

chai TIMES

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 Serving the Community through Education and Inspiration Iyar 5765 May 2005 Vol. 19, No. 6

in the NEWS


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Mazel Tov to **Tova** and her fellow graduates by Arlene and Jack Lowenstein

Ben - We are incredibly proud of you on your graduation and on being such a fine mench! May you continue to go from strength to strength.
 Love Mom, Dad and Katie

In honor of our **Bracha Metuka, Brenda Melissa Klein**
 May you go from strength to strength
 Your Parents

in this ISSUE

Sefirat Ha'Omer	3
The Man Who Changed His Life	4
Seniors Speak Out	5-9
Chabad Happenings	10-11
Alumni News	12

Shabbat 1000 A Night To Remember

By: Stephanie Klorman

As the students streamed from the Old Union down the hill to the East Gym, a buzz was in the air. For many, this Friday night, April 8th, was their first Shabbat dinner while for others the experience was made more special by the 1000 students they were to share this holy night with. Shabbat 1000 had arrived and the crowd was immense.

Whether the students were freshmen, seniors, or alumni, the electric atmosphere only added to the Shabbat meal. Seated at tables of ten or twelve, friends, sororities, fraternities and clubs sponsored tables in hope of reaching the goal of 1000 Jewish students celebrating Shabbat.

It is hard to imagine a room filled with 1000 Jewish people, especially students. For many, including myself, I could not picture it if I tried, that is, until I experienced my first Shabbat 1000 four years ago. At a weekly Shabbat dinner at Chabad House, the meal may be shared with 250 students, so to quadruple that number is impressive and mind-boggling.

I was lucky enough to spend my last Shabbat 1000 with many of my friends, most of whom I met through Chabad. We sat at a table in the back overlooking the entire scene. It seemed like a rite of passage; we had graduated to the back of the room, away from the chaos of younger students as they reveled in the excitement of night. We had been there once before, when

Binghamton was still a new place and for many, the idea of Shabbat was still foreign. I especially felt the need to reminisce as an important time in my life is coming to a close.

New to keeping the Sabbath, my Shabbat experiences began at Chabad. Whether it was with the large crowd on Friday night or the more intimate meal on Saturday

Continued on Page 4



A partial view of the East Gym as it begins to fill up with students for Shabbat 1000. More photos of the event on page 10.
 (Photo by Ryan LaFollette/Courtesy of Pipe Dream)

Chabad House wins numerous Xcelsior awards for year of Stellar Programming

The Chabad House Jewish Student Center won numerous awards at the seventh annual Xcelsior awards ceremony, an evening of recognition showcasing the best of Binghamton University's programming and student talent. Chabad was awarded a trophy in the Promotion of Intercultural Understanding category for the sold out Matisyahu concert which brought various segments of the university community together for an evening of entertainment and fun. In the Outstanding Programs/Special Event category, Chabad won a trophy for the annual Mitzvah Marathon, a campus wide event held in commemoration of the victims of 9/11. In the Fund Raising Efforts of the year category, Chabad won a trophy which recognized the nearly \$10,000 raised through Chabad House for various charities and in the Lecture/Educational Program of the year, Chabad won recognition for the campus wide distribution of Chanuka Menorah kits. Various members of the Chabad board took home awards for their efforts in organizing these events, while awards for outstanding non- Executive board members went to Stephanie Klorman and David Natani.

"We had an absolutely outstanding student executive board this year; each one

of them worked very hard producing a year rich with diverse activities. I am extremely thankful to them and proud to have worked with these current and future leaders. They certainly set a new bar for any incoming e-board members, said Rabbi Aaron Slonim. "The awards are all to their credit

and to the credit of the hundreds of other students who have worked to make these programs a success."



Chabad House student leaders accept plaques and trophies at the XCELSIOR Award Ceremony

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from the DIRECTORS

On the Road. Together and Alone

While the air around us is thick with pollen and endings, in the Jewish tradition we are still "en route." As graduation plans swirl about us and talk of summer plans is everywhere, in terms of the Jewish calendar we are still very much "in the middle." In the middle of a seven week count known as the *Sefira* which begins with Passover and ends with the festival of Shavuot. Concerning this Mitzvah, the Torah states: "And you shall count for yourselves...seven complete weeks." The Talmud teaches that the expression "for yourselves", which at first glance seems perfectly unnecessary, implies that each and every Jew must engage in this count, it is simply not enough to have the Jewish court or Rabbi dispense of this obligation on behalf of the community. This focus on the need for each individual to count indicates that it is more than just marking the passage of time in a formal, ceremonial fashion; it is the undertaking of a "journey", something each one of us must do for ourselves.

Concerning the origins of this commandment, our tradition teaches that after their exodus from Egypt the Jews marked the days leading to the revelation at Sinai with anticipation and excitement. Jewish sages, however, have consistently taught that the count was more than just an expression of enthusiastic expectation; it was a form of preparation for the most revolutionary moment in history. The seven weeks were a time of spiritual growth and transformation. The Jews left Egypt as a family, a motley tribe. They had been deeply enmeshed in an immoral society and pagan culture. Now they had to prepare for their destiny as the chosen nation "a kingdom of priests and a holy people." It was a metamorphosis of the highest order and it required intensive effort.

Each year, as we return once again to this junction in time on the Jewish calendar we too are commanded to undertake this journey. We are exhorted to leave "Egypt", our personal constraints and limitations, and travel inward to the depth of our soul, to the core of our beings-- to stand again at Sinai. We need to prepare by making each day count, by using this very special time to refine and strengthen our soul bond with G-d, so that we can arrive at Sinai.

The midrash records that each and every Jew – and every future Jewish

soul – was present at Sinai. Had even one been missing, our Rabbis taught, we could not have received the Torah. Juxtaposed, somewhat paradoxically against this emphasis on the totality of the nation, is the way in which the Ten Commandments are addressed in the singular rather than the collective plural form. "I am G-d our G-d" says the Almighty to each individual Jew.

The revelation at Sinai highlighted the twin tensions that inform our Jewish consciousness. On the one hand, "all Jews are responsible for one another" – our reliance on each other and our responsibility towards the nation as a whole and on the other, the need for us to maintain and foster a personal, unique, singular relationship with G-d.

We all have the same charge, the same point of departure and the same point of return. Yet each one of us must make our own journey and preparations, no two are alike. Similarly as we approach Sinai we are aware of the awesome whole of which we are a part even as we experience our very own, unique revelation.

For our graduates this message holds special meaning. As you leave the comfort and security of college where many of you have enjoyed and been instrumental in the creation of a vibrant Jewish experience, do not doubt your ability to make Judaism a continuous and pervasive feature of your lives in the "real world." On the contrary, use your particular strengths and experiences to bring added Jewish vitality to your new environment and station in life. Always remember that you are part of something larger and never forget that you, as an individual, have something extraordinary to share!

We wish you Mazel Tov upon this milestone; may you see the fulfillment of your every dream and prayer. While we will miss you dearly we watch you leave with a smile, confident that each one of you will make a special mark on the world that awaits you. *L'hitraot*, we will not say good-bye; one never graduates from Chabad House and we look forward to seeing you again and again.

To all our friends, we wish a meaningful *Sefira* count and joyous Shavuot holiday, may we rededicate ourselves to the Torah with joy and heartfelt devotion.

Aaron and Ricky Slonim

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TORAH thoughts

Adapted from the Works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Sefirat HaOmer: Counting More Than Days

By Yanki Tauber

In Anxious Anticipation

"When you have led the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain." Recalling this Divine promise to Moshe Rabbeinu, from the moment of the Exodus, the Jews eagerly counted the days until they would reach Mt. Sinai and receive the Torah. Ever since, our people have counted these 49 days from the second day of Pesach until Shavuos, in fulfillment of the mitzvah of *Sefiras HaOmer*, the Counting of the Omer.

Liberation, an Expression of Divine Favor

The sequence of Pesach, *Sefiras HaOmer*, and Shavuos is much more than a commemoration of a certain segment of history. Each of the three events involved corresponds to a stage of spiritual development in the history of our people and in the life of each individual Jew.

Pesach marks the first stage. Before the Exodus, the Jewish people were enslaved, dominated body and soul by the Egyptians. In Yechezkel, their spiritual state before the Redemption is described as "naked and bare." They could never have been freed from slavery on the basis of their own merit; only through G-d's benevolence was the Exodus possible. He revealed Himself and redeemed them, despite the depths to which they had sunk.

