



The WYHS brainstorm

Volume# 2
Issue# 1
Nov. '07

It's Time to Hear What's on Your Mind!

The Amazing Race

By Ilana Ben-Ezra ('10)

The race for the '08 presidency is on and the candidates are already mud-slinging over the issues. While the primaries have not yet started, the polls indicate that either Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama will head the Democratic ticket, while Rudy Giuliani will probably lead the Republicans. Here's a run-down of the front-runners' opinions on the hottest issues.

The Issue: Talks With Iran

Barack Obama: Having recently called Iran's rulers "reckless, irresponsible and inattentive," Obama believes that the situation has become so extreme that we should not rule out military action. However, Obama's first response would be aggressive diplomacy and tough sanctions, and he hopes to engage Iran in dialogue. Beyond military and diplomatic action, Obama wants the UN to apply economic pressure on Iran.

Hillary Clinton: Hillary believes that Iran should be dealt with through methods other than war. She is co-sponsoring a bill that, if passed, will not allow funds to be spent in Iran for military action without explicit permission from Congress. She does believe that talks with Iran are needed, citing the Cold War as having been solved through diplomacy. Recently, she has voted to designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization because they are helping Iran acquire nuclear weapons, which she knows are a threat to both America and Israel.

Rudy Giuliani: Giuliani is not opposed to using military force to ensure that Iran does not have nuclear weapons at its disposal. He calls for international intelligence sharing to better protect the world against Iran, as well as collaboration from the Western nations on ideas and solutions to this conflict.

Ilana's Pick: Obama's open attitude to both diplomacy and military action seems necessary to assure that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons.

The Issue: The War in Iraq

Barack Obama: Obama was the only candidate to have voted against invading Iraq in 2002. Consistent with his prediction, he sees the war as utterly futile violence. As soon as he is installed in office, he plans to begin steadily withdrawing troops (one or two brigades each month) with a goal of having a complete withdrawal by the end of next year. He would also gather together Iraqi leader to draft a constitution and offer aid in rebuilding the nation.

Hillary Clinton: Although Hillary voted for the war in October 2002, she has said that her vote was based on information available at the time; in retrospect, she (like many of the Democrats) says that she would not have voted for the war. In recent months, she has become a strong force in the opposition to the war, and plans to draw up a plan to bring home the troops starting with the first 60 days of her presidency.

Rudy Giuliani: Giuliani supports keeping the troops in Iraq. He fears that removing them will embolden our enemies, the terrorists, and glorify them as winners. Staying in Iraq and helping the Iraqis establish a democratic government seems to be the only way to "win the war on terror."

Ilana's Pick: Clinton's "Get 'er done" attitude assures me that she will make the greatest strides in bringing home the troops as fast as possible.

(Continued on page 4)



From The Editor

Yids Speaking Yiddish: A Strange Concept in our Strange Land

By Alexa Bryn ('08)

A friend's mother told me a story this summer that I have not been able to shake from my mind. Her Eastern European father and first-generation American mother connected to each other through Yiddish. Hearing Yiddish constantly in their household, the children began to decipher the language. But they spoke to their parents only in English, and therefore did not learn to speak Yiddish themselves. Recently, my friend's mother asked her father why he had never actually "taught" her to speak Yiddish.

"Chavele," he said endearingly, "It never occurred to me that one would have to teach a *yid* Yiddish." And then, deep in contemplation, he sighed, "Oy, America, what a strange land."

When I heard this story, I recognized – for the first time in my life – the strangeness, not of America, but of our generation of American Jewry. We, unlike our parents and grandparents, are the first generation to grow up without hearing the sounds of Yiddish. We regard Yiddish as something "old world" and passé – a language for the fiddlers and tailors of the Eastern European shtetl, with little value for us, now that we have the State of Israel and live in the modern world. But as I am starting to realize – hopefully not too late – this view is terribly mistaken.

Yiddish is not simply a language, nor was it ever. It was the beating heart of a vibrant culture that the Nazis tried to destroy, one which we, as the third-generation of survivors, have an obligation to keep alive. Yiddish was the language spoken in the cultural capitals of Eastern Europe by the greatest intellects. It was the language of the theatres and the *yeshivot* alike. When our grandparents and great grandparents left Europe to come to this country, Yiddish was common currency among uncommon people living on Manhattan's Lower East Side, as

well as communities in the Deep South and across the Midwest.

Everywhere, though, Yiddish was the immigrants' bridge between past and future, the language that propelled them forward in this land. Ironically, it was largely through the Jewish Daily *Forverts*, established in 1897, that several generations of Jewish immigrants actually learned how to be Americans: how to vote, who to vote for, how to be hygienic, how to deal with in-laws and love interests, how to understand strange new games like baseball, how to fight for better wages and secure better places in society for themselves and their children.

