

# THE JEWISH STAR

**MAYER FERTIG**  
*Publisher, Editor-in-Chief*  
**YAFFI SPODEK**  
*Assistant Editor*  
**MALKA EISENBERG, MICHAEL ORBACH**  
*Reporters*  
**HELENE PARSONS, RACHEL WEINBERG AND KENNETH GOFFSTEIN**  
*Account Executives*  
**RABBI AVI BILLET, AYALA COHEN, ALAN JAY GERBER, RABBI YAKOV HOROWITZ, ADAM NEUSTADTER, SARI NOSSBAUM, LISA SCHIFFMAN, RABBI AVI SHAFRAN, DAVID SEIDEMANN, MIRIAM L. WALLACH, CHANANYA WEISSMAN**  
*Contributors*  
**ALYSON GOODMAN**  
*Editorial Designer*

The Jewish Star is an independent community newspaper. All opinions expressed are solely those of The Jewish Star's editorial staff or contributing writers.

2 Endo Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530  
 (516) 569-4000 E-mail: letters@thejewishstar.com  
 Fax: (516) 569-4942

The Jewish Star is published weekly by The Jewish Star LLC, 2 Endo Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530. Postmaster send address changes to The Jewish Star, 2 Endo Boulevard, Garden City, NY 11530. Subscription rates: \$36 for 1 year, \$72 for 2 years, \$108 for 3 years. Single copy \$2.00. All other subscriptions, including foreign, subject to change without notice. Major Credit Cards accepted. Copyright © 2008 The Jewish Star. All rights reserved.

## OPINION

### All or nothing vs. something for everyone

#### Editorial

Finally, there is an indisputably positive development in the drama over the venerable Shulamith School for Girls in Brooklyn and its much younger sister school, Bnot Shulamith of Long Island.

A group of parents has come forward that is committed to peacefully negotiating with the school administration to develop an outcome in which viable branches of the school continue to exist in both Brooklyn and on Long Island, each in its own modern home. Their first public act was to announce that an auditor has been engaged to determine the true state of the school's finances, which have been kept secret until now, arguably in violation of halacha that requires a gabbai tzedakah to maintain open books.

Another group of parents has already done a great deal to lay the groundwork for a settlement. For one thing, by going to Bet Din and seeking civil court intervention, they frustrated the possibility of a quick sale, and very likely saved the Brooklyn school, attended by some 500 girls. Many of them are the nieces or grandchildren of Bnot Shulamith parents or supporters, or other Long Island residents.

The first group arguably went wrong in its

increasingly shrill, extremist tone, leaving room for other Brooklyn parents to seek a more practical strategy.

No, it would not be proper for a Bnot Shulamith parent to seek the demise of the Brooklyn branch simply to finance a shiny, mortgage-free new building in the Five Towns — and those who hold such views ought to reconsider his or her priorities. Similarly, however, it is just wrong for a parent in Brooklyn to pretend that Bnot Shulamith is not a legitimate part of the institution — and categorically unworthy of benefiting from a potential windfall from the sale of real estate — simply because effective legal tactics have cast strong doubt on the validity of the current board. Those hundreds of Shulamith girls in the Five Towns aren't a legal tactic; they're Shulamith girls, including many nieces and grandchildren of parents and supporters of the Brooklyn branch.

As a general observation, some parents may find the value of a Shulamith education weighted or lightened by the nature of the real estate the school occupies, but others believe a

Shulamith education for their daughters is priceless in and of itself. One parent of our acquaintance has said of the school, "I would send my daughters to Shulamith if the school was on the back of a motorcycle."

That's the sort of passion that has led to this fight to save the Brooklyn school in the first place. Most other schools would have simply wound down their affairs and folded. Anyone remember Eitz Chaim? Retail stores stand today on the spot the school used to occupy in Borough Park.

None of this is to say that the Shulamith campus in Flatbush is without value. It would be preferable not to have to sell it, but it may well be that a sale is in the best interests of the school — and by school we mean the whole school — both branches.

We believe that word of peaceful negotiation is very good news and we encourage both sides to continue their discussions until an agreement is reached. It is also our opinion that an all-or-nothing outcome, of any sort, is undesirable. We urge all interested parties to reserve judgment until a deal is made and to then judge the outcome on its merits.

Let me be more appreciated. I understand Illinois may be looking for a new governor.

**JOSHUA SCHEIN**  
*Woodmere*

Shame on O.U. Sen. Luchins for not upholding the voting process at the organization's convention and abusing his influence with teenage delegates (Unorthodox tactics at the OU convention; Dec. 19, 2008).

