

Briefs

BBBS clothing drive

Zions bank will hold a clothing drive to benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah. Those wishing to participate should take their clothing donations to any Park City Zions Bank location before July 19. A customer appreciation BBQ will take place July 19 between 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the snow Creek Office.

Preschool registration

The Park City cooperative preschool has two openings for the 2002-2003 school year. One is for a three-year-old on Monday and Wednesday, and the other is for a four-year-old on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Park City Cooperative preschool is a nationally accredited program. For more information, please call the preschool at 649-5949.

Synagogue garage sale

Temple Har Shalom is having its first annual community garage sale on Sunday, July 21 between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. The event will be held in parking lot "K" at 1910 Prospector Ave. In addition to the garage sale, the synagogue is planning several upcoming activities in honor of the new Rabbi Joshua Aaronson and his family. These events, which will be announced at a later date, will help introduce the Aaronsons to the Park City area. Har Shalom is also in the process of preparing for Rosh Hashanah, which begins Sept. 6. For information about holiday services, welcoming plans for the Rabbi or participation in our drawing for a 2002 Vespa, please call the synagogue, at 649-2276.

Local conference attracts unlikely lecturer

Beth Samuels reconciles academic life with Orthodox Jewish life

By RENEE LOWRY

Of the Record staff

Park City residents may or may not be aware of the recent happenings at the Prospector Square Lodging and Convention Center.

Since June 30, the convention center has been hosting Park City Mathematics Institute's Graduate Summer School Lecture program. Guest math experts have been drifting in and out for the past two weeks.

One of the more atypical types is Beth Samuels, a Ph.D. candidate from Yale University.

"There aren't many women in the math department at Yale," admits Samuels. Furthermore, "There aren't any tenured math professors."

Yet Samuels insists that she "has always felt encouraged. I was conscious that I was different, but I was attracted to that."

That attraction has been present since the very beginnings of her math career.

"Ever since I was little, I liked playing with my calculator," says Samuels. Later on in her schooling, Samuels recalls how "my teachers showed me there was a world beyond calculations. There is an art and an elegance to it."

Originally from Los Angeles, Samuels completed her undergraduate work at Columbia University in New York before deciding on Yale.

Surprisingly, Yale was put off for a few years in favor of something more important.

"I'm an Orthodox Jew," says Samuels. "I've always been involved in Jewish activities and I've always been interested in creating more opportunities for women."

Prior to Yale, Samuels spent two years teaching at the Drisha Institute in New York City. Like Samuels, the program at Drisha is something of a cultural paradox.

"I was there for a two-year fellow-

ship," recalls Samuels. "I directed a high school program for girls. A lot of it involved Bible classes, Jewish law and philosophy. But the underlying goal was to teach Jewish girls that there are many opportunities for them."

Samuels acknowledges that this feminist approach is considered somewhat controversial within certain Orthodox communities.

"There are parts of the Jewish community that are supportive and some that are less supportive," says Samuels. In some communities, it's still seen as radical.

Samuels sees herself as part of the "modern Orthodox community." This modernity encourages women in the Orthodox faith to become active members of outside society - participating in the career world and education.

This doctrine is slowly spreading to many of the more liberal Jewish communities.

And for the most part, the education portion of the Drisha program is largely accepted by New York's Jewish community. However, there are some aspects of Samuel's dogma that trouble traditionalists.

One potential goal, though unlikely at this point, is the idea of a female rabbi. However, Samuels admits "that is not an explicit goal."

Obviously Samuels is something of a hardcore feminist, though she hardly looks the type.

Samuels is soft-spoken, feminine and seven months pregnant. She has been married for close to three years to Ari Tuchman. Tuchman is also at Yale completing a graduate degree in physics.

"He's very supportive," says Samuels. "I'm always running my ideas off him."

Samuels will be exploring these ideas throughout the conference, which ends July 20.

"It's a great opportunity," continues Samuels. "I'm having a lot of fun."

Fun to her means interacting with other members in her field, attending lectures and even teaching a few of the undergraduate courses.

Samuel's specialty is a small field of the number theory discipline called the Zeta function.

It sounds impressive, whatever it is. Samuels is equally impressed with



PETER CHUDLEIGH/PARK RECORD

A very pregnant Beth Samuels takes a quick break before heading back to class. Samuels is a participant in the Park City Mathematics Institute's Graduate Summer School Lecture program.

Park City. "It's beautiful here and the people have been friendly."

This is her first trip to Park City, though she's been to Utah before.

"My family would go camping in the national parks," recalls Samuels. At one point, they stayed in Salt Lake City with "some good Mormon friends."

Despite her coastal upbringing, Samuels feels at home in Utah's great outdoors. Under normal circumstances, she would have chosen to spend her off-time mountain biking. But in her current state, she's content with simply riding the bus and going to class.

"I love math and I love being preg-

nant," jokes Samuels.

Between a baby and a Ph.D., it sounds like life will be hectic in the coming months. There's little possibility slowing down any time soon.

"I hope to go into academia," continues Samuels. "I hope to teach math one day as well as Jewish studies."

As to which will come first, math or religion, Samuels cannot foresee any future conflicts. "I always hope to be active in the Jewish community."

As to becoming Yale's first female tenured math professor, "it's a definite possibility."