While our grandparents and great-grandparents read the *Forverts*, *Der Allgemeiner Journal*, and Yiddish writers avidly, most of us are unaware of the magic of Yiddish prose. Stories by writers like Isaac Bashevis Singer and Sholem Aleichem seem so simple, and yet they are deceptively so. The characters – "Gimpel the Fool" who knew just when to turn a blind eye, "Tevye the Milkman," who understood tradition in its many variations, "Mrs. Pupko," the bearded woman who loved her husband too much to ever leave the house

– are all complex creations. Yes, the classic works have been translated, but as I read Singer's stories over the summer, I could not help feeling that in translation, the nuances of Yiddish were somehow lost. I realized then that I will never be able to fully appreciate these writers, or the culture of my ancestors, unless I learn Yiddish myself.

Luckily, a Yiddish "renaissance" seems to be underway in this country. Klezmer music is making a serious comeback – with Klezmer cafes, concert series, festivals (and even Klezmer ringtones!) springing up constantly. The Yiddish Book Center

in Amherst, Massachusetts has saved over a million Yiddish books and constantly hosts panels on Yiddish language, culture, and literature. And interestingly, the hottest Jewish writers of the past few years – Michael Chabon, Nicole Krauss, Jonathan Safran Foer, Dara Horn – have all written books that involve Yiddish, or seek to connect to the "old world," in some way.

While we can take our lead from these creative initiatives and individuals, ultimately, the burden falls on us: teenagers in Yeshiva High Schools across



America. We should ask our schools to teach us the “other” language of our heritage so that we can teach it to our children and they can teach it to their children. If not an entire class, how about some time during the day, the week, or the month for a program devoted to Yiddish?

My grandfather, who has Alzheimer’s, rarely speaks anymore. Years ago though, I am told, he spoke a very beautiful, sophisticated Yiddish – with wit, humor, and always with pride. Now, when he tries to speak, his words only come out in fragments. But these fragments – “*mein kinde,*” “*shaine maidele,*” “*bubbelah*” – are always in Yiddish, because he is a *yid* and Yiddish is the language at his core. Hopefully, our grandchildren will say the same about us one day.

S.S. Sudan?

By Randi Prince (‘11)

Seventy years ago, when Jewish Holocaust victims sought refuge in America on the S.S. St. Louis, the US government turned them away. Israel was created to absorb the thousands of refugees that no other country would take in. As a country founded on the principles of freedom and safety for all, Israel is faced with a very large moral dilemma: Can it send back Darfurian refugees?

Recently, Israel has encountered criticism for returning 50 illegal immigrants from Darfur back to Egypt. However, this condemnation failed to highlight the estimated 2800 refugees who are living in Israel, 300 of which were granted citizenship this past September. Israel, guided by its ethical obligations as a “safe haven” for Jews, is trying to absorb as many refugees as it sees possible. Yet, there comes a point where any country must draw the line.

The 50 refugees that were turned away crossed the border from Egypt illegally and were caught. Each day in America, Haitians fleeing chaos and violent death-squads are returned to Haiti for attempting to cross the border illegally. Unlike the Hatians who have no safe haven anywhere, these Darfurians are safe in Egypt from genocide and civil warfare. Though a small percentage has faced beatings and death by Egyptian police, they are not in urgent need of shelter. Israel’s bill to block illegal immigration does not preclude the

thousands of Darfurian refugees already in Israel from staying there, nor escapees truly in need of safety from entering the land. Conscious of the Darfurians’ plight, Israel has even drawn up an agreement with Egypt about treating the refugees more humanely.

Still, Israel can only do so much. It is a country less than 1/50th the area of America, famously compared in size to New Jersey. The rejection of the most recent wave of Darfurians is in large part due to a lack of space – Israel is an already over-crowded country. Additionally, Israel lacks the economic resources to care for thousands of new immigrants. Ephraim Zuroff, a spokesman for the Simon Wiesenthal Center in L.A. told the Associated Press, “Israel cannot allow unlimited access for people who are basically economic refugees. Their desire to enter Israel was motivated primarily by the difficult living conditions and bleak economic prospects in [Egypt.]”



And finally, Israel is still absorbing new *olim* from Russia, France, Yemen, South America and other places where anti-Semitism threatens. Israel was established as a state for the Jews, first and foremost. Any Jew, regardless of circumstances, will be granted citizenship.