The fact that the redemption from Egypt did not result from the Jews' own divine service affected the manner in which they responded to the freedom they had not earned. Though utterly unprepared for a hurried departure, they fled Egypt at the first opportunity. In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe notes that Pharaoh would have been compelled to grant the Jews freedom even if they had not fled. Why, then, did they flee?

Because the evil in the souls of the Israelites was still strong..., yet their aim and desire was to free their divine souls...from the defilement of Egypt and cling to G-d.

The Jews had not earned their freedom through personal refinement. Fearful that the evil which still influenced them might gain full control of their thought processes, they fled.

Resolving an Inner Conflict

Most people are aware of the presence of both good and evil impulses within their hearts. Even an individual who feels inspired to fulfill G-d's will may be faced with a battle, for that part of his nature which opposes this wish will seek the gratification of his personal desires instead. As a result, he might come to believe that he must "flee from himself," and suppress his identity in order to commit himself fully to G-d.

The rejection of evil is, however, only a preliminary stage in our service of G-d. Our ultimate goal should be to unite all the aspects of our personalities in serving Him, as it is written, "Love G-d with all your heart (Bechol Levavecha)." Observing that the Hebrew word for "heart" is spelled here unusually, with a doubled consonant, our Sage interprets this to mean, "with both your hearts": both the yetzer tov ("the good inclination") and the yetzer hara ("the evil inclination") should join forces in the desire to serve G-d.

Systematic Growth

This level of service can be achieved only through a consistent, concerted effort. For this reason, a significant block of time, the seven weeks of *Sefiras HaOmer*, is dedicated to this endeavor.

Our striving for systematic spiritual growth during *Sefiras HaOmer* — a graduation from the animal level to the human level — is reflected in the Omer offering itself. Most of the meal offerings in the Beis HaMikdash consisted of wheat, which, as our Sages note, is primarily human food, while barley is primarily animal fodder. The Omer offering, which signifies the beginning of our process of development after our physical liberation on Pesach, consisted of barley; the offering of Two Loaves, which marks our spiritual maturation with the Giving of the Torah on Shavuos, consisted of wheat.

The spiritual dimension of this contrast is clear. Man, unlike an instinct-driven animal, has the intellectual capacity to control his behavior. The Omer offering represents the beginning of the process of refining the animal aspects of man, the ultimate goal

being to bring that part of ourselves which is dominated by self-centered concerns close to G-d.

The 49 days of *Sefirah* correspond to the 49 emotive attributes within the human character. Each day is related to the elevation of a different trait, as step by step, we refine our personalities.

This process of refinement allows us to resolve the conflict between our good and evil impulses. On Pesach, our individual identity and our spiritual goals may be separate from each other, or even in conflict. We might feel that in order to establish a bond with G-d, we must deny our own identities. The spiritual labors of *Sefirah*, however, enable us to refine ourselves, allowing the integration of our divine service and our individual personalities, thus adding to the strength of our commitment to G-d.

Internalizing Infinity

The counting of *Sefirah* concludes at the festival of Shavuos, but Shavuos is more than the culmination of *Sefirah*. The Counting of the Omer, which involves the refinement of the self, is limited by the framework of the individual. It relates only to the Divinity which can be perceived within man's limits.

On Shavuos, by contrast, a level of Divinity which transcends all limitations is revealed. Our Sages teach that during the revelation at Mt. Sinai, "at each [Divine] utterance, the souls [of the Jewish people] took flight." The revelation exceeded the capacity of their limited natures and brought about complete self-nullification.

In a similar fashion, within each individual's service of G-d in all subsequent generations, Shavuos takes us beyond the realm of our individual selves. As a result of the preparation undergone during *Sefiras HaOmer*, the transcendent revelation of Shavuos (in contrast to the revelations of Pesach) can be accepted by and integrated within the finite limits of our individual personalities.



The Rebbe

The potential to internalize our spiritual development afforded by Shavuos is reflected in the special offering brought on that day, the Two Loaves. As a rule, chametz (leaven) may not be offered as a sacrifice.

On Pesach, furthermore, all traces of chametz, the symbol of bloated self-assertion, are forbidden. However, once the self has become refined and transformed through the service of *Sefirah*, not only is chametz permitted, it can even serve as a mitzvah.

"A Sanctuary in Microcosm"

On a personal level, the Pesach-Sefirah-Shavuos sequence teaches us that through our service of G-d, we can establish a bond with the transcendent dimension of G-dliness. In order to relate G-dliness to our daily experience, the personal refinement developed through the process of *Sefiras HaOmer* is necessary. This service directs a person toward refining himself and seeking personal fulfillment. Afterwards, through the Torah's influence, one can proceed to transform himself, his home, and his surrounding environment into a "sanctuary in microcosm," a place where the Divine Presence is revealed.

And by revealing G-dliness within the reality of our contemporary experience, we prepare the world for the coming of the era when "the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed." May this era come speedily in our days.

Adapted from *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, Parshas Emor

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The Man Who Changed His Life After Reading His Obituary

By Dov Greenberg

The world's most famous set of awards are the Nobel Prizes. Presented for outstanding achievement in literature, peace, economics, medicine and the sciences, they were created a century ago by Alfred B. Nobel (1833-1896), a man who amassed his fortune by producing explosives; among other things, Nobel invented dynamite.

What motivated this Swedish munitions manufacturer to dedicate his fortune to honoring and rewarding those who benefited humanity?

The creation of the Nobel Prizes came about through a chance event. When Nobel's brother died, a newspaper ran a long obituary of Alfred Nobel, believing that it was he who had passed away. Thus, Nobel had an opportunity granted few people: to read his obituary while alive. What he read horrified him: The newspaper described him as a man who had made it possible to kill more people more quickly than anyone else who had ever lived.

At that moment, Nobel realized two things: that this was how he was going to be remembered, and that this was not how he wanted to be remembered. Shortly thereafter, he established the awards. Today, because of his doing so, everyone is familiar with the Nobel Prize, while relatively few people know how Nobel made his fortune. Shakespeare's Mark Antony was wrong: the good we do lives after us. For most of us, it is the most important thing that we leave behind.

Thinking about how one's obituary is going to read can motivate one to rethink how he is currently spending his life. No eulogy ever says a person dressed well, lived extravagantly, took fabulous vacations, drove an

expensive car, or built the most expensive home. I never heard anyone praised for being too busy at work to find time for their children. A call to someone who is lonely; a listening ear to a person in need; long walks with our children, saying thank you to a spouse and to G-d, performing mitzvahs (acts of goodness and holiness)--are the essence of a life well lived.

The people who are most mourned are not the richest or the most famous, or the most successful. They are people who enhanced the lives of others. They were kind. They were loving. They had a sense of their responsibilities. When they could, they gave to charitable causes. If they could not give money, they gave time. They were loyal friends and committed members of communities. They were people you could count on.

There is a lovely story about the great Victorian Anglo-Jew, Sir Moses Montefiore. Montefiore was one of the outstanding figures of the nineteenth century. A close friend of Queen Victoria and knighted by her, he became the first Jew to attain high office in the City of London. His philanthropy extended to Jews and non-Jews alike, and on his one-hundredth birthday, *The London Times* devoted editorials to his praise. "He had shown," said the *Times*, "that fervent Judaism and patriotic citizenship are absolutely consistent with one another."

