Booths from Chabad, the Israeli hockey team, artists, the Golan Heights, Hillel, and dozens more distracted me on my way to registration. After receiving my CJF press badge, pen and pad in hand, I was ready to go.

Not before a quick tour by Gary Rosenblatt, editor and publisher of The Jewish Week. The world of the General Assembly was new for us college students. FSU does not stand for Florida State University, but for the Former Soviet Union. The importance of issues was stressed.

Issues of concern in this year's GA ranged from the Jews of the former Soviet Union, Israel-Diaspora relations, the question of who is a Jew, and the relevance of federations. Being participants of "Do the Write Thing" provided us with opportunities to meet top Israeli leaders, leading figures in the American Jewish community, and journalists from North America and Israel.

During our opening dinner, "Do the Write Thing" participants

were addressed by Avrum Burg, the Chairman of the Executive for the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel. With strong conviction and a rough Israeli accent, he told us what Zionism means to him.

Meetings with both the Israeli Press and the American Jewish Press were very informative. During these personal gatherings, question and answer sessions were most interesting. This part of the meeting gave us an opportunity to express our thoughts and concerns on issue specifically pertaining to college campuses and to get expert advice from experienced professionals.

During the session with the Israeli press, Yaa'kov Ahimeir, presently the correspondent for Israel Channel 1 to the United States and formerly the Chief Editor and anchorman of the Israeli TV News, addressed the issue of the media's responsibility in a "self censorship" in light of Rabin's assassination. He spoke about an interview he had with a Rabbi Hecht from Brooklyn a few weeks prior to the assassination, and the decision he made not to air it. There is a difference in inciting versus reporting. Chaim Shibi, a political columnist and correspondent for the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot, discussed the question of an Israeli media bias.

The main focus of the American Jewish Press' meeting with "Do the Write Thing" was to bridge the gap between campuses and the Jewish community. Many students come from campuses such as San Francisco State University, where anti-Semitism is prevalent. Another student from Halifax, Canada, stressed the concern of anti-Israeli media at her campus. The journalists were very receptive to our journalistic ambitions and many informed us of available internships.

Being with the press contingent, "Do the Write Thing" journalists had the privilege of attending two press conferences. At the first conference, MK Yuli Edelstein, Minister of Absorption, spoke about the establishment of Jewish communities from the former Soviet Union and the Aliyah effort to move all remaining Jews to Israel.

Also confronting the issue of Russian immigrants, MK Shimon

Peres, at the second press conference, answered a question regarding the "Russian vote" effect on his defeat in the May elections. He said that he would rather have more Jews that do not vote for him than less who do. He stressed the importance of the next few years in the history of the world. Addressing the issue of the peace process, Peres flatly stated that peace carries a price, and the cost calls for concessions. But it is better to pay the cost of peace, he proclaimed, than the cost of war.

The featured speaker of the GA was Prime Minister Netanyahu. Initially, he was to address the GA in person, but ultimately, he spoke via satellite. He decided to stay in Israel to ensure a safe and secure redeployment of troops in Hebron. The importance of Hebron is based on the fact that it is the oldest Jewish community in Israel. Security in Hebron would be good for peace. He reassured his commitment to the international policies of the former government, with the added requirement of reciprocity. "We bargain and they collect will no longer be a principle," he proclaimed. He also addressed the much heated question of the status of reform conversions. He committed himself to maintain the status quo: if someone has been converted in the Diaspora, he or she will be recognized as a Jew. Looking into the 21st century, Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed the desire to see western communities move to Israel to improve their economic condition. He believes that Israel will be the success story of the next century.

The last speaker I had the privilege to hear MK Natan Sharansky, Minister of Trade and Industry. A short, stout man, wearing a shirt and blue kipah sruqa (knitted yarmulka), shared with us his experience as a Prisoner of Zion in the former Soviet Union. More incredible than his story is the life he leads now. Who would have thought that a Russian "refusenik" would hold a position in the Israeli Parliament?

Throughout all the talk of Jewish continuity and pluralism and the future, the message this reporter took with her was, Who knows what the future will bring?

First Meeting of the Political Observers Club

BY RIVKA NEUSTADT

When the first woman is appointed Secretary of State, it is cause for celebration. When we find out that she is Jewish, we know it must involve food. That's what led a politically aware group of students to meet at Mendy's Restaurant after school on Monday, April 7th. The members of The Political Observers Club each presented information they prepared about Madeleine Albright.