That being said, Israel truly is a country devoted to humanitarian aid – from sending assistance to victims of tsunamis, floods, and hurricanes to promoting HIV awareness in Africa. Israelis understand the pain of the innocent Darfurians. Yet, there is nothing wrong with denying asylum to illegal immigrants, especially in a country that barely has enough resources for its own citizens. Instead of asking Israel to shoulder the burden, all nations should provide safety for the Darfurians, according to each country’s size and economic resources.

(Candidates continued from page 1)

The Issue: Global Warming

Barack Obama: Obama plans to require twenty percent of electricity to come from renewable resources by 2020, lower the carbon in our fuel, and invest in advanced technologies that will lower our dependency on gasoline.

Hillary Clinton: A supporter of reducing carbon emissions and other pollutants, Hillary wants to invest in cleaner energy sources and provide the international market with more energy-efficient technology.

Rudy Giuliani: Giuliani seeks energy independence through alternative energy sources. He believes in using renewable energy, such as coal that can be found within our own borders, as well as using biofuels and natural gas to replace gasoline that harms the environment.

Ilana's Pick: Giuliani is unique among the Republican candidates in having a specific program for aggressively dealing with environmental issues. I agree with his suggestion that we use renewable energy sources such as hydro and solar power.

Rudy Giuliani: A main part of Giuliani's educational platform is expanding charter schools' access to funds. In addition, Giuliani believes that the teachers' union is responsible to some degree for the failing educational system, due to its emphasis on salary over quality teaching. He plans to invest in computers and art programs that would directly benefit the students.

Ilana's Pick: Barack Obama seems to not only want to improve the quality of our schools, but the intellect of America's students both in and outside the classroom.



The Issue: Education

Barack Obama: Obama wants to hire more capable teachers, place them in "needed-places" and give them higher salaries. He strives to raise the educational standards in public schools (especially urban and rural schools) and close the education gap between high and low income students. Obama proposes that any student with a B average be entitled to free public college and is fighting the "anti-intellectualism" that exists outside of the classroom due to overindulgence in teen TV dramas and magazines.

Hilary Clinton: Hillary believes that teachers should be given job assignments appropriate to their experience, new teachers should be attracted with higher salaries, and classrooms should be of manageable size. She also feels that all children should have access to after-school activities that keep them in a safe environment. For public schools suffering from gangs, drugs and violence, Clinton suggests that a school uniform would provide a degree of structure in the students' academic lives.

Ali-What?

By Jessica Friedman ('08)

I spent this past summer on NCSY's JOLT (Jewish Overseas Leadership Training) program in the Ukraine. Yes, Ukraine, one of the former centers of Ashkenazic Jewry, the home of the Baal Shem Tov and other prominent rabbis, the place that has been systematically stripped of its Jewish life over the last century. I had the unique privilege of working with young teenagers in a summer camp and discussing issues surrounding the "Jewish Future" with them on a daily basis. A common topic of discussion was Israel: Do the Jews deserve to own it? What should our policies be on returning land? It was only a few days into camp when someone dropped the "A-bomb:" Do you see yourself making *aliyah*?

I was shocked by the answers I heard. The Ukrainian teenagers said that they definitely saw themselves moving to Israel. Some of them had even

been filling out the paperwork to make *aliyah* in the weeks before camp began. When I asked them why they wanted to make *aliyah*, falafel, Ben Yehuda, and the Inbal Hotel did not seem to factor into their answers. They yearned for Israel because it is their homeland, the only place that will ensure their religious continuity.

Speaking to these Ukrainian campers helped me realize how different we in America view *aliyah*. For my whole childhood I have been planning to move to Israel after graduation. My mother was born in Israel and most of my family still lives there, so my upbringing has been shaped by Israeli influences – from Idan Raichel music to our satellite Israeli TV station. Each time I visited Israel I always planned my future there: the college I would attend, the neighborhood in which I would one day live, the Israeli political causes I would identify with. But now I am in twelfth grade, and my only concrete plans to go to Israel are for one year. I thought I would be jumping on that Nefesh B’Nefesh flight the day after graduation. What is keeping me here? What is keeping all American Jews here?

We in America are not fighting for religious survival. For kosher food, we are not confined to the “less than appetizing” meals at the local Orthodox Union center like my friends in Kharkov. We don’t even need Ben Yehuda. We have Central Avenue in New York and 41st Street in Miami Beach. We are part of tightly-knit Jewish communities and we have teachers constantly motivating us towards spiritual growth. It is quite easy – with all of the opportunities we experience here in America – to be content.

Nonetheless, many American Jews have Israel on their priority lists. We are there at the Zionist rallies, we visit Israel during school vacations and summers, we go to Bnei Akiva summer camps. But for most of us, *aliyah* is just an abstract idea – a yearning felt deeply in our hearts, but often buried beneath the everyday concerns crowding our minds.