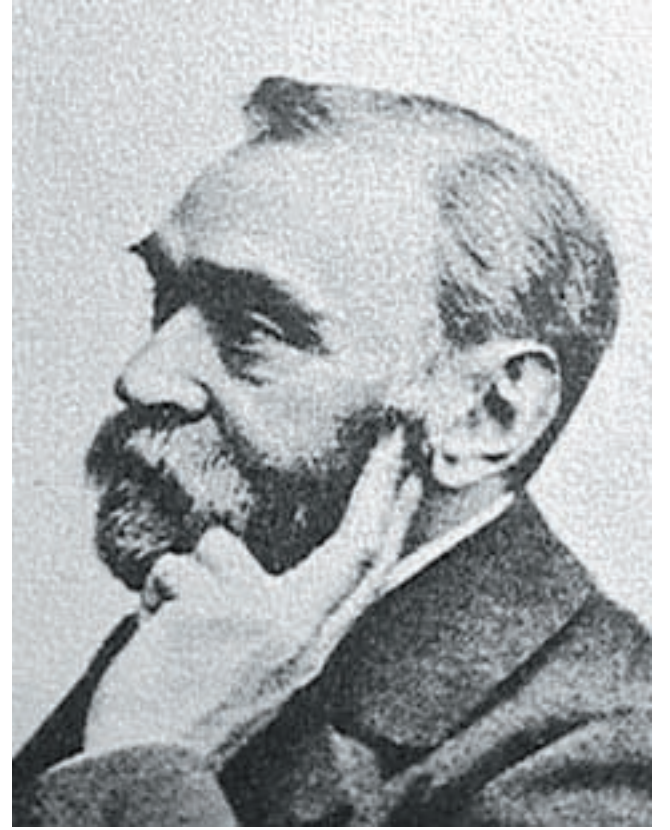
One reflection was particularly moving: Someone once asked him, "Sir Moses, what are you worth?" Moses thought for a while and named a figure. "But surely," said his questioner, "your wealth must be much more than that." With a smile, Sir Moses replied, "You didn't ask me how much I own. You asked me how much I am worth. So I calculated how much I have given to charity this year."

"You see," he said, "we are worth what we are willing to share with others."

In 1798, the great Chassidic leader, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, was imprisoned for spreading religious faith (and thus subversion) amongst the Jewish population. While he sat in prison awaiting trial, his warden, conscious of being in the presence of a holy man, asked him a question that had long been troubling him. He said: "We read in the book of Genesis that when Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves amongst the trees of the Garden of Eden, and G-d called out, 'Where are you?' What I want to know is this. If G-d knows and sees everything, surely He knew where they were. Why did He need to ask, 'Where are you?'"

The Rebbe replied: The words of the Bible were not meant for their time alone but for all time. So it is with the question G-d asked Adam and Eve. It was not addressed to them alone but to each of us in every generation. We squander our days and nights on artificial, temporary objectives; we become consumed with self-preservation and gratification, and we believe that we can hide from the consequences. But always, after we have lost our course, we hear the voice of G-d in our heart asking: Where are you? What have you done with your life? I have given you a certain amount of years; how are you using them?

In Herman Wouk's World War II novel, *The Caine Mutiny*, Willie, the central character, is serving in the Navy when he receives a letter from his father, who is about to die from cancer. Reflecting upon his



life, one in which he achieved much less than he had expected to as a young man, he cautions his son, "Remember this, if you can: There's nothing, nothing, nothing more precious than time. You probably feel you have a measureless supply of it, but you haven't. Wasted hours destroy your life just as surely at the beginning as at the end, only at the end it's more obvious."

G-d decides how long our chapter on earth is going to be; it's up to us to make every paragraph and sentence count. Immortality lies not in how long you live but in how you live. Every day is a gift from G-d and we should use it to the fullest — to celebrate life and become a blessing to others.

If, G-d forbid, you were to leave the world tomorrow, what would your obituary say? Would it read the way you want it to read?

Rabbi Dov Greenberg is executive director of Chabad at Stanford University

Continued from Page 1

afternoon, in many ways, they all paled in comparison to this one night 1000 Jews eating and singing together, welcoming in the Sabbath.

Now, as the weeks before graduation are closing in, I have become reflective on my time spent at Binghamton, particularly the Shabbats I spent on campus and now, since I live on the west-side, downtown with my housemates. I cannot count how many plates of chicken or kugel I have carried, or how many bottles of soda I have put away, but I can say with the utmost confidence, that all of these times made me appreciate Shabbat 1000.

Shabbat 1000 is a special night for which students spend the days prior preparing in the kitchen and all day Friday setting up in the gym. It is hard work, but satisfying and enjoyable work. One knows that when they have finished their job with Chabad, it is something to be proud of. No one truly understands what goes into creating the Friday night meal until it is personally experienced.

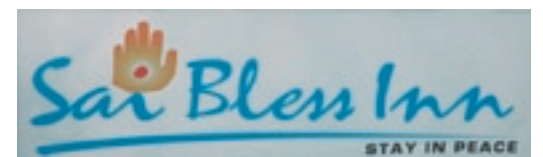
The night's entertainment was also impressive as 613, a Jewish cappella group founded by Binghamton alumni, and Kaskeset, the Jewish a cappella group on campus serenaded the crowd throughout dinner. The a cappella performance only added

to the electric atmosphere the students created around them.

It was obvious that everyone in the room was excited to be there and that Shabbat 1000 was something special. There are not many times throughout the year where there is anything close to this huge gathering of Jewish students socializing, so everyone took advantage of the scene and enjoyed it to the fullest. It was an unforgettable evening, a Binghamton tradition I am will continue on

for many more years, growing always stronger.

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Jewish life at

The State of the University Address

By the Graduates of 2005

SENIOR REFLECTIONS

After four years at Binghamton University, the seniors know it all! Below you will find the thoughts and sentiments expressed by some of this year's graduates.

They were asked the following questions:

1. **How has your collegiate experience at Binghamton University affected your Jewish identity?**
2. **Which event(s) were most memorable/meaningful/helpful/enjoyable for you as a Jew?**
3. **How would you describe the role of Chabad House within the greater Jewish experience at Binghamton University?**
4. **What would you like to see changed/added in terms of Jewish life on this university?**

Name: Natalie Benhamou
Major: PPL
Future Plans: Brooklyn Law School



I remember my first night at Chabad as if it were last night. I was a freshman, and it was my second day at school. You all know the nerves that go along with being in a new place away from all the comforts of home, and I had it bad. That Friday night, I missed the crowd that walked to Chabad, so I ventured out by myself. I had no idea what was waiting for me on Murray Hill Road across that short little bridge.

I walked in to see over 300 students like me sitting down to enjoy Shabbat together. Walking into Chabad that night, my nerves calmed, and that's how they've stayed for 3 years.

You are now reading the "Senior Goodbye's" in the Chai Times. These are written every year by the seniors who are graduating and want to leave their last thoughts about Chabad. Reading so many of these, you are probably thinking that they all sound the same. That is what I think is so special about Chabad. Chabad is everyone's home away from home, their center for Jewish life, the place that is their safety, the place they met all their friends, and one of the only things they will remember when they graduate.

Chabad was all of this to me and more. Going that first Friday night alone was terrifying. I was a little freshman and I came into a big world where I knew no one. At Chabad, this did not matter. Within minutes of arriving, I had met so many people that I did not know what to do. These people have been my life for the past three years, and will make up my life for the next 50.

We will never forget any Shabbat meal, all the learning opportunities, the barbeques, the Purim carnivals, the concerts we put together, the go-karting, the special Saturday night events, the Cafés, Shabbat 1000, Mock Weddings, and every other event that we have been a part of.

I want to thank my high school friend who helped me adjust that first night when I came in alone and scared, the Ginky that made it his business to come say hi when he didn't know me and introduced me to all his friends who are now my best friends, the boy who became my life and always will be, the girl who is now busy becoming a famous dentist but was the best roomie a girl could have, the four girlies who taught me that girls are impossible but you can't live without 'em, and the girl who's been through it all with me since we were 6!

Good Luck and Congratulations Class of 2005!! Keep in Touch!!

Name: Lisa Carny
Major: Finance and Marketing
Future Plans: Working at Deloitte



It's pretty hard to sum up the impact Chabad has had on my life, but I'll try. The people that know me know how anxious I have been to graduate and get out of Binghamton. I have been counting down the days for as long as I can remember. Although I have had my fill of Binghamton and I am eager to move on, I have to say that my time here was made that much better by the Chabad House. One of my very first memories of being up at school was coming out of my room in Bingham on that first Friday night only to find that the majority of the people in my dorm were actually Jewish. Coming from the Yeshivah of Flatbush, I was used to everyone around me being Jewish. I figured coming to a public college I would soon learn a very different life, but I was obviously wrong. Making that trek down the hill and across the bridge was where I made some of the best friends I still have

today. As time went on, I continued going to Chabad every Friday night for the following two years. Occasionally I joined in on programs and activities and I remember feeling so welcome when I first realized that the Rabbi and Rivky knew exactly who I was even when I was not as involved as others were. As a junior, I moved off campus and let's just say I was never as well fed for Shabbat dinner. The days did actually wind down, faster than I thought, and as I prepare to graduate I have such an appreciation for Chabad for making me feel warm when it was so cold and rainy outside. My years here would not have been as meaningful without it.