We discovered that her background made her perfectly suited for a life of foreign affairs. She was born in Czechoslovakia to a diplomat father, and while fleeing from World War II made several stops around Europe before reaching America. Her travels provided her with knowledge of several languages. As to

how she got where she is today, Secretary of State Albright did not have a concrete plan. In fact, she didn't have a paying job until she was 39 years old. She told a radio interviewer that she just always tried to learn and make a difference, and that she followed a path of what she considers "fun," known to the rest of us as hard work.

She has an undergraduate degree in political science, with honors, from Wellesley College. She also studied at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University; received a Certificate from the Russian Institute at Columbia University; and received her masters and Doctorate from Columbia University's

Department of Public Law and Government. She also served as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations prior to her appointment as 64th Secretary of State, when she became the highest ranking woman in the United States government. She was sworn in on January 23, 1997.

Our group's discussion of Secretary Albright's brilliant career, her drive and determination, stimulated an even livelier discussion of the role of Orthodox Jewish women in contemporary society. We look forward eagerly to the next meeting.

Rivka Neustadt is the Secretary of The Political Observers Club.

WOMEN'S MINYAN ROCKS QUEENS

News Analysis

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here. The issue is the severe repercussions and consequences that may result from this minyan.

In Sefer Devarim it is written, "Lo Tasur Mikol Hadavar Asher Yagidu Lecha Yamin Oosmol—Do not flee from the psak halacha of a great person." In other words, listen to the gedolim. An article written by Rav Herschel Schachter in Beis Yitzchok (a journal of Yeshiva University) quotes two great Gedolim, Rav J. B. Soloveitchik and Rav Moshe Feinstein. Both authorities are firmly against women conducting Hakafof, separate minyanim for women, and women reading from the Megillah for other women.

What is most distressing about this whole mess is the blatant disregard for the rabbis. These women have silenced the warnings of the rabbonim. If the conflict surrounding this issue and the disapproval of their fellow Jews has not affected them, shouldn't the advice and admonitions of the rabbonim rouse some sort of response? Shevuos is quickly approaching. Who will be reading Megillas Ruth at the women's minyan in Hillcrest?

In fact, this minyan is unbecoming and potentially harmful to the rest of the community. These women do not seem to realize that they are slowly steering away from the sacred customs and rituals that have existed for centuries. They are tugging at the delicate fibers that make up the quilt called mesorah. For thousands of years, the righteous women of our faith have always turned to tefillah in all faces of adversity. Tefillah was their link to G-d. They used Tefillah as a vehicle to voice their fears, and concerns for the well-being of their families.

In sefer Shmuel we read of Chana's unfortunate fate of barrenness. Her own husband was indifferent to her tragic suffering. Yet she knew that the only thing that would help her change her destiny was to pray

with such an ardent intensity that even G-d would not and could not refuse her. And so she pleaded to G-d in her own unique fashion by moving her lips. Sure enough, her voice reached the gates of heaven. Her prayers were answered.

Just like Chana, the devout women of our faith cried wells of tears to G-d, hoping that He would answer their prayers swiftly. Never did they feel the need to alter the gift that G-d bestowed upon them. Never did they feel the need to change the method of how they approached their creator. Never did they deviate from tradition.

I would like to ask these women why they feel compelled to wander away from the larger community. Segregating themselves is not the answer to the problem. First, noise and disorder is to be expected when a shul has scores of congregants. We all learn to put up with the chaos and chit-chat. I think these women need high dosages of patience and tolerance to teach them how to cope with the annoyances of a Shabbos tefillah. Thank G-d, we live in a time when we do not have to trek five miles to the nearest synagogue. In Queens alone there is a plethora of shuls to choose from. If they are so easily distracted by the clamor, my advice to them is to switch shuls!

Secondly, these women claim that when they come to shul to pray, they feel as if they are not involved with any part of the service. Certain aspects of Judaism we accept, even if we do not understand them fully. No questions asked, no fuss made. If the concept of a shul and praying together with a congregation was good enough for the bubbies and devout women of years past, then it is good enough for the educated, talented women in Hillcrest. No, we can't participate in the reading of the Torah. Accept it. And if you cannot accede to it, pray at home.