We are not at fault for finding comfort in our daily lives, and we should be proud that we have maintained such a connection to Israel despite our distance. Yet whether we move to Israel or not, we should strive for the Zionist spirit of the Ukrainian campers – always striving for more. When our group traveled to Israel at the end of the six week trip, I met former JOLT Ukrainian campers who made *aliyah* after graduating high school. Their Hebrew is incredible, they are fully integrated into Israeli society, and are preserving their Judaism – *ba’aretz*.



Photo courtesy of Michel Skura

The Aftermath

By Michel Skura (‘08)

Just as I landed in Lima, Peru, my relatives called to tell me that a few hours earlier an 8.0 magnitude earthquake had struck Peru’s coast. Lima, where I am from, was relatively undamaged, but I saw on the news that Pisco, Chincha, and Ica, cities south of Lima, were severely affected. In those cities, over 500 people died, 70% of the infrastructure was damaged, and a small tsunami destroyed a port.

Help started arriving from almost every country. When I heard that the Chabad Rabbi of Lima was sending some community members to Ica to help the Jews living there, I decided to go with them. As soon as we arrived in Ica, I was shocked to see approximately fifty homeless orphans wandering aimlessly on a grassy area next to the landing strip. We left the airport with the donations in the back of a pickup truck and went to the house of a Jewish man who was in charge of distributing humanitarian aid. On the way to his house we noticed that the earthquake had damaged about half of the buildings in Ica, and that most of the tall buildings had lost their upper windows.

After leaving this man’s home, we visited a smaller town close to Ica where another Jew helped us distribute water, food, and clothing. The people there were very grateful for the basic necessities we gave to them. I don’t think I’ll ever forget their smiles contrasted against the destruction in the background.

This experience made me realize the importance of helping fellow human beings, first and foremost because a natural disaster could turn any of our lives upside down instantly. I feel so lucky that my plane landed in Peru when it did – that I came just in time to give the residents the hope and strength to persevere. It was as if this good deed came knocking at my front door.

Miracle Pill?

By Harry Ganz ('08)

There aren't many commercials these days more annoying than those for medications. I am truly sick of having my TV-watching interrupted constantly by people touting miracle cures for everything from migraines to acne. I really don't want to hear about all of these diseases, and anyway, who has the right to tell me what medicine I should take other than my doctor?

Of all the "miracle cure" commercials, though, none bother me as much as those for so-called "diet pills." These ads promise instant weight-loss, increased energy and a faster metabolism. Most of the time, the medications being sold aren't even medications at all! Anyone reading the fine print during one of these commercials will notice two disclaimers. One disclaimer is, "This product is not intended to treat, prevent, or cure any diseases." Fair enough. Obesity is not a disease, right? The second disclaimer is "This product is best used with a balanced diet, and exercise." Now wait a second... what do I need to diet and exercise for if the pill is a diet in and of itself? Then the commercial goes on to say that this product is not approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). By this point, I have changed the channel.

Some would say that the proliferation of diet drugs is a result of our weight-conscious society. How many fat models and overweight movie stars do you know? This unattainable, not to mention harmful, obsession with being thin has pervaded the American psyche. However, despite the unhealthy pressure to be thin, it still isn't healthy to be fat. With the recent and precipitous increase in obesity in the United States has come an increase in obesity-related diseases. Heart disease and insulin dependent diabetes cases have skyrocketed in the past decade. The reasons for this increase are not simple, and the solution is sure to be more complex. After all, obesity cannot be solved with a pill... or can it?

The FDA recently approved a pill, commonly known as "Alli," that blocks fat absorption in the intestines. Imagine a chemical version of a nightclub bouncer. Alli, just like that imaginary bouncer, leaves a lot of fat sitting on the curb. The fat has to go somewhere, and it does: into the toilet. In order to avoid this unpleasant side effect, patients taking Alli

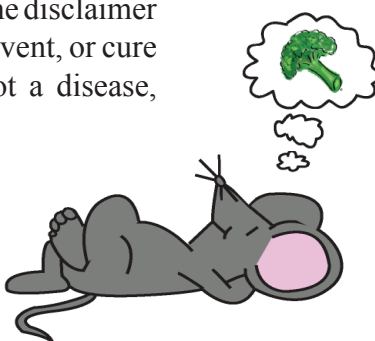
are recommended to eat a low fat diet, and of course, exercise. After all, there is no "miracle pill."