Instead of glossing over the incident, the OU leadership should dismiss Luchins immediately. Rather than trumpet the importance of youth involvement, which no one disputes, they should emphasize the despicable example Luchins has set for our well-intentioned teenagers and future Jewish leaders.

Perhaps Luchins, a former aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, should consider a political position in which his sleazy tactics

ner, an important fundraiser, during the counting of the Omer. My synagogue was later surprised to learn that the caterer's hashgacha would not allow catering of an event with live music during the Omer.

Our synagogue's experience with their clients, from where the clients send their children to school, to how late at night a restaurant can stay open. Frankly, I would prefer if hashgachot kept to the business of overseeing kashruth, and left these other social and religious policies to be made through other mechanisms, such as the

individual and his or her halachic authority.

A similar argument can be made regarding ethical behavior of kosher businesses. Perhaps hashgachot should stick to determining the kashruth of the food, and leave the ethical determinations to other mechanisms, such as the Conservative movement's Hekshsher Tzedek and Uri LTzedek's Tav Hayosher.

However, if kashruth organizations are willing to impose religious and social demands on their clients, it is troubling to me that there is as much reticence to investigate the ethical behavior of their clients. After all, ethical behavior is a major, if not a paramount, religious and social value in Judaism!

The article also reported that Rabbi Shafraan rejected the Hekshsher Tzedek idea as "sinful" in "jumping to negative judgments." Rabbi Shafraan did not shy away from making his own judgments about the Conservative movement. Arguing that in the Orthodox world ethical problems should be addressed to "the elders," Rabbi Shafraan said that, "non-Orthodox rabbis are based on progression, not Mesorah and not on respect for elders."

I am not familiar with the "mesorah" that creates a theocracy in which ethical decisions are made only by a privileged few. I am far more familiar with the mesorah that interprets that "Have fear of no

man, for justice is G-d's" (Deut. 1:17) requires a student to speak up when he believes his teacher is rendering an unjust decision (BT Sanhedrin 6b).

Rabbi Shafraan's presumption that mesorah and elders play no role in the non-Orthodox world is both preposterous and offensive. I myself do not agree with the Conservative approach to Torah and Halacha. I feel that as a movement they have misapplied the balance between modernity and Jewish law. Because of these differences, I disavowed myself of the Conservative movement and now affiliate with the Union for Traditional Judaism (UTJ), a group that I believe best reflects

authentic Torah and halacha. Nonetheless, I believe that the Conservative movement is sincere in its attempt to apply Jewish law and tradition (mesorah) and the guidance of scholars both modern and ancient (elders) to today's reality. Where we disagree with their conclusions, the halachic world must learn to express those differences in terms of reasoned analysis, and not by jumping to negative judgments.

**RABBI NOAH GRADOFSKY**  
*Long Beach*

The writer is Rabbi of Temple Israel of Long Beach and a member of the Executive Board of the Union for Traditional Judaism.

Let the sun revolve around you.

**PIROUETTE®** Window Shades  
 Welcome to a place where you take complete control of the light in your life. Introducing Pirouette® window shades from Hunter Douglas, an innovative product that combines the richness of a fabric shading with light control—day and night. Call or stop by today to learn more.

**Lenny Koegel • 516-594-6010**  
 Serving the Five Towns and surrounding areas since 1988  
 www.distinctivewindowfashions.com  
**HunterDouglas**

© 2008 Hunter Douglas Inc. ® Registered trademark of Hunter Douglas Inc. Patented in the U.S. and other countries. Other U.S. and foreign patents pending.

**WINTER SPECIAL**  
**DON'T MISS OUT!**  
**ADVERTISE IN**  
**THE JEWISH STAR**  
**For HALF PRICE**

**Buy A Whole or a Half Page Advertisement In The Issues of**

<b>Dec. 26</b>	<b>Jan. 9</b>
<b>Jan. 2</b>	<b>Jan. 16</b>

**And Save Half Off The Regular Rate!**

INSERTION DEADLINE: PREVIOUS FRIDAY 10:00PM • ART DEADLINE: MONDAY 4PM  
 PAYMENT IN FULL REQUIRED BY INSERTION DEADLINE  
 CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER SPECIAL OFFER

## EAST COAST ENDODONTICS

*the offices of:*  
**Dr. Michael J. Feldman and Dr. Evan R. Chugerman**  
 are pleased to announce the association of:  
**Joseph H. Chu, D.D.S.**

**EAST COAST ENDODONTICS**

*Quality care through microscopic endodontics*  
 Specializing in the one-visit Root Canal Experience

1705 Broadway  
 Suite 5  
 Hewlett, NY 11557  
**516.593.0000**