Apparently, these women do not understand the significance of a synagogue and praying with a congregation. The synagogue is a symbol of solidarity and wholeness. Jews are united together in a synagogue on the holiest days of the year to pray to their creator as part of one congregation. When we pray together we are one! No evil, no enemy can penetrate through the solid bond that we establish when praying in unison, in shul.

When synagogues are built, a special section is constructed for women. Women are always welcome to be a part of the prayer. Prayer means with a congregation. A congregation means men and women, not women and women. They are breaking the congregation into thousands of pieces.

Their indifference toward this mess is mind-boggling. They are indifferent to the possibility that this "minyan" may start an alarming trend throughout the Orthodox community. Once these female "minyanim" (an oxymoron, since a minyan is defined as a quorum of ten men) rise up, then the larger community has to deal with even more halachic problems, such as Orthodox female "rabbis" answering rabbinic questions! Although these women are not advocating more minyanim similar to the minyan they conduct, it will inevitably spread to neighboring communities and eventually to other boroughs and states. Where then does it stop?

Their apathy toward this situation is somewhat ironic, for it seems as though these women have an innate desire to be scrupulously and meticulously religious concerning their service toward the Almighty. If this is the case, why are they behaving in such an irreverent manner? I pray in my own tefillos that these women come to their senses and realize the magnitude and severity of their actions.

This is one mechitzah G-d does not approve of.

The Political Observers Club, a monthly meeting on political personalities.

For more information please contact
Devorah Klahr or Malky Tannenbaum.

A LANDMARK FOR TOURO

Corbett's Legacy

continued from first page

mission, and generations of students received instruction in areas such as book illustration, textile and wallpaper design, interior decoration and other related fields.

The idea of training women as working class professionals was quite progressive for that period. What further distinguished the institution was that it was directed specifically toward low-income women who might otherwise have had difficulty paying the tuition.

Similarly, Touro prides itself in preparing women to embrace the career world. Fortunately, as the career world for women has expanded over time, the range in education has broadened from previously feminine areas to general areas. Like its benevolent predecessor, Touro endeavors to provide education to students from all walks of life.

Artists can use artistic license to humanize their creations. Just as Emily Bronte designated a soul to Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, so Touro College emanates its own soul.

The presence of Touro's soul can be traced to the building's original blueprint, designed by architect Harvey Wiley Corbett. 160 Lexington Ave was one of his earlier projects in a long, varied and prominent career. It was designed uniquely as a school of art. Some of his later work involved designing Rockefeller Center, Brooklyn College, New Law Courts in New York, Washington's Freeman Memorial, Bush Terminal, New York, and Bush House, Aldwych of London, and other buildings in a variety of styles, both in New York and other parts of the country. His career was so vast and accomplished that he was awarded the 1953 annual award of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Aside from his talent and design, Mr. Corbett was an imaginative visionary. He suggested that New York could be rid of its congestion by building three street levels, a sort of modern Venice with one level for transit, another for cars, and the last for pedestrians. He was an ardent protagonist of the skyscraper, predicting that one day there would be buildings half a mile high.

Mr. Corbett's timeless view was incorporated into the Touro College building.

Its superb ionic frieze represents the panathenaic procession of officials, youth, maidens and sacrificial animals. This procession was the high point of the great festival of Athena held every four years. Was this Corbett's artistic prediction of mankind's inevitable recognition and reverence of women in careers,

despite the resistant generations? If so, he contributed his body and soul to this ideal, because he taught architecture at the School of Applied Design.

What makes Corbett even more admirable is that he provided comfort for people, not only as an architect but as a humanitarian as well. He fought for low-cost housing for national defense workers and sought employment for unemployed architects and draftsmen.

The Touro structure, a five story terra-cotta and stone building, is an exceptionally imaginative version of the neo-classical style. The symmetrical building has its main facade on East 30th Street, with its most outstanding feature the low relief frieze above its high ashlar base. The frieze was composed of portions of the Parthenon's panathenaic frieze in Athens. Four polished granite ionic columns rise above the frieze, followed by the entablature of rich classical moldings and a steep gabled roof painted green in imitation of copper.