But wait! A new medication, currently in development, promises to be exactly that. In laboratory studies, a chemical known as C75 has caused massive weight loss in mice in a matter of days. Despite C75's rather unimpressive name, it has a very impressive story, and it starts with a search for the medical Holy Grail: a cure for cancer. Back in the early 1990's, scientists discovered that cancerous cells use an enzyme system known as FAS (fatty acid synthase) to create fatty acids from simple sugars. Utilizing this information, researchers at Johns Hopkins University's School of Medicine created C75. C75 blocks the FAS pathway, inhibiting the production of fat, and hopefully starves the cancerous tumor. The Johns Hopkins research team, led by Dr. Francis P. Kuhadja, noticed that C75 blocked

fatty acid synthesis in regular cells, as well as cancerous ones. Even more interestingly, C75 reduced the appetite in the mice they were testing it on. The team immediately seized upon this information, and began development of what will hopefully become a powerful weight loss tool – one that allows the body to "feel" fed, even when it is not.

How C75 works is simple (well, relatively simple). Imagine that the FAS pathway is a construction project on a tall building. Supports (carbohydrates) arriving at ground level are assembled into grids (fatty acids) before being lifted to the top of the tall building. In order to know how many supports the project needs, a supervisor (NPY) must count all of one specific type of support (Malonyl CoA). If there are too many of this specific support on the ground level, the supervisor will call the purchasing center (hypothalamus) and tell it to stop ordering supports (eating).

Now that you have read that (a few times), I am sure you can understand the spectacular power of C75. Not only does it keep the body from producing fat, but it also keeps it from being hungry. Even fasting isn't as efficient. And, as far as scientists know, C75 has no side effects. However, it is still in the research phase of development. If something detrimental is found, it may never reach pharmacy counters. But, if C75 does ultimately reach store counters (hopefully with a much cooler name), it will be the answer to the prayers of millions of overweight people.



SATs Rock the Radio

By Nonny Gross ('09)

SATs – just the word instills fear in the hearts of high school students. These days kids are so crazed about getting a perfect (or as close to perfect as possible) score on the SATs that they will spend hundreds of dollars for every type of prep book, hire expensive private tutors, take extra courses at school, and even attend summer SAT courses. Some especially-obsessed students (prompted by their equally, if not more, obsessed parents) might even start prepping BEFORE they reach high school! Because of this “SATmania,” the SAT business is absolutely booming, and those in the business are increasingly thinking “outside the box” – creating everything from (don’t laugh) a “Top 100 SAT Vocabulary Word Shower Curtain” (available on amazon.com for \$19.95), to novels teeming with SAT words (available at Barnes & Noble), to a new SAT-themed musical (“None of the Above,” now playing off-Broadway if you happen to be in New York).

For those who prefer singing to studying in the shower, or those who are simply more musically than verbally-inclined, or even those (in Hollywood and Miami Beach) who want to do something both fun and productive on those long drives to and from school, I highly recommend “Rock the SAT,” a CD accompanied by a book of lyrics that integrates over 260 common SAT words into thirteen Rock songs. When I first heard about the CD I was **incredulous** to say the least. When I was instructed to buy it, I was **embittered**, spewing **vitriol** right and left. But when I listened to the CD for the first time, I was absolutely **euphoric**. The songs were not only hysterically funny, but I just couldn’t stop myself from singing along. Sure, I felt ridiculous – pop songs aren’t usually filled with **esoteric** words like **obstreperous** and **ebullient**. But even after the summer was over, I found myself playing the CD of my own **volition**. And within days, “Rock the SAT” became a carpool favorite – at times beating out 102.7 and Y-100.

Because the SAT words are **amalgamated** into the songs, and are usually followed by a synonym in more **pedestrian** English, a dictionary is unnecessary.

Lately, when one of my siblings asks me to define a word, I find myself humming a tune from “Rock the SAT” to help me recall. Some of my personal favorites are “Spitball in the Eye,” a weird song about an artist falling in love on a **cacophonous** bus ride to school, but being too **demure** to approach the girl, and “Silence, Reticence,” which has the catchiest tune and most interesting lyrics by far. Not to be **parsimonious**, but for me, “Rock the SAT” has been more effective in improving my vocabulary than I can imagine any expensive program or tutor would have been.



The idea behind this CD is truly **ingenious**. In an age where teenagers are music **connoisseurs** (but less-than-**avid** readers), “Rock the SAT” is a perfect avenue for slipping in a little extra vocabulary, without making kids **restive** and **querulous**. Regardless of the SAT words, the music is **sonorous**, so even if you do have a tutor or prep-book, I’d still recommend picking up the CD. You might surprise yourself (and your friends, teachers, and parents) by describing your day as **banal**, high school boys as **jejune**, or Terry’s chulent as simply **palatable** (Just Kidding!).



