

THE BOSTON GLOBE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2006

# A Christmas Eve klatch

For Jewish singles, it's the most wonderful time of the year

By Christopher Muther  
GLOBE STAFF

Rachel Davis summoned her klatch to Toscanini's in Central Square last week to help her make one of the most important decisions she will face this year — what to wear to the Matzo Ball on Christmas Eve.

"If I wear the red cocktail dress with the spaghetti straps, I'll look hot," the 26-year-old paralegal said to her three buddies. "But I don't want to send the wrong message. It's a fine line between hot and tramp, you know?"

Davis confesses that she's feeling pressure to find just the right ensemble because Christmas Eve is perhaps the most important night of the year for the city's Jewish singles. While Boston's



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Taking a shot at romance are (from left) Wendy Fergusson, Bob Schwartz, and Esther Cohen and (above) visiting Israelis Yaara Dgani and Haim Trabelsy.

## Holiday survival guide

Dating coach Evan Marc Katz advises singles who are looking for romance online. Katz, the author of "Why You're Still Single" and founder of the website e-cyrano.com, offers advice on what to do if you're single this holiday season.

**Don't dwell on your single status.** "There are plenty of other things to celebrate for the holiday season than having a partner. No one wants to be around someone who's depressed, needy, and sad. There's nothing wrong with feeling what you're feeling. The question is, how much are you going to let those feelings dictate the course of your life?"

**Don't get caught up in the "Why are you still single?" question.** "If you go home to your family and they ask 'Why are you still single?' do your best to make haste of the question and defuse it. Any real answer takes a lot longer than a line. They're not really looking for an answer when they ask the question, so don't give them one. If you get into a real conversation about your single status, then you're going to have to defend yourself, and it's just a downward spiral from there." — C.M.

gentiles are tucked away with their eggnog, plastic Santas, and enough sugar cookies to feed the population of Luxembourg, something massive has happened in the clubs. Christmas Eve has evolved into Jewish Valentine's Day.

Boston can take credit for this national shift. Back in 1987, a young real estate agent named Andrew Rudnick decided he had enough of Chinese food and "It's a Wonderful Life" on Christmas Eve. He got in touch with nightlife impresarios John, Patrick, and Michael Lyons to see if he could use one of their Lansdowne Street clubs for a Christmas Eve mixer for Jewish singles.

"They were expecting about 200 or 300 people," says Rudnick, who moved from Boston to Florida two years ago. "They thought it was going to be a slow night. We had 2,000 that first night. The Lyons brothers had to leave their

CHRISTMAS EVE, Page C9



## Holiday help

Need a last-minute present? Here are some ideas. C2



## Contemporary gifts

The ICA Store matches the museum's mission. C3

## Work of art

A historic house in Acton finds new life as a gallery. C5

# Taking the mystery out of architecture

By Tina Cassidy  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

WELLESLEY — Stephen Chung is bringing a whole new meaning to "doing shots on campus."

The Boston-area architect, model, and aspiring TV show host is taping a pilot program in Wellesley College's new Lulu Chow Wang Campus Center. All Chung has to do is walk through a hallway of lockers fitted with circular lights and custom seating and explain — without saying "actually" too many times — why the space is so interesting. It's no easy task.

Joel Coblenz, an Emmy Award-winning camera man who has worked for decades on programs such as "This Old House" and "The Victory Garden," as well as on an about-to-launch cooking show with Todd English, tells Chung he is going to start fining him a dollar for every time he uses the empty four-syllable word.

As much as he tries, Chung can't help himself. So they tape the shot over and over, until Coblenz, Chung, and producer Dan Aronovitz are happy.

The standards, and the goal for the pilot, are lofty. Chung, who lives in Wayland with his wife and 3-year-old son, has been an on-camera expert for several HGTV programs, which got him thinking: Why not create a show that decodes contemporary public-space architecture? The program would explain why structures were built in a particular way, point out what makes the design successful, and note details that the average viewer might miss.

For example, at the Wang Campus Center, one of those details involves the round lights that protrude out of the sides of the room, on the locker doors. "There are," Chung says gesturing upward, "no lights on the ceiling." He then plops down on the amoeba-like seating and explains that the architects, from the firm of Mack Scogin Merrill Elam, chose not to have a simple bench against the wall because they wanted students to engage each other in the walkway.

Chung, who has taught architecture at Cornell, Yale, and the Rhode Island School of Design, met Aronovitz on a Braun shaving commercial. Chung was the



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Architect Stephen Chung (left) and producer Dan Aronovitz rehearse at Wellesley College.

model; Aronovitz the casting director. They discussed the idea for a show and later brought in Coblenz, someone Aronovitz knew, and a soundman. After months of practice, scouting, and writing, they have finally begun filming. Ultimately, they hope to pitch the package to the Discovery Network.

"This is a show built around Stephen's talents as a natural teacher," Coblenz says over lunch in the campus center's cafeteria. "And what a fantastic example.

This is a tremendous space."

Chung, who has worked for Machado and Silvetti in Boston, as well as with Richard Meier and Philippe Starck, is making it a point to feature public spaces, which the Wang Campus Center is, so that viewers can actually — oops, strike that — go see the space. Other places in Boston that Chung is taping: District Lounge near South Station, the new ICA, and the Shu Uemura cosmetics boutique on Newbury Street.