Mimi Kotlar, a student at Touro College, admits she didn't notice the beauty of the school until an elderly pedestrian pointed it out to her: "What is this, a library? Do you realize how superb this building is?" she was asked. This interaction made Mimi do "a double take" and see the structure for its aesthetic worth.

On the other hand, Jackie Freeman, another Touro student, recognized the building's unique qualities from her trip to Greece. She said, "It's great to see similarities from across the world on your college building."

The building has been noted in various architectural reviews for its columns and its roof, emphasizing the strong verticality of the building. For the architect, the building undoubtedly had a soul and purpose. His hope in his vertical emphasis was possibly to inspire women to reach for the stars.

If there is a message in this building, let us listen. Let us heed the visionary's call to us to draw from our strength and display our accomplishments to receptive eyes.

When this building was secured many renovations were made. Most of these required backbreaking work on the interior. Heavy supplies were carried up countless flights. The Touro building may stand silently, but the winds that dance wistfully in its halls whisper of a certain unpaid gratitude. That gratitude is owed not only to the brave pioneers of feminism and the architect but to all those who saw and still see our education to be a worthy investment.

Jews Against Genocide

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group, Merrill Zegarek, a book publisher, had a planned agenda for that night, and holding a stack of papers, sat on one of the two couches. To the left of the couch was a display of five Star Trek videos; to the right was a small black and white telescope. Weiss joined her. A large picture of a woman with a tear on her cheek hung on the wall above the other couch where Sharon Silver, a family therapist, and Jim Andrews sat. Stephen Sheinbart, a psychologist and the host of the night's meeting, and Carson, sat on wooden chairs on either side of the small table of food. They were ready to begin the meeting.

"Has anyone read Anthony Lewis' article?" Carson eagerly asked. Lewis, an Op Ed columnist for The New York Times, is their hero. They believe his articles about Bosnia are moral and ethical. He is important to them for this reason: they are eager to find others that are also moved and interested in ending genocide. The members put an enormous amount of time and energy into the group, and it is often disheartening and frustrating for them that so many Americans aren't more involved. They discussed Lewis' article as well as a few other writers who share their beliefs. Carson said, "I work; I travel a lot, and one of these stupid airline magazines had this article and it said that Clinton read a certain book about Bosnia — which was just super. And I thought to myself, 'this is really good because he is actually for the first time reading our version of what's really going on there. It was one of the highlights of my past year.'" They want to know that others care; they find comfort in it. It lets them know they are not alone.

Merril Zegarek announced the agenda: planning a letter writing campaign. But they couldn't merely encourage people walking down the street to write letters to politicians; they would first need to explain the

situation in Bosnia, get people emotionally charged, and then, only then, would they be able to start the letter writing. They wanted it to be a big event. They decided to plan an evening that would consist of a documentary film, a speech, and the encouragement of writing letters to politicians, but they weren't sure of the details. "I thought she was uninspiring," Sheinbart told Weiss of a speaker she recommended highly for the event. And there were other choices that needed ironing out. They disagreed on what movie to show, and how long the movie should be. "Let's discuss the general plans," Zegarek kept interrupting, hoping to get the discussion to remain focused. "We can decide on the details later." Weiss later told me, "You see even tonight — we had five people here and we all agree on everything — the theory. It's just the actual implementation. We're all very strong-minded and strong-willed. And it's like..." she paused. "Aghhh!" she let out a low, frazzled yell. "But somehow we pull it off. Our events are always well attended and serve their purpose."

And they are successful. They have an 800 number, a web page, buttons that read "Save Bosnia," music tapes featuring songs about ending the battles in the Balkans, and they have literature they hand out to anyone who is willing to read. But, more importantly, they educate people about the situation in Bosnia. When Jim Andrews — the new attendee — asked the group to give him some information about what they do, Zegarek explained, "We used to do a lot of demonstrations but that was at a time when we were pushing for a lifting of an arms embargo, when the fighting was going on. Now we don't do that, but we continue to write letters to congressman and senators. And I feel that lobbying congressman and senators is almost more effective. And we organize

events like teach-ins." Weiss added, "Two months ago, at Lincoln Center, we did a demonstration to put pressure to arrest war criminals."