Name: Josh Diamond
Major: Economics
Future Plans: Undecided



A few things you need to learn about the Chabad House:
 Speak up.

I mention a lot that I really like cookies after chicken, soup, gefite fish, and salad Friday nights. So they decide to put some cookies in the cabinet for me at all times. Then starting my junior year they have cookies out for everyone in the Student Lounge. Oh the power of words. When you start to speak up people notice that you have a loud voice so all of sudden during the Simchas Torah dancing my freshman year I was called upon to try to get everyone quiet. I was pretty sweaty at the point from dancing but I got the job done. Even though at that point, most people knew me as Diamond because my brother was active years before. Soon enough everyone at Chabad will learn your first name and then by your senior year they will start calling you by your nickname. If you have something to say, say it, don't be shy, they are open to all suggestions. The people are really nice. You might even get your picture in the Chai Times every month like I did.

The Purim Carnival.

Always try to run the food at the Purim carnival at least once because it's all the Hamentashens you can eat. Don't fall off the obstacle course.

The pizza.

As the official pizza delivery man for the Chabad house I was able to receive tips, most of the time, and donate them to charity. And the best part some customers asked me to stay and eat pizza with them. I loved when that happened. And the pizza is really good.

Jewish Identity...

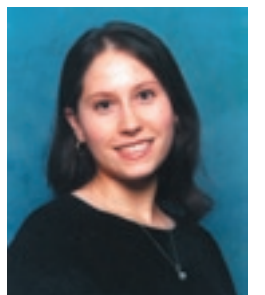
It's not all about the food. At the Chabad House you will meet people that will help strengthen your Jewish Identity. It happened for me. I took classes to learn more about Judaism and learned how to be a better person. Being Jewish is a big part of my life and going to Chabad made it a bigger part of my life. I met my friends here and had a lot of fun here. Thanks everyone who served on E-Board with me to make all the programs at Chabad successful. Thanks for everyone at Chabad for making my life at Binghamton more meaningful.

Name: Mara Ducorsky
Major: Psychobiology
Future Plans: Undecided



My first experience at Chabad of Binghamton started even before I decided to come here. It was the second to last weekend in April in my Senior year in High School, when I came with my best-friend to visit her family friend who attended Binghamton. The Friday night that we were there, the friend naturally took us to Chabad. It was there that I made my first friends at Binghamton, (even though some of them do not remember meeting me then). While I was there, I was only scared for a brief moment of this new surrounding, but it definitely did not last long. Without even noticing I felt right at home with Chabad, making good friends that I still have to this day. After that weekend, my best friend told me that we have to go to Binghamton next year and obviously we did. Chabad has definitely helped me to continue and even enrich my connection with Judaism and I thank all the people that I have encountered over the years that have helped make this possible. I sadly have one regret that I am partially to blame for and that is that I did not take full advantage of becoming friends with all the wonderful people that I have encountered. So my advice for the underclassmen is that there are many opportunities given to you at Binghamton and even Chabad that all you have to do is have the courage to go out for what you want because all the resources are there.

Name: Peggy Echt
Major: Psychology, Applied Behavior Analysis
Future Plans: Special-Ed, work with developmentally disabled children



You could say my Jewish identity is as mixed as my Texan and upstate New York accent. When I was five-years-old, my family moved from my hometown of Forth Worth, Texas to the Catskill Mountains of New York. Although my family is from a staunch Reform background, when we moved to New York, I was enrolled in an

Orthodox Jewish Day School. Throughout elementary and high school, I frequently heard derogatory comments against my family for not being religious enough and against me for being too religious as I began to take on more religious practices.

Then it came time for college. To say I was nervous entering a large, diverse campus with co-ed dorms from a small all girls' yeshiva high school would be a gross understatement. However, all my fears were for naught. From all my experiences with Jewish life on campus, predominantly through Chabad, I can honestly say I have never felt more at home. For the first time, my Jewish affiliation was secondary if not unimportant to my personal identity.

I have been immersed in Jewish education, religion, and culture since kindergarten, but I never knew what it meant to belong to a Jewish community until Chabad. Chabad has been a surrogate family to me in many ways, with constant acceptance, concern, and support. When anyone walks through the doors of Chabad Friday night, they are greeted with warmth and a smile. Due to Chabad, I was able to celebrate the Jewish holidays, attend thought provoking classes in Jewish studies, and was given unwavering support during the difficult time of my grandfather's death. Many of my unaffiliated Jewish and non-Jewish friends have routinely commented in surprise on Chabad's nonjudgmental, open-minded, and accepting ambience. Now that I'm graduating and moving to Atlanta for graduate school, finding a synagogue with the same emphasis on acceptance and Jewish community is the deciding factor in choosing a place of residence. I only hope I can find a similar sense of belonging that I have found on Murray Hill Road.

Name: Gil Efrati
Major: PPL
Minor: International Studies
Future Plans: Make Aliyah, attend Yeshiva, join the Israeli Army



Binghamton has had a huge impact on my Jewish identity. For the first time in my life, I had to seriously confront what it means to be a Jew. Fortunately, despite the formidable obstacles of a college environment, I was able to find my niche and to strengthen a deep connection with a rich heritage.

One of the most important lessons that I have learned is that Torah is a way of life that does not relegate the divine to prayer and to rituals. Rather it commands us to bring G-dliness to the physical world. This was an extremely important concept for me over the past few years as it is very easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. It always impressed me to see how my peers managed to not only balance schoolwork and other responsibilities with religious obligations, but also to act in a Jewish manner toward otherwise mundane parts of life.

There are some great memories that I have about the Chabad House: Morning minyan, Shabbat, Chagim, E-Board, learning with the Rabbi and chavrutas, staying up all night at the first Mitzvah marathon, babysitting, the Chanukah canned food menorah, sitting in the Sukkah, Simchat Torah, intramural basketball and making the playoffs, intramural football, Matisyahu, BBQs, tabling, pizza, and most importantly the people.

Saying the Chabad House plays a huge role within the greater Jewish experience at Binghamton University is an understatement. It serves as a place where Jewish students can come together and form lifelong friendships. All of my friends have made my last four years such an amazing experience. It is a scary thought to think about what school would be like without a Chabad House.

If I could change anything about this campus, I would like to see more students coming to Shachrit and learning in the morning kollel. I would also hope that Hayes would continue to be a place where an observant Jew can throw the occasional Friday night birthday party. Finally I hope that a regular Sephardi minyan will one day start on time. Well two out of three isn't so bad.

Name: Ben Greenberg
Major: History and Judaic Studies
Future Plans: A year in Israel on Otzma



When I received the email from Chabad about this senior statement, I was caught off guard. I have been reading these goodbye testimonials for three years now and it never once dawned on me that I'd ever have to write my own. The overriding themes I'd read over the years of these goodbye statements seemed to be nostalgia, a longing for the college experience to last longer, to enjoy even more good times with Chabad and all the many friends everyone had made in their years in Binghamton. I'm not going to do that. Instead I want to thank Chabad for preparing me for my future as a proud and practicing Jew. In my four years of going to Chabad, I went from someone who sat in the corner and felt like I had no friends to feeling right at home, as though the entire Binghamton community was my extended Jewish family. Although I myself am not orthodox and was uncomfortable initially with the idea of attending orthodox services, the people at Chabad opened up their hearts to me and with them I've found a true kehilla (community). When a place radiates warmth and a sense of welcoming it is usually a sign that the people who run that place are kind and generous. I've seen the kindness shared not only with me but also with every person who enters the Chabad house. I hope that as I go on in life and continue to explore my identity as a Jew, this example will continue to guide and inspire me; kindness and the devotion to Jewish tradition. Over my years in college I've grown gradually more and more religious and it's been a change for the better in my life. For helping gently nudge me, answer my questions and in essence act as my surrogate parents in Binghamton, the depths of my gratitude cannot be fully expressed to Chabad. In conclusion, I'd like to say one last thing for any freshmen reading this goodbye, and that is to enjoy the privilege that you have. You have only begun to embark on the unique journey that is college. I can't force you to go to Chabad or partake in the many great activities they offer. All I can tell you is that I came into college apprehensive about my Judaism. I went to a private Jewish high school and wasn't sure if I wanted to still be "so Jewish" in college. The moment I walked into Chabad all those insecurities and doubts vanished. I knew I was somewhere I belonged. So all I can hope for you is that you give yourselves the chance to have that experience.