ARTS AND CULTURE



Spy Novel Defies Genre

The Bourne Identity by Robert Ludlum

Reviewed by Shalva Ginsparg ('11)

As the final installment of Robert Ludlum's "Bourne" trilogy hit the box office this summer, people looking for an action-packed, fast-paced tale of intrigue and espionage can also reach for *The Bourne Identity* in print.

The Bourne Identity traces the exploits of Jason Bourne, a CIA operative who suffers from amnesia as well as a dawning realization of a criminal, even murderous, past life. As Jason grapples with the psychological implications of his discoveries, he is simultaneously pursued by both friends and foes. The tension builds to an explosive confrontation between Jason, his enigmatic past, and a notorious serial killer named Carlos.

Perhaps the one quality which distinguishes *The Bourne Identity* from other novels in the spy genre lies in the book's ability to elicit profound moral questions from the reader: What makes someone fundamentally good or virtuous? At what point do actions mold and transform a character to such an extent that he is deemed "good" or "evil"? Is someone who has no recollection of his past deeds responsible for them? And can such a person achieve total redemption by performing acts of altruism in his "present"? Jason's travails as an amnesiac-cum-agent is much more than a spy thriller: it is rife with moral and philosophical conflicts.

Robert Ludlum's aptitude for dialogue and surprising plot twists contribute to an engrossing, "edge-of-your-seat" experience. However, the complex plot progression requires tremendous concentration on the part of the reader. That, mixed with an incredibly

large cast of characters and interspersed French dialogue (without English translation) can get a bit confusing. Yes, *The Bourne Identity* is a very "involved" read, yet its complexity is what makes each page so thought-provoking.



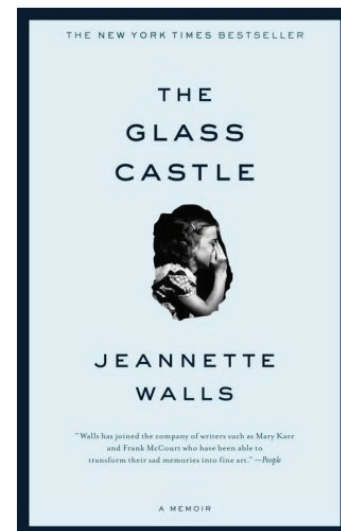
Dysfunction Revisited

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls

Reviewed by Jessica Weisel ('11)

Many of us have viewed the plight of the homeless—we see it on our visits to the Miami Heat arena downtown and on I-95 exits each morning. But most of us have never wondered what it is like to be homeless by choice. What is it like to be a child whose mother hates the domestic life, and chooses to concentrate on her passions — art and literature — rather than feed or care for you? What is it like to have a father who teaches you to live life to its fullest, who knows physics and geology inside and out, but comes home drunk and steals the money you need for food and clothing? Jeanette Walls' memoir, *The Glass Castle*, is a story, told through a child's eyes, about valuing independence while feeling the pains of neglect — about loving parents who, in conventional terms, don't seem to love you back.

Because their parents have chosen a nomadic lifestyle, the Walls siblings have few outside friends and form strong ties with one another. As the four children grow up, they protect each other from harm. For instance, when bullies attack Jeannette, her brother rushes to her defense and together they fight bravely. Inventing games, reading and telling stories, and cooking dinner out of the limited food they have are their escapes. When the siblings scrounge for food, they always share. Without "responsible" caretakers to look after them, the siblings become "parents" to each other. Yet strangely, their lives are not always filled with despair and anger, but mostly with adventure and laughter.



What is most remarkable, however, is that despite the pain their parents inflict upon them, the siblings remain loyal, respectful children. The book is not a rant against a dysfunctional clan, but very much a celebration of a family's love for one another. Walls recounts the adventures her parents inspired: taking the children on boogeyman chases through the desert, leading long excursions to the public library, packing up and leaving town on a moment's notice.

Eventually, the children do attain more traditional lifestyles – escaping to New York where three of them attend college and become professionals. They are able to transcend their father's "glass castle" – his grand plans and fanciful ideas that cannot translate into the real world. Jeanette, of all the children, is particularly successful, working as a correspondent for NPR and a journalist at major newspapers. They are able to shed the painful memories – of kids in their classes spraying Lysol before they sat down, coloring in the holes in their pants with marker before school, eating popcorn for days on end – and form meaningful relationships in their adult lives.

The Glass Castle is a book about fortitude in the face of all odds, about finding your place when there is no one to guide you. It is a book that the reader will not be able to put down until the final page or put out of his mind for days after – for the prose is both so beautiful and so haunting. Most importantly, it is a book about love and acceptance in all of their many forms.