Andrews — who speaks in "up talk," ending sentences as though they were questions — was then asked to speak of his recent experience in Bosnia. "I just got back a month ago. I was in Bosnia? and Croatia? For just about six months out of the eight, I was living in refugee barracks, and the rest of the time I was trying to get in with an NGO? Or I was visiting a barrack. There was one barrack in an auto camp which is where refugees live in cars or trailers — which is very common. And I was just visiting but it was impossible to live there. I was a humanitarian volunteer. Essentially you make your own program, which is not the best aspect. They simply put young European kids — essentially collage age kids? — into refugee camps and then there is some type of loose program which usually focuses on visits, visiting families and the second thing would be activities with kids and the third and fourth might be an art type activities and teaching english. Half the work is really just having an outside presence. Just people who are going back and knowing what is actually going on. It's pretty wild."

While he spoke of his experiences, the feeling in the room gradually changed. They were no longer arguing over how short to cut the movie for the event, what speaker to invite, or whether they should send checks to politicians while they are running for office, or after they have been elected. At first, when he began, they intermittently interrupted him, asking questions. But then the room became quiet. They were listening to Andrews' words. They wanted to hear his stories. They plan, and schedule, and worry about Bosnians — but he was there. There was tension in the room from the silence. Carson broke it. "Are you

from New York?" he asked the humanitarian volunteer. Andrews said, "I'm from 76th and Amsterdam." The members of the group gently laughed, except for Carson; his laugh was louder, more audible and distinct. It was funny that someone who seems so foreign — a visitor of Croatia, Albania, and Bosnia — lived a few avenues over from where the meeting was taking place. He wasn't so far away; he was one of them.

The organization tries to point out that the killings of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, the genocide, is analogous to the Nazis' killing of six million Jews. "It's one group of people saying to another — you can't exist," Weiss said. "We said 'Never again,' and it's not 'never again' only for Jews. It's 'Never again' for anybody." Weiss declared, "if these were Jews, there would not be a day that went by that there weren't massive protests. It just wouldn't happen." She ignored the fact that there are a significant number of Jews in Sarajevo who are being killed — a whole Jewish community that is, perhaps, in danger of being destroyed if the killings are not stopped.

After the meeting ended, Sheinbart and Andrews talked for a while, standing a few steps away from the door, which no one had closed after the other members left. I sat on the couch with Weiss and we talked about the group. "I feel like banging my head against the wall," she said. Her voice grew a bit louder, "I feel like screaming in the streets, 'Why isn't anyone doing anything?' For four years we've been using every moment of our free time trying to do something — write a letter, show a film. Do something, anything — sell buttons just to make people aware. And people are apathetic. I walk out of here furious and frustrated. And I feel like I've accomplished nothing, and done nothing. And people say 'Oh, you've done so much for Bosnia.' But I have done nothing

compared to what should have been done." I asked her, "So what do you do?" "Uhm," she utters. As she thinks there is a pause in the conversation that had not been there since we began speaking. The only sounds were those of Andrews and Sheinbart talking in the background. "I weep and rend garments," she answered with a grin. She laughed at her own remark.

She feels that, since there is so much more to do, the group does not accomplish anything; but it does. "I mean, there are times when I feel like I can't even function. But it's very helpful to have the other people in the group. We kind of have this mutual support thing going. And there are little moments that are just amazing. For example, we have a phone line, and out of the blue we'll get a phone call from someone in Holland who somehow got our button and was so thrilled to know that someone in America cared — because they have been working in their little world. And it gives them moral support; it gives them a boost — and they can go ahead doing what they're doing, knowing that they are not working in isolation. They are not working alone." Weiss knows that in many ways the group is successful. She feels that the group's lobbying effort directly helped end the arms embargo. All the events they organize help to educate people, to tell them what is going on in Bosnia. They make people aware.

Weiss feels that working in the group has improved her life. She believes she helps end killings, and that she makes it easier for Bosnians to bear their situation. "I've never been involved so much in a cause like this — in my life!" she says. But she wants to do more. After we finished speaking, she stood up, wrapped her scarf around her neck, put on her gloves, and went outside to brave the cold, and her frustration, and her rage.

A Visit to Belgrade

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country to escape the draft. One woman called it "our Vietnam."

Many believe that trust between the warring factions can be cultivated. Ola, a twenty-five year old student, reminded me of the history of Great Britain, France, and Germany: "For hundreds of years they fought; now they are allies. Why can't it be the same here?"