Name: Todd Grober
Major: Computer Science
Future Plans: Undecided



My dad has been a religiously observant Jew for a long time now, but I personally never really liked being involved in religion. When I came to Binghamton University as a Freshman, my roommate was David Natani. He got me to come to Chabad a couple of times that year and I noticed a pretty big difference between the Jewish population at this school compared to the one I was familiar with at home when I was in grade school and high school. People at Binghamton University seem more proud to be Jewish than the people from my town back home.

One event that no matter how busy I was, I would make sure not to miss was Shabbat 1000. It was always great seeing so many Jewish people in a single room. I also enjoyed taking part in the Purim Carnival the last couple of years when my fraternity, Alpha Sigma Phi, helped Chabad House out with the event.

Speaking of Chabad House, the first time I ever went to Chabad, it was kind of weird because I didn't know too many people there. But nonetheless, everyone was very friendly and had open arms to newcomers. And the faces became more and more familiar over time.

Name: Neal Hakimi
Major: Biology
Future Plans: Medical School



Looking back on my time in Binghamton I think of how different it would be, and how different I would be without the Chabad house. Knowing that you always have a place to go no matter what has made all the difference in the world. There is a special organization here that works tirelessly day and night just to make life for the students of Binghamton a little easier. They are situated in the "crossroads" of our lives, lending a hand to all in need. From the bottom of my heart I thank the Chabad House for all they have done for us and continue to do for the the students of Binghamton.

Name: Jackie Hakimian
Major: Accounting
Minor: Economics
Future Plans: Law School



Being away from family places Jewish college students at a particularly high risk for assimilating and losing their faith. However, at Binghamton we were privileged to have a Chabad House that gave us the opportunity to keep in touch with Jewish Life. The Slonims welcomed me and my friends and made us feel like family.

The Purim carnival was my favorite Chabad event. It was always a welcome break from studying and a great place to have fun with your friends.

Within the context of overall Jewish Life, the Chabad House is your best bet no matter what your level of observance. The great thing is that they accept you for who you are and do not push you to do anymore than you absolutely want to. This creates a welcoming environment that makes students look forward to Jewish events.

The one thing I would like to see is more crossover between students involved in the different Jewish organizations on this campus.

Name: Oren Kashi
Major: Computer Science
Major: Economics
Future Plans: Working at UBS, marriage



Future: working at UBS, and in the meantime B"H finding a beautiful young lady inside and out.

WOW. I was tempted to just leave my essay at that. But after some thought, I decided that just one word would not do justice to such a wonderful organization. Actually, it's a lot more than an organization. It's a means of producing lifelong friendships with a weekly side of great food. Being closely attached to the Chabad House for five years, especially the people in it, I will have a hard time letting it all go. So in a way it is with a heavy heart that I continue to write.

As a freshman (no, it was not 17 years ago), I entered Binghamton University being unsure where my religious path would lead me. That, coupled with a Muslim roommate, and not knowing anyone here amounted to a lot of pressure. The first Shabbat at Chabad was a bit uncomfortable because of the sheer amount of people and it seemed like everyone knew each other and everyone had a set place to sit. As the weeks turned to months which turned to years, Chabad has really become my second home (or more correctly home away from home away from home) and I am not able to imagine what life would have been like had it not been here. Through Chabad I have met my closest circle of friends, have had great laughs and have had some of my fondest memories of my time at Binghamton. Among them have been the Purim Carnivals, welcome back BBQ's, canned food menorah, countless Friday night meals, Simchat Torah, over-crowded Sukkah, Mitzvah marathons, Hayes, chilling with the Creegers, my "granddaughter" getting married, Shabbat 1000's, 7:30 am minyan, tabling, E-board meetings, the original "Jew Crew", Ferret(s), the Persians, little Yisroely running into poles, Shneur-Zalman my "younger brother", arguments about the "roles of women" with Rivky, Sefaradim vs. Ashkenazim arguments with the Rabbi and the list goes on. In short, Chabad has been an integral part of my student

life and in my religious life as well. Had it not been here I do not want to know where my path would have taken me.

To all of you who are staying here, take advantage of the Chabad House - a wonderful asset for you to benefit from. If you do, you too will be taken on a path that will leave you saying "WOW".

Name: Corinne Kaufman
Major: Judaic Studies
Future Plans: Grad school for Special Ed



The Chabad House has been an integral part of my four years at Binghamton University. It was comforting to know that every shabbos and holiday was being experienced by the Jews on the Binghamton campus. I am grateful that I too, got to take part in this experience. Additionally, the classes at the Chabad House helped continue my Jewish learning, and they were truly inspiring. I want to sincerely thank all the students and the Chabad House for being a part of my college experience, and making my time at Binghamton that much better. Thank you for everything.

Name: Natalie Khalatov-krimnus
Major: English
Future Plans: AmeriCorps NCCC, Law school in '06



Although I plan on taking time to thank the individuals, who have affected me the most here personally, it is fair to say that I owe something to everyone who has come to Chabad and helped make it a community as well. Above all, this is what being Jewish in Binghamton has meant for me: community. There is not one single event I hold above all others, no moment that stands out in my mind as more exceptional than the one that preceded it. Rather, what has been most memorable to me has been the stability of warmth, friendship, and spirituality I have experienced every time I walked into the Chabad House.

It's a remarkable feeling to know that for every week for the last two years I have been able to grow as a person. To know that every Friday night I have been able to sit down and have real conversations with some of the most articulate, intelligent, and caring individuals you can meet here at Binghamton; this is what it means to have emerged richer. To know that if there is something you need, there are people ready and willing to help!

I feel indebted to everyone I have met here at Chabad in that each and every person I have met has helped create a sort of community that is based around caring, learning, and vibrancy. In fact, above all, this is what I'll miss about Chabad. Although I'll always be indebted to the Chabad House (and anyone else who has ever spent an obnoxious amount of time answering my questions) for the instruction with which they have provided me, I do not worry about my knowledge lapsing, for knowledge has only a beginning. I will be able to pick up a book and learn anytime the desire strikes me. A community though is harder to replicate, and precisely for that reason, it is more precious. Thank You!

Name: Brenda Klein
Major: Art History
Future Plans: Hunter College - Special Ed



The house that sits at 420 Murray Hill Road may look like an ordinary home from the outside, but those who have entered it's welcoming doors, know that something special happens inside. After watching my family drive away in late August 2002, at the very beginning of my college career, I was so nervous. I wanted something familiar in a place that felt so far from home. That evening I went to Chabad with a few girls from my dorm. I immediately felt so welcomed and some of my worries were quickly eased.

I met other students who would become my some of my closest friends and with them have shared many unique experiences. I played a grandmother in a mock wedding, all dressed up with gray hair and lots of lipstick. I have cheered on Chabad's basketball team, and even got my own jersey. I have spent many Thursday afternoons helping prepare for the Shabbat meals. I have hung out with my friends eating pizza in the lounge. And of course, I've taken many Shabbat afternoon naps in the library.

I have always been proud of my Jewish identity, and I am so glad that the Chabad House has given me the opportunity to explore it. I learned that no matter where I may travel, a community will be waiting for me, but I have to make the first move.

Chabad has become my home away from home, and my friends have been my family away from home. As I'm leaving the nest, I will carry with me the lessons I've learned and the moments we've shared to wherever I may journey. I wish the other graduates Mazal Tov, as they embark on their new journeys in life and may you all find Jewish communities as welcoming and nurturing as the one we have shared together at Binghamton's Chabad House.

Name: Stephanie Klorman
Major: English, Rhetoric
Minor: International Studies
Future Plans: Law School



Four years ago I walked into the Chabad House on Shabbat and never looked back. As each Friday night passed, I began to enjoy the atmosphere more and more. I decided that I needed to learn more about Judaism; it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The hours I spent at Chabad either learning or taking part in the various activities all hold a special place in my heart. I

know that the friends I have made here will be in my life for a long time. Never in a million years would I have thought I would be graduating amongst friends I first met because of Chabad.

Chabad has affected me in numerous ways, not only in my religious practices but in who I am as a person as well. My college education has taught me many things throughout my four years, but there are only some things that can be put to practical use. I can now say with confidence that I am an accomplished baker who can multiply a recipe by four, and can roll a mean matzah ball (perfectly circular, if I must say so myself).

Thank you Chabad; thank you for all you have taught me, for the great friends you have given me and for the memories that will last a lifetime.