Jeanette Walls

I hairspray

A Review of *Hairspray*
By Leah Wiznitzer ('08)

My friends say I am obsessed with *Hairspray*. And I have to agree. I can watch *Hairspray* so many times over because it is a classic, "feel good" show: bright lights, upbeat songs, a heartthrob of a male lead, and most importantly, a love story with a happy ending. Set in Baltimore in the 1960's, *Hairspray* is the story of Tracy Turnblad, a high school student who has big bones, big dreams, and even bigger hair. Tracy watches the "Corny Collins Show," a local TV program that features "gorgeous" high-school-aged singers and dancers, hoping to catch a glimpse of Link Larkin, the male performer she has been in "love" with for as long as she can remember.

Tracy's biggest dream is to become a cast member on the show, and while her audition is less than impressive, she is ultimately discovered "busting some moves" at an after-school detention session with a group of African-American students. After landing the role, Tracy is able to use her newfound fame to rally against the racism she sees in her city, win over America, and most importantly, Link Larkin's heart. *Hairspray* ends on an even higher note: Tracy wins the Miss Hairspray competition, proving that beauty and thinness are less significant than good morals and a good heart.

Though *Hairspray* is fun to watch -- with its sing-able tunes, cute actors, and beautiful actresses -- it certainly isn't a realistic depiction of love, or life in general. Most high school "teeny boppers" do not end up in the arms of their celebrity crushes, as Tracy does in Link's. Even more unlikely is Tracy's ability to have a genuine relationship with a boy who she seems to merely have a schoolgirl crush on. While the movie deals with significant issues such as race, identity, and belonging (more so than in the Broadway musical), the kitschy songs and dances don't allow the audience to grasp the monumental changes wrought by the Civil Rights movement and its profound effects on Sixties' youth.

(Continued on page 10)



Yet, as a die-hard fan, I stand by my conviction that the fluff is really what makes *Hairspray* lovable. It's an escape – one that makes room for hair and boys and weight on the never-ending list of problems in our world. Yes, I'm probably a little bit biased, given that I have seen the Broadway musical once, the movie twice, and am more than willing to see either one for a third or fourth time. I waited outside the Broadway stage door so I could meet and take pictures with Ashley Parker Angel (Link Larkin). On another night, after seeing a different musical, I rushed out to catch the *Hairspray* cast exiting their theatre (and would do it for a third time now that Lance Bass of NSYNC is starring!). I don't know if it's Zac Efron (the movie version's LL and *High School Musical* lead), but even though it's been close to a year since I have been introduced to *Hairspray*, it's still a guilty pleasure!

STAFF

Editor-in-Chief: Alexa Bryn ('08)

Assistant Editors: Harry Ganz ('08), Chana Brauser ('10)

Technical Editors: Jessica Friedman ('08), Harry Ganz ('08)

Graphics Editor: Shmuel Dresner ('09)

Faculty Advisors: Mrs. Amy Horowitz, Mrs. Claudia Cohen

A “Rock” Solid Success

A Review of *The Game Plan*

By Leelee Borzak ('10)

I have to admit that I didn't expect to like *The Game Plan*. I was sure that I was “beyond” Disney movies, with their predictable, happy endings. In this movie, the storyline certainly had all the ingredients of pure “cheese:” Joe Kingman is a quarterback, enjoying his life of fame and fortune as a wealthy bachelor. It seems like he has everything he could ever want: an expensive car, luxurious home, and football championship. Enter Peyton, his long lost eight-year-old daughter from a previous relationship, and his whole world turns upside down. But as this story unfolded on the screen did I walk out of the theater? No, I was pretty much engaged from the start because the acting was great, and the two main characters (played by Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson and Madison Pettis) were so endearing.

Joe responds with the expected frustration as he learns to deal with ballet lessons, BeDazzlers and tea parties, all the while practicing for the big championship game. Understandably, he resents his daughter for disrupting his lifestyle. As the movie goes on, however, Joe starts to shed his tough guy exterior, and show his vulnerability, becoming the type of father he never thought he could be. Father and daughter bond over ballet when Peyton is extremely nervous before her recital and Joe encourages her to do only her best, recalling his own experiences on the field. And Joe feels the true pains of fatherhood when Peyton undergoes a near-death experience. Peyton exudes personality and tries to hide her own vulnerability through much of the movie. But Madison Pettis is most believable when she finally breaks down, showing her vulnerability as well.

I won't spoil the ending for you, although it's fairly predictable. But so what? The movie is still enjoyable for any-aged fan of these actors, which is why *The Game Plan* has proved to be such a “Rock” solid success at the box office.