There are many Serbs who feel that they were unjustly maligned for their actions during the war. "We all killed each other," one student expressed, bewildered, "Why should Serbs get all the blame?" When I reminded him that it was the Serbs who started the aggression, he went on a rampage about how they were justified in joining battle against Croatia when it declared independence because, during World War II, the Croat "Ustashe" massacred many Serbs, and they feared that the many Serbs still living in Croatia at the time she declared her independence would face danger. "What would be with our compatriots in Croatia," a Serb high-school student whined. "They will kill our brothers like last time," the kid added, ominously referring to W.W.II.

Another method that is used by many Serbs to excuse the ethnic cleansing they perpetrated is one made famous at Nuremberg: "We just followed orders!" As the Germans blamed Hitler for their involvement in the Holocaust, the Serbs are wont to blame Slobodan Milosovic, their embattled president. He controls his nation's media. All it showed of the battle was the suffering Serbs, ignoring the massacres that were perpetuated on the enemy.

The irony is that many are also angry at Milosovic for selling out at Dayton. "He sent my friends to die and then signed the land away," a student, protesting for the President's resignation, told me. He then exposed his right leg where there was a bullet wound from the fighting in Bosnia.

The history department of the University of Belgrade is the nest for nationalism, which sort of makes sense. It is there that they learn of their people's tragic and embattled existence. The students, being passionate Slavs, become enraged by what they learn. "We always

fight; it's natural to us," a twenty-one year old Judo champion commented on her nation's history. The Muslims are hated, even though they are ethnic Slavs, because the fourteenth century saw the beginning of a long period when Yugoslavia was partially occupied by the Muslim Turks, and those who converted to Islam are viewed as traitors. A rambunctious twenty year old history major, nicknamed "illegal" (he liked playing hooky in high school), is so paranoid about the Muslims — "They grow like rats!" — that he would be willing to part with Kosovo, a province on the southern border that is the Serb "Jerusalem," but is ninety percent Muslim.

Now there is peace in the former Yugoslavia; however, in the minds of many Serbs, nothing has been settled. Mistrust is an overriding and palpable emotion — both to the enemies of the war, Muslims and Croats, and of the foreign governments who the Serbs believe have unfairly blamed them for the brunt of the fighting. Every week, skirmishes arise, though no one has rekindled a regional wide war.

Anti-Semitism was not apparent. As one elderly man, whom I met in front of the Belgrade "Democracy Wall," explained, "We both have problems with the Germans and the Muslims." This thought was echoed by many of the people that I met here. In the outskirts of Jerusalem, there is a Kibbutz that quietly goes about its business of bringing together Arabs and Jews in the belief that only through direct personal contact can two peoples, each filled with severe animosity towards the other, arrive at a true and lasting peace. Too bad that these idealists never studied the history of Yugoslavia.

The Eastern Orthodox Serbs, Bosnian Muslims and Catholic Croats lived together amicably since World War II under the dictatorship of Tito and his disciples. For most Yugoslavians, the ethnic and religious distinctions mattered little. Inter-marriage was rampant. Yet, when the first opportunity arose, after the fall of communism, they illustrated Rabbi Chanina's dictum: "Pray for the peace of the government for if not for its peace, people would eat one another alive."

Finding My Favorite Shul

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soliciting new members. I had never joined a shul by myself. That night, Layl Shabbos, I entered Ohav Sholom for the first time, and have never gone shul-hopping since.

The shul was small. The women's section held about 15 women, the men's section had 45 men crammed in. Half of the congregants were older, their wrinkled faces taut with kevanna (concentration). The other main contingent were twenty-somethings, many reading from the English side of their siddurim. I had brought my own siddur, but found a stack of the familiar Artscrolls near the coat rack. The shul was set up such that the entire women's section was situated behind the men's section. A narrow path led from the entrance at the back of the women's section to the back of the men's section. I found a seat in an empty pew.

The davening was slow and melodic. The women appeared to be in some type of a Shabbas-y trance. The air was maintained until after Yigdal, when the room exploded into conversation. A thousand "Good Shabbos" greetings rang out like clandestine bells. An older woman turned to me and asked my name. I knew this place was special.

The shul was founded in 1900 and has the distinction of being the only shul on the Upper

West Side to have never missed a mincha-maariv minyan since then. A major early priority of the institution was paying off its mortgage. This was quickly achieved and the shul owns the entire building.