Name: Rosie Kornspun
Major: Psych - Applied Behavior Analysis
Future Plans: Graduate school for school psychology



As I walked through the Sukkah in front of Chabad watching the boys put up the lighting and decorations, and continued my way to the kitchen where the girls were cutting up vegetables, I was embraced and welcomed for the first time. Of course, I was quickly introduced to the knife drawer and the 967 tomatoes waiting to be diced for Shabbos dinner. The warmth and boundless energy went right through me; I knew I had found my home away from home.

The environment that the Chabad House provides plays an essential role in intriguing and developing the Jewish mind. It is a place where the Shabbos feeling is truly captured by the prayers and songs; where a warm Shabbos dinner and Saturday morning chulent are enjoyed while chatting with your best friends; where one's questions from within are answered by listening to Rabbi Slonim's thoughts on the weekly Torah portion. These are all recollections that will follow me for years to come and I will cherish them forever.

It has been four years of accepting a wonderful spiritual side of religion that I never expected to find, and my future will be forever entwined with a deep sense of Judaism. Chabad House has brought me to this level of consciousness, and I thank them for this revelation.

Stepping into Chabad four years ago was a defining moment in my life. It has truly changed me as a person. And as I leave, I remember why so much of my time was spent there. I want to thank the Chabad House for the efforts and devotion that they have presented us with. But more than anything, I want to thank them for touching my heart.

Name: Zack Kuperwaser
Major: English
Future Plans: Cornell U. School of Law



My four years here have been marked by constant change and continuing progression. In a sense the need to change friends, courses, and even residence is what has allowed me to grow and blossom into an adult. Amid all the change there has been one constant in my life. Chabad House has been the most important element of my college experience for the simple reason that regardless of whatever else was going on in my life, the richness and warmth of the Chabad House has always been there for me. The security of knowing that my week would end with Shabbat services and dinner at the Chabad House always managed put things in their right perspective, especially when the going got tough.

My affiliation with Chabad House, and Chabad House's prominence on our campus has really helped me construct an identity for myself as a Jew in a secular university setting. While my non-observant or non-Jewish friends have not always understood the nuances of my religion, they have all known about the Chabad House and what it represents. To be affiliated with the Chabad House is to be recognized as part of one the biggest and most vibrant organizations on our campus. Finally, I strongly urge anyone reading this issue to make Chabad House as big a part of your life here as you possibly can, it will be the biggest service you can do for yourself and for others.

Name: Meeka Levin
Major: Finance, Consulting & Leadership
Minor: Hebrew
Future Plans: Law School



As outgoing Co-President of The Chabad House, I will now be addressing you for the last time. Thank you for four great years at Binghamton, I couldn't have done it without you. From the friends I met at my first Chabad dinner to the friends I now share my home with, you have all influenced and motivated me to be who I am today - an impending law student who now, after successfully running the Matisyahu concert (with the help of many others of course) feels that a career as an event planner would better suit me (Ema, I'm joking - but seriously...I'm not).

On a serious note though, thanks to all that Chabad offers, I have been able to study aspects of Jewish culture and religion I would otherwise have not known. I have grown in regards to Judaism and without Chabad's influence this never would have happened. I reflect on my time at Binghamton with a smile, only to realize that most of my memories in some way relate back to The Chabad House. I laughed my best laughs at Chabad - most unforgettable was in preparation for the Mock Jewish Wedding. I am proud of who I have become over the past four years, and the road that lies ahead for me is now clearer. Although I am leaving Binghamton, I must say that I am leaving behind an even better Levin sister! I feel blessed that I have been given the opportunity to meet so many inspiring people and to be involved in the planning and executing of so many enriching events for the Jewish community. To the Chabad House- thank you for giving me this leadership opportunity, the opportunity to make friends, and for the best days of my life. I urge all of

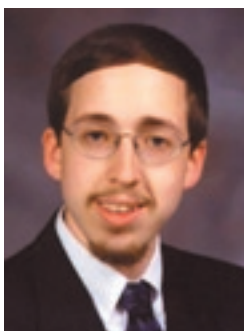
you to get involved and take advantage of what Chabad has to offer. I am living proof that it will change your life forever. Farewell and Good Luck to the Class of 2005!

Name: Tova Lowenstein
Major: English and Judaic Studies
Minor: Comparative Literature
Future Plans: Teachers College, Columbia University



Four years of my life
 gone in the blink of an eye
 from Taglit Mayanot
 to the Times we call Chai.
 Intimate Shabbat dinners
 for over 200 of your closest friends
 add an unforgettable touch
 to the long countless weekends.
 Rivky's challah, kugel and chicken,
 Friday night comes just once a week;
 around Rivky and the Rabbi
 there's never a reason to feel meek.
 From the comfy library couches
 to the Purim carnival and Ladies Night,
 spending time with the Chabad crew
 simply felt right.

Name: Brian Daniel Miller
Major: Political Science
Minor: Judaic Studies
Plans: Law School at American Uni.



Believe it or not, Binghamton was actually my first choice for college.

One of the key factors in that decision was the university's Jewish population and the Jewish organizations on campus (or just off campus, as the case may be). I'd grown up in a town with a fairly negligible Jewish population, and I was intrigued by the prospect of being at a school with more than a dozen Jews.

But I didn't jump right in and get involved in Jewish life the way I'd wanted to, and soon found myself largely detached from all things Judaic. So, instead, I pursued my other interests. I was a staff writer for Pipe Dream for a while, and actually wrote the article about the dedication of the new "Great Room" at Chabad House. But, mostly, I got involved in the Student Association. During my sophomore year, when I was in my second year as a representative on the Student Assembly, a proposal was put on the ballot which sought to extend the reading period before finals. In order to make up some of the class days, one of the options, as you may recall, was eliminating Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as days off.

Obviously, I was strongly opposed to that idea and, to make a long story short, I was left standing in front everyone after services -- on my birthday, sick with a cold, in only my second visit to Chabad -- explaining how to go vote against the proposal.

After I spoke, I was rather surprised when a number of people came up to me to welcome me and say "thanks for spreading the word." In that way, that shabbos at Chabad went a long way towards making me feel comfortable there and got me to take another look at Jewish life on campus. It helped me realize that, though it was unlikely I'd end up being more directly involved in the inner-workings of Chabad, I still had something to contribute through my involvement in the SA. Since then, I'd like to think that I've been able to do some good through that comfortable niche I've had in campus Jewish life. My role may have been best summed up by the half-joking title Brian Cohen of Hillel-JSU once used to introduce me: "SA Jew."

I hope that other students who might find themselves in a situation similar to mine can also find a way to connect their secular activities to their Jewish ones. I've always appreciated how Chabad has been particularly receptive to, and supportive of, such efforts, and I thank them for it. I'd also like to thank them for all of their work on Shabbat 1000, the Purim Carnival, countless shabboses at Chabad, and the numerous other activities and events I've enjoyed during my time here.

To everyone who's graduating this semester, and to those of you who will be graduating sooner than you realize: I hope that you never forget this place, or the people who were here with you. Miles and years from here and now, I believe we'll all be able to look back on these times and smile. It's funny how, after a while, you stop thinking about it as a 'home away from home,' and it just becomes 'home.'

Name: David Natani
Major: Computer Science
Future Plans: Undecided



After being here for 4 years I finally feel like I am ready to move on, but at the same time I am sad to leave. Before I go I would like to thank the Chabad House for opening up their lives and home so that we can all live better lives. If it was not for them my whole life would be different. When I was a senior in high school I came to visit, and I was taken back by the generosity and friendliness of not only the Chabad House but the entire Jewish Community that they bring together and inspire. At that point I knew that Binghamton was

the place for me and that I wanted to be apart of this great Jewish community. So with a little luck I was accepted not only to Binghamton University, but also to Chi Beta Delta. Being a member of Chabad has helped me grow in so many ways, and has helped me meet more people than I could ever imagine. Through Chabad I was able to make friends for life, and I was also able to meet my girlfriend Devorah who I will miss very much. So aside from all the amazing events that Chabad coordinates I am just thankful for the Chabad House being "My home away from home."

Name: David Natanov
Major: Accounting & Finance
Future Plans: Real Estate Advisory at PricewaterhouseCoopers



I consider myself blessed to have been a part of the strong, vibrant, and dynamic Jewish community at Binghamton University for the past four years. I would like to thank the Chabad House for working as hard as they do to make this such a great campus community. I met some of my best friends here and trace some of my best college meals, memories, and experiences back to the Chabad House.