Sports



Re-Reverse The Curse

By Harry Ganz ('08)

The Red Sox won the World Series. Big deal. Before hundreds of red-cloaked fans throttle me, let me explain. For eighty-six years the Red Sox struggled through one of the most notorious championship droughts in sports history. For eighty-six years they hoped and prayed, for eighty-six years they cheered and groaned, for eighty-six years the Red Sox were the most loved team in baseball. They were the most loved team in baseball not because they lost, but because they lost in such spectacular fashion.

They lost with the best players in baseball. They lost with Ted Williams, they lost with Roger Clemens, and they lost with Carl "Yaz" Yastrzemsky. They lost in extra innings, they lost in seventh games, they lost on errors. The Red Sox turned losing into an art form. With the possible exception of the Phillies, the Red Sox were the best losers in baseball. Now, what do they have? Two World Series titles in four years – the Yankees accomplished that. So did the Los Angeles Dodgers, the Oakland Athletics, and the Saint Louis Cardinals.



Even without their infamous losing streak, the Red Sox still have personality. The Sox lineup has a Manny, a Big Papi, and a Greek god of walks. Their bullpen has its own percussion section, and a river-dancing closer. Their starting rotation has a cancer survivor, a rookie that pitched a no-hitter in his second Major League start, and a Japanese pitcher whose name happens to sound like a device used for gambling. Despite all of this, personality can only get them so far.

If I asked someone five years ago, "What are the Red Sox famous for?," his answer would invariably be, "the curse of the Great Bambino." Now, if I ask someone the same question, I could get any number of answers – not all of them positive. The Red Sox are becoming the symbol of an upcoming baseball dynasty, one that may be as loved or as hated as the Yankee dynasty of the 1950's and 60's. This may mean little to Red Sox nation, who is looking for eighty-six years of payback for the curse. But to other baseball fans, it portends something much more ominous. The rise of an evil Red Sox Empire may be at hand. Only time will tell if the future of the Red Sox lands foul or fair in the baseball history books.

**Account-IT Consulting Services**
CFO Services • Accounting • Tax • IT Services
Douglas A. Cohen
7425 Andorra Place
Boca Raton, FL 33433
Tel. 954.592.8630
Fax 561.955.8913
dac@account-it.net



Ideas



Herschel Potter

By Chana Brauser ('10)

When faced with the overwhelming popularity of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, one can't help but wonder: How did one school-age boy and his trials and tribulations find a place in the hearts of millions of readers of all ages, all over the world? Perhaps it is because Harry's story resonates so easily with our common, cross-cultural experiences on so many different levels. Harry is an ordinary boy caught up in extraordinary circumstances. He faces the same "mundane" dramas we teens face daily: balancing school, friends, searching for family and acceptance.

But isn't Harry's story more fantastical, much greater than that? As I turned the pages of each *Harry Potter* book, I could not help but notice that Harry's task is precisely that which we face as Jews: to integrate the spiritual into the physical, to take part in both realms. Could it be that Harry is really a Herschel, his veins pumping with Jewish blood?

For those of you who have somehow managed never to pick up any of the *Harry Potter* books, I will digress for a moment to bring you up to speed on the story. The series begins with a one-year-old, orphaned Harry being taken by an elderly wizard, Dumbledore, to the Dursley household (his estranged aunt and uncle). Having survived a death curse by Voldemort, the villainous wizard who killed his parents, Harry grows up unwanted, verbally abused and ignored by the Dursleys. And then, miraculously, Hagrid, a gamekeeper at Hogwarts, informs Harry that he is endowed with magical powers – that he must leave the world of the

"muggles" and go to Hogwarts, a special school for magicians. Suddenly, Harry feels a sense of belonging, a sense of community; there is an entire world of people just like him, with the same powers he suddenly is told he possesses.

Sound familiar? Harry's discovery of his wizardry is simply a variation on the tale of exile and redemption from the Torah – the most classic of which is the Jewish exodus from Egypt. Abused by the Egyptians and forced into slavery, the Jewish people were propelled into despair until Moses, our "Hagrid," came to tell them that they are special, a people far greater than the "muggles" – G-d's chosen nation.

Yet before they can become accustomed to their new religious identity -- before they have time to really believe in their powers -- they are led out of Egypt and taken on a long, arduous journey to the Promised Land. There they are able to build a community, test their strengths and weaknesses, and begin to understand the source of their powers.

One can hardly find a Jew today who does not live, to some degree, amongst "muggles." Many of us certainly look like "muggles" to the outside. But our task as Jews living in a modern world is to forge our own "golden paths" – to steer clear of the temptations offered by the "Voldemort," yet to still live in the "muggle" realm. Maybe the trick to our survival is that we can find the magic in this world, that we don't have to travel to Hogwarts to get our inspiration. But, like Harry, now that we know we have powers, all we have to do is look a little bit harder to find where the magic lies.