For several years Ohav Sholom has shared some of the upper floors with the Mesifita Manhattan High School. The third floor apartment is occupied by the current Rabbi and his family, and the fourth floor provided for maintenance custodian. This arrangement has been integral in keeping Ohav Sholom afloat.

Since Rabbi Mehlman took over, a new generation has been added to the shul. The age spread adds significant dimensions to the davening, shiurim, and social events like the Chanukah party, and kiddush-es. While the presence of a young rabbi encourages younger attendees, he is careful to maintain a diplomatic balance between the older and younger members of the congregation.

Ohav Sholom's strength has always been its warm and friendly atmosphere. The shul's firm adherence to halachic precepts combined with an eclectic membership and well-loved Rabbi have made it a favorite of the West Side community, as well as my second home.

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CHESS: HOOKED ON HELPING

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unable to walk to the bathroom to rinse her mouth, so we gave her mouthwash which she sucked through a straw, and spit into a basin. Chanie left to get the tray of food. Dora was unable to feed herself. She was almost too weak to hold a small carton of milk upright while drinking with a straw.

She kept on thanking us; all the while she had this beaming smile radiating from her face. She asked, "What's for breakfast?" When we told her that eggs were on this morning's menu, her face lit up with glee. She said she was hoping they would serve eggs. After breakfast we shmoozed. I introduced myself as Channie's cousin; and she said, "from the moment I saw you I knew I like you, now I know why. I love Chanelleh." She took my hand and kissed it.

In the bare room with two sterile hospital beds, she had the nurse paste up the cards she got from well wishers. She practically glowed as she related the history of how each card came to be there. It was kind of gloomy in the room, and the sun was shining bright outside, so I opened the curtains. Dora said, "Thank you darling, but please close them, my eyes are sensitive." She took my hand and kissed it again. Chanie plays piano very well, and was going to play for the residents that morning. Channie asked the nurse if she would bring Dora to the breakfast room in her wheelchair, so that she could participate. The nurse said she had orders that she not be moved from her bed. Dora was momentarily upset,

but let it slide. The glow of contentment was on her again.

The founding fathers spoke of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But some are bound by fate, and don't have much life physically. They don't have the liberty of choosing breakfast, their clothes, or how to spend the day. So what enables Dora to attain a hold of that elusive wellspring of angelic contentment that cascades into warm sparkles of pure joy?

In that dark shaded sterile hospital room, seeing Dora smile, it was impossible not to have this warm glow all over. Her face has creases with laugh lines around her eyes and mouth. They show that that she lives life joyously. She bestows upon you her brilliant dazzling smile. I wonder what propels her, what compels her to smile? I wish I could have the recipe to reproduce that glowing smile inside of me, to conjure up and magically wipe away the feelings that sometimes drag me down. I must have been wearing my thoughts on my shirt sleeve, because as I was leaving her room, Dora called me back, kissed my hand fervently once more and offered up her formula for happiness: "my Mother always told me, 'be kind to others and they will be kind to you.'"

When asked why I volunteer, I answer in two words: I'm hooked. As Chazal say, "It's not so much what the beneficiary gets from the benefactor, as what the benefactor gets from the beneficiary." It all started with a phone call, and it ended with a new outlook on life.

THE SOUL OF KLEZMER MUSIC

Carrying on a Tradition

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deeply emotional experience for him. He described how, in contrast to extreme joy usually associated with klezmer, there is also a "deep sadness and tenderness" found within this music. It expresses rapturous intensity and evokes an inner longing that, in the bustle of our everyday lives, often becomes subdued by the demands of the moment.

I expressed to Mr. Warschauer that classical training can be inhibiting due to its technical precision. However, he explained how klezmer's improvisational style is quite "liberating" for him, creatively, and, while skill is critical, the breath of life in klezmer is passion. People must possess charisma and imagination to excel in klezmer music. It is a dimension in the imagination of one's experiences and everyone will experience something different.

Highly recommended for budding klezmer fans is the album "A Marriage of Heaven and Earth," which contains the work of many klezmer musicians along with a miniature hardcover book. The book provides insight into shtetl communities with pictures from the early 1900's. These pictures include weddings, traveling klezmer bands and old synagogues. The images capture the awe-inspiring atmosphere and mystique of these communities, a spirit that is still flourishing within our modern-day North American society.