I would like to congratulate my fellow graduates and wish them all good luck in their future endeavors. To those who are not yet graduating, I would like to encourage each and every one of you to become more involved in Jewish life on our great campus. If you like one of the events that is put on by Chabad, Hillel, or JHP, get into a leadership position and help plan its execution. If you'd like to see a different event happen, get it done and get your friends involved. Many doors will open for you and you will be extremely proud of what you created.

As a Jewish student leader I had the opportunity to learn from and work with many great members of our Jewish community and I will cherish my experiences and all I have learned here in Binghamton forever. The Chabad House was and continues to be an integral part of my development and identity as a dedicated member of Klal Yisrael, The Jewish People. *Toda Raba!*

Name: Sharon Petrizzi
Major: Marketing, Consulting, Leadership
Future Plans: Public relations or marketing; raising a healthy, loving family



Many Jewish students say that they chose Binghamton University because of its abundant Jewish population, but I can say that my choice was a little different; my mother told me, "Bubbula, you can't attend a school that's more than 3 hours away!" And, we all know that a Jewish mother is very persuasive!

Throughout my life, I always had Jewish friends, and always loved being Jewish, but I never truly felt that I completely connected with my Jewish identity. Looking back, I can honestly say I never would have guessed how much Judaism would become a part of my college experience, and how truly blessed I would feel in having learned so much.

Over the past four years I have truly grown and developed as a person and, more importantly, as a Jew. Chabad has opened up a whole new world for me, where I have learned not only the traditional prayers and customs, but have also learned the meaning of friendship and family. My Thursday night's have become devoted to cutting vegetables and each week I look forward to experiencing the warmth that Rivki and Rabbi Slonim have instilled in Chabad.

I am thankful that I have been able to discover a deeper side to my Jewish identity, and that I have had the privilege to learn so much. Chabad is a place that I will always hold close to my heart, and I will forever be thankful that I was a part of something so wonderful. I can truly say that when I send my kids off to college there will be three criteria to their choice; is there a Jewish population? is there a Chabad? and is it less than 3 hours away?

Name: Hallie A. Pollack
Major: Human Development
Future Plans: Social services



My first time at the Chabad House was as a senior in high school. I did not know where I would be going to school the following year. The feelings of warmth and welcome emanating from the Chabad House were obvious to anyone who walked through their doors, and it drew me in. My first Shabbos here was nerve wracking, as it is for anyone going to a new place for the first time, but I felt like I was walking into someplace special.

My freshman year I lived very close to the Chabad House. Over the next four years I moved farther away but the bond that had started to develop my freshman year grew, even as the distance increased. As I became more and more involved in the many different programs that Chabad offered, from working in the kitchen Thursday and Friday nights, to helping out with the cafes, to running Shabbat 1000, Chabad has helped me to grow in many ways. I have learned many things about myself and have become comfortable with my religiosity, I have taken on challenging roles and excelled in spheres I didn't think I would ever become involved in, and I made many friends who have been there for me as only good friends can be.

Chabad is there for anyone who is willing to open their hearts to something new. It is a place to grow, to learn, and to become a part of a community. If you allow yourself to experience the wonderful things that the Chabad house has to offer, you can only benefit from it, as it is here for us, the students.

Name: Michelle Sakhaee
Major: PPL
Minor: Anthropology
Future Plans: Graduate School



I will never forget the first time I attended a Shabbat dinner at Chabad my freshman year here at Binghamton. The flyers which were posted all over campus said to meet at the Union to walk to the Chabad House for the incoming freshman for Shabbat dinner. Me being the typical late Jew, on my way to the Union I saw a large group of nicely dressed students walking through Newing Community. As I made my way to the group I was approached by some girls who were so friendly and welcoming. Just by walking there I was able to meet and socialize with Jewish students my age. Once I arrived to the Chabad House I was even more impressed with the amount of Jewish students who showed up and the friendly warm atmosphere that the Chabad House brings for Friday night Shabbat dinner. That first Friday night I spent at Chabad allowed me to make so many friends, many of which I am still close with and will continue to be close with after college.

Chabad to me has always been a place where everyone is welcome and is truly a student's home away from home. Chabad has always made the students feel like an extended part of their family not just visitors who come to visit on a weekly basis. The warm, loving and openness of everyone regardless of level of observance is what made me return Shabbat after Shabbat to Chabad (along with the amazing challah).

Even though I have always considered myself to identify with my Jewish heritage, Chabad has strengthened my Jewish identity. Chabad gave me the opportunity to travel to Israel for the first time on Birthright despite the event which occurred post 9-11. From helping prepare Shabbat dinner, to the enlightening classes, Simchat Torah parties, Purim Carnivals and Shabbat 1000's I will never forget the wonderful memories and friends I have made through my experiences at Chabad. I would like to thank the Chabad House for everything that they have done for making my religious experience away from home a positive one that I will cherish forever. I wish all the graduates of 2005 a sincere Mazal Tov and best of luck in the future.

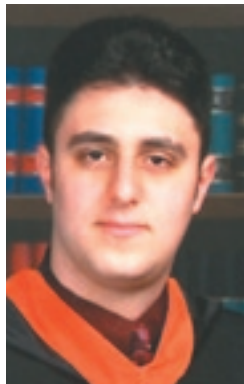
Name: Matthew Schneider
Major: Finance & Marketing
Future Plans: Law School



Without a doubt, my experience at Binghamton University helped me to discover my Jewish identity and has helped to define it as well. As a Reform Jew, I came to Binghamton rarely celebrating any Jewish holidays except for the biggies. However, in my freshmen year, I gave in to peer pressure and went where all the students around me were going: the Chabad House on Friday nights! This opportunity to mingle with my fellow Jewish students, enjoy a weekly meal, and become familiar with Hebrew and prayers all over again was part of why I became so I passionate about Binghamton University from the beginning of my time here. Overall, the Chabad House's presence on campus obviously enables Jews to become better Jews, but I truly believe it helps make all people better people, and in the very least, it inspired me to want to become better and do more in the future.

Some of the most memorable events have been the Purim Carnival and Shabbat 1000, specifically because each successfully reaches out to the entire campus community and shares with them our traditions and celebrations. Twice taping my campus television show "Schneider on the Street" at Purim Carnival resulted in a line some students still quote to this day. After Rabbi Slonim discussed all the new and exciting plans for Purim Carnival, my response was "This Rabbi's on fire!" However, most significant for me personally, was having the honor to light the big Hanukah menorah at this past year's lighting ceremony in the Old Union. The only thing I could imagine that would improve Jewish life on this university would be greater outreach efforts to the casual Jewish students on campus. If it was not for the successful nudging of some freshmen friends, then I would have missed out on so many great opportunities and I shudder to think how joyless my experience at Binghamton could have been!

Name: Tom Triebwasser
Major: Electrical Engineering
Future Plans: Lockheed Martin, BU Grad. School, Husband of the Year



Words cannot describe the powerful impact Chabad of Binghamton has on my life - but I'll attempt a few nonetheless. It was there that I met my future wife, shared countless Shabbat and Yom Tov meals with hundreds of friends, and began my journey towards a living deeper, more meaningful Jewish life. Each person who comes to Chabad, whether current student or alumni, close friend or not, has touched my life in a positive way which cannot be measured. I thank you all for helping to sculpt the masterpiece that is Jewish life at Binghamton University.

GRADUATES!!

To continue receiving the Chai Times and news from the Chabad House Alumni Association, please forward your new address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address to:

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Chabad HAPPENINGS



Shabbat 1000 !

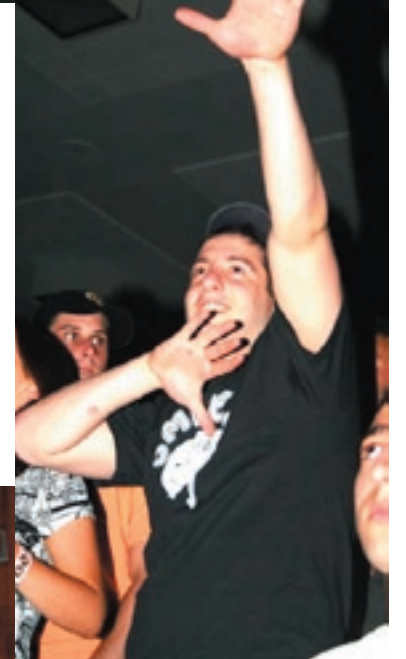
Shabbat 1000 took hours of work on the part of many student committees. Pictured are members of the set up, catering and welcoming committees working feverishly in the final hours before the dinner.