Other names to look for are Michael Alpert and Steve Greenman, who have recently released a compact disc entitled, "Brave Old World." Max Epstein is another major figure in this field. Although many klezmer musicians are not very religious, he is, and this is demonstrated in his work. He has just finished working on a movie, "A Tickle in

the Heart," about klezmer music. "The Klezmatics" are a well known klezmer group that may appeal to the audience as well. There is also the "Klezmer Conservatory Band" located here in Manhattan.

After interviewing Mr. Warschauer, I was bold enough to ask if he and his wife, Deborah Strauss, a prominent klezmer violinist, would perform a duet for us at Touro College. I was greatly overjoyed when he volunteered to come anytime. If anyone has any feedback on this idea, please let me know.

It is an undeniable reality that artists are often poor. The older generation of klezmer musicians interviewed admit that klezmer was far from lucrative. They often played on the streets or paraded through the villages looking for work. The situation for free-spirited musicians today is also quite difficult. When my brother asked for a trumpet at age three so he could play klezmer and jazz, my mother and I bought him a sleek baseball bat and dreamed of his reaching the major leagues. However, he persisted until his loyal and devoted sister finally bought him his first trumpet.

As soon as my brother put the instrument to his lips he was playing music without a single lesson. It was truly invigorating to see that same sparkle in his eyes that I recognized in Leon Schwartz. He sparkled when my mother and I clapped and shared in the experience, just as Leon's eyes did when he remembered those musical moments with his friends. The soul of klezmer music is following your heart by letting its spirit guide you, and in my brother's generation of enthusiastic young musicians, klezmer is a fountain of limitless potential that keeps this spirit alive and thriving.

Some Observations From A Denizen of Law School

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then compared to the quality of the rest of the class. Receiving an A depends on how well you have done compared to the other members of the class.

Two aspects of law school bear down on students with particular ferocity: the constant fear of being called on by a professor to explain a case or point of law, and the competitive nature surrounding all activities in law school. The fear of being called on by a professor is what drives students to scrupulously prepare the assigned material everyday. No matter how many times one is called on to speak in front of the class, it is something to which one never becomes acclimated. Because the professors call on students to speak at random, students learn to hate the sound of their own name. This fear cannot accurately be described by mere ink and paper; it is a consuming fear, the impact of which takes a heavy mental toll on students. For those interested, a classic film well worth seeing is *The Paper Chase* (1973), starring John Houseman.

The second most negative aspect of the law school experience is that all law school activities are grounds for competition with one's fellow students. Whether it is legal research and writing, interviewing for summer internships, studying for exams or merely reading in the library, the quality and quantity of these activities are subject to intense scrutiny by one's fellow students. As a consequence, you begin to wonder whether you are spending enough time in the library or allotting enough time to study for exams, when compared to your classmates' own inflated estimates of their endeavors. The result is usually acute, self-induced paranoia that never really dissipates. Both of these factors bring to the fore the more selfish and animalistic sides of law students' personalities.

If one manages to surmount the formidable obstacles intrinsic to a legal education (i.e., the high cost, the paranoia, the cutthroat competition, the crippling fear, the resulting bitterness, and the bar exam), one emerges with a professional degree, an ability to earn a living, and the expertise necessary to help the downtrodden of our society. Of course, for those who are more materialistic, these same skills can be used to further the accumulation of personal wealth and fame, and facilitate repayment of student loan debts. (Repaying student loans is something encouraged by lending agencies!)

Contrary to popular belief, the process of attending law school does not cause moral turpitude in the students. Law school attracts people who are already bereft of morals. A legal education merely serves to reinforce the low ethical standards which are inherently characteristic of most law school attendees. The minority of students who serve as an exception to the above principle are members of an endangered species.

In conclusion, for those of you who are related to a law student, I urge compassion and an easily available comforting shoulder for that special someone. For those of you who have taught someone who has gone on to law school, you have reason to be proud. For those of you considering a legal education, I urge you to seriously deliberate before making a decision whether or not to attend. For those of you already in law school, I extend my most heartfelt sympathies.

Zach Abend is an Alumni of Touro College. He was Assistant Editor of *The Independent* in 1995.



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