At the VIP reception following the concert, students listen intently as Matisyahu speaks about his life experiences.

Matisyahu Rocks the House!

Over 650 students enjoyed an unforgettable concert with Hasidic Reggae Superstar, Matisyahu when he appeared live in Binghamton on April 14. The electric in the air was palpable as students took in the sight and sounds of a Chasid singing about spirituality in this most unlikely style.



Chabad HAPPENINGS



Pesach at Chabad

For Jewish students who stayed in Binghamton for the first part of the holiday Chabad House held spirited Seders that were very well attended. During the latter days of the holiday, hundreds of students enjoyed holiday services and meals.

Trivial factoid: over 800 lbs of potatoes were used to create the Potato Kugels and potato salads enjoyed at Chabad over this holiday. And then... right after Passover, scores of students crowded Chabad House for a midnight Bagel and Pancake Bust. "Welcome Back, Chametz!" was the fervent sentiment expressed!

How this (Seder) Night was different... and still felt good

By Tzvi Furer

It's that time of the year again to remember our Exodus from Egypt by foregoing chametz for eight days. It is a time to get together with family and friends to celebrate the holiday by holding a Seder, a Hebrew word meaning order... This ordinarily isn't a problem for students of Binghamton University, however, because it is a Jewish leap year, Passover occurred later than it usually does. Due to its late-April timeframe, there was not a vacation given that spanned the holiday like there has been in previous years. Instead, there was only an extended weekend. Most students took advantage of that extra day and headed home. But not every student, myself being one of those people. Instead, the Chabad house was kind enough to host Seders for us students as well as members of the local Jewish community. I attended both nights, and by the end of the first I was very glad that I did.

Due to the fact that my parents emigrated from Russia several decades ago, my family was never very knowledgeable about most of the traditions surrounding Judaism. Sure, they both knew about holidays in the general sense, but my parents did not know any Hebrew, much less anything about prayer or how to conduct a ceremony. When I became of age, I took it upon myself to attend Hebrew school, and learn the facets of our religion that my family was unable to teach me. After I first learned about the history and traditions surrounding Passover, I immediately made sure that my family had their own Seder, which I led every year.

This was my first year away from home during Passover, and though my family urged me to stay here in Binghamton, I wondered how the Seder at the Chabad House would differ from what I had done with my family for so many years.

As soon as the Seder began, I was immediately taken back to my Hebrew school days. Here, the ceremony was performed primarily in Hebrew, which differed from the English I mainly used at home because I had wanted my family to understand me. Another difference

I immediately noticed was that everybody was attentively listening, and that many people were joining in with Rabbi Slonim on nearly all of the prayers. Even though I conducted the Seders at my house in English, the members of my family insisted

on listening to me, rather than joining in prayer or song.

Despite these differences, I was able to really enjoy myself both nights of the Seder. Though I was initially homesick, it wasn't long before I felt like I was home. It was probably due to the fact that I was fed until I couldn't eat anymore, and that I was having a good time singing and eating around people I was already friends with, and people who I became friends with once the night was over.

I, among other students, am grateful to the Chabad House for what they did and how much they gave during both nights. The great atmosphere of the Seders made this a special night that I will surely remember for many years to come.



Chabad Alumni News

Mazel Tovs!

Class of '91

■ Ron Elimelekh announces his engagement to Enbar Joudai; a November 23, 2005 wedding is planned. Ron graduated from NYU Law School and currently works for Weil, Gotzhal and Manges LLP. Enbar will graduate in May 2005 from Kean University with a Masters in Speech Pathology and will begin a career in that field soon after.

Class of '92

■ Allen and Robye (Shaw) Margolius announces the birth of their daughter Francesca Lee (Shira Leah) on February 3, 2005. Her brother Jack is doing great and turns three next week.

■ Enbar Joudai announces her engagement to Ron Elimelekh, see '91 for full details.

Class of '93

■ Marc and Kayla Warren announce the birth of their son, Yechiel Meir, February 24, 2005.

■ Michael and Naomi Knopf announce the birth of their son on March 14. He was welcomed home by big sister Alissa.

■ Robye (Shaw) and Allen Margolius announce the birth of their daughter, see '92 for full details.

Class of '95

■ Seth and Bonnie Davis announce the birth of their son Brendan Reece, Ilan Gavriel, March 12, 2005. The Davis family makes their home in Denver, CO.

Class of '96

■ Rachel (Sperling) and Daniel Solomons announce the birth of their daughter, Tova Tzyril, March 6, 2005. The Solomon family make their home in sunny California.

Class of '97

■ Joel and Jackie Lynn announce the birth of their daughter, Shoshana Rivkah, April 3, 2005. She was welcomed home by big brother Shmuel Chaim.

■ Matt and Yaira Binstock announce the birth of their daughter, Eliza Netiya, April 11, 2005.

Class of '00

■ Yitzhak Bachman and Aura Danesh announce the birth of their son, Menashe Eitan, April 4, 2005.

Send us your Mazel Tovs so we can share them with the world!!

Have a picture of your Mazel Tov? Send it together with your details to rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com and we'll put it up on the new Simchas and Such section of our webpage!

SIX13: NEW PROFESSIONAL A CAPPELLA GROUP, WITH GRASSROOTS FROM BU, BRINGS FRESHEST SOUND TO JEWISH MUSIC

Despite increasing interest in Jewish A Cappella, fans of the genre have been limited to collegiate groups or ensembles that sing only at simchas.

Until now.

Starting with its debut headlining performance at the Jewish Music Café in Park Slope on April 2nd and continuing with its CD released on April 15th, just in time for sfira, Six13 is primed to leave fans with an unforgettable musical experience.

"We want to energize crowds with a unique and powerful sound they haven't heard before," says tenor Shlomo Ressler. "Our sound is different, fresh and will appeal to people of all ages and religious levels."

Ressler, a veteran of Beatachon and Kol Zimra, says that for an A Cappella group to be able to perform stellar concerts, a main requirement is having a skilled arranger. The group has one in the form of musical director Mike Boxer.

Boxer, who has arranged all of the group's songs, is already garnering praise from producers for his innovative composing.

"Our sound is a fusion of the

traditional and the modern," Boxer said. "A variety of nuances are meshed with power



solos to result in music that is distinctive and broad in appeal."

Mayer and Alan Zeitlin. Ishofsky and Mayer were two of the founding members

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These power solos are performed by all six members of this professional male group. Their vocal textures vary greatly, ranging from smooth R&B to hard rock to Miami Boys Choir. Boxer and Cohn also help make the group unique with their impressive beat box vocal percussion. Six13 has been rehearsing and recording and its CD features an upbeat L'cha Dodi, a boisterous version of Yigdal and an original rock-anthem about an Israeli bus driver who survived a suicide bombing.

So how did the group come together? At Binghamton University, Boxer sang with bass Avi Ishofsky and baritones Stuart

of Binghamton's only Jewish a cappella group, Kaskeset. Zeitlin and Boxer came into the group at separate intervals shortly thereafter. The four only overlapped in Kaskeset for less than one year, but all of them spent many a Shabbos at Chabad House singing their hearts out, creating great harmonies. Already then they envisioned having a professional group after they all graduated. Ressler was enlisted shortly thereafter. An American Idol-esque set of auditions looked like it would fail to produce a star sixth member until tenor Moshe Cohn, who sang with Ressler in Beatachon and Kol Zimra, arrived and the votes were unanimous. The group performed at the Chabad 18th Anniversary Dinner at the New York Hilton to rave reviews and have twice performed at Shabbat 1000 at Binghamton University.

For some, the thought of Jewish A Cappella may conjure up images of a barbershop quartet, or someone's uncles singing at a shabbos table.

Six13 is a far cry from that. The group, whose members hail from Monsey, Great Neck, Brooklyn and Los Angeles boast a booming beat box and a plethora of experience from performances in other groups.

"We're looking to defy the stereotype of Jewish A Cappella," Mayer said. "Even people who are not generally turned on to A Cappella will be turned on to our sound."

Six13's album is currently on sale at Judaica stores across the country. To learn more about the group, including information on purchasing a cd online, log on to their website at www.six13.net.