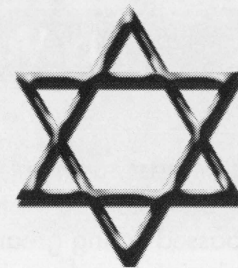




The Star



WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL NEWSLETTER ————— WINTER 2001

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

It's been a busy semester for Washington and Lee Hillel. We have been more visible on campus displaying our banner for parents and students to see (and for some to wonder "what the heck is that?"). At the Student Activities Fair, freshmen picked up our new publicity brochures, post-it notes, and snacks, and had a chance to chat with upperclassmen about Hillel activities. There was much excitement, and I'm happy to report that this level of enthusiasm has continued.

In September we started "First Fridays at Five," our monthly Reform Shabbat service held at the Alumni House, followed by kiddush and dinner provided by the Lexington Jewish community. During the High Holidays we drove vans to Temple House of Israel in Staunton. We held the concluding Yom Kippur service and break-the-fast on campus. For students who cannot celebrate these events with family, socializing with the Lexington Jewish community feels almost like home.

In September also we formed a Hillel Advisory Group, began fundraising efforts, met with our consultant from Hillel's International Center, continued our "Very Interesting Professors" luncheon series, and held a "drive-in" movie (not very successful because rain forced us to move it indoors). In response to the events of September 11, students met informally with the Muslim student group to begin a dialogue. As the semester progressed, our activities, events and plans blossomed, as you can see from this newsletter.

Hillel's group of student officers (affectionately known as the "Jew Crew") meets monthly to plan and organize activities. Over the summer they welcomed new students as big brothers and sisters. They have published this issue of *The Star*, speaking as the Jewish voice on campus. I think you will enjoy their work.

B' Shalom,

Joan Robins
Joan Robins

VERY INTERESTING PROFESSORS

Each month a group of Hillel students gathers at the Sheridan Livery Inn for informal conversations with a Jewish professor. Economics Professor Art Goldsmith kicked off the series last May, sharing personal anecdotes as well as discussing his research projects. In October, Anthropology Professor Sasha Goluboff talked about her trip to Azurbaijan and her work with the Mountain Jews of the Caucasus. In November, students heard about Law Professor Louise Halper's proposal and upcoming trip to study women in democracy in Turkey and Iran. This led to a lively discussion of how it feels to be Jewish at W&L. Geology Professor Fred Schwab ("top rock doc") was featured in December.



"Very Interesting Professors" luncheon series. Bottom row (left to right): Kelly Sugarman '03, Professor Sascha Goluboff, Kirsten Gladding '02, top row (left to right): Seth Martin '04, Robin Okin '03, Graham Frankel '02, Becky Ostendorff '02, Jennifer Cowen '05, Jordan Wolff '03, Yana Komornik '04.

MY VISIT TO AUSCHWITZ

By Seth Martin

This past summer, with my father and brother, I traveled around Europe for two weeks. The majority of the time was passed eating great food and having fun, however the beginning leg of our journey was quite somber. The first day we flew into Poland, and then drove through mostly rural terrain, to Auschwitz. During the ride there, I began picturing everything I had ever learned about Holocaust concentration camps, and Auschwitz. Most prominent in my mind were scenes from *Night* by Elie Wiesel and things I saw last year when W&L Hillel visited the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. We arrived at Auschwitz, which is a place that can be expressed by so many words, but to me, best by the word unwelcoming. We took a guided tour on which you see everything that you have always read, heard, or seen movies about. Point-blank, you see the piles and piles of shoes, suitcases, hair, and other belongings of the Holocaust victims. To see the names on the suitcases makes you feel more familiar with the victims and that much more disturbed by what happened. You see the barracks where the victims slept, the places where they worked, the paths enclosed by barbed wire through which they walked, and of course the gas chambers in which they died. It all seemed so real and so recent to be there.

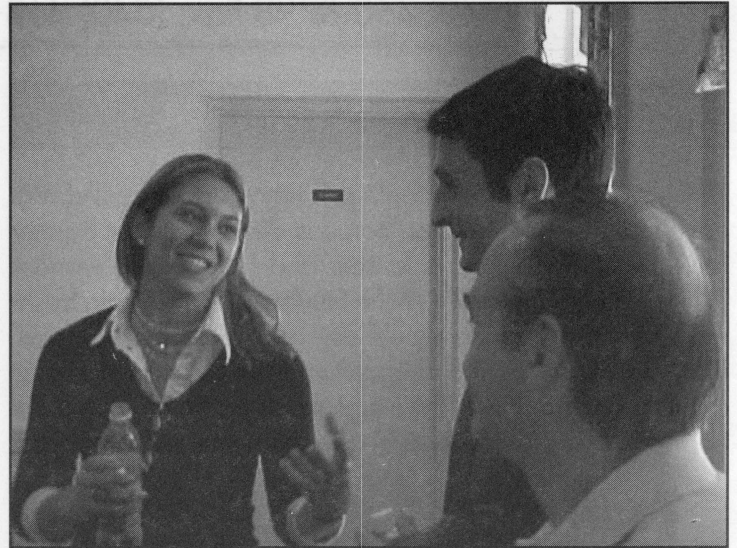


Human Ovens at Auschwitz

While you see many things that you expect, some things may come as a shock. For instance, during our tour, we entered one room that took me by surprise. It contained standing rooms, which are small brick cells with only enough room to pack in four people in a standing position. With their bodies pressed up against each other, there was no way for these victims to sit down, rest, or sleep. The Nazis usually placed their victims in these cells overnight, and then sent them back out to work the next day. This was a cruel form of punishment that often carried on for about a week until the victim died from exhaustion. It made me sick to think about it. Not as much as a surprise, but equally as

sickening were the human ovens in which the Nazis burned their victims to death. It is unreal to stand in front of one of those ovens and to think about the countless number of victims that were burned inside it. Although most of the victims at Auschwitz were Jewish, many were also non-Jewish Poles who opposed the Nazis. It is a good idea for everybody, especially Jews, to visit Auschwitz and pay respect to its victims and all the victims of the Holocaust. It is a humbling and melancholy experience that I am glad to have suffered through.

PARENTS' WEEKEND RECEPTION



Graham Frankel '02 greets Matt Fink '04 and his father Dr. Alan Fink.

On Friday afternoon, Oct. 26, W&L Hillel welcomed parents to a reception held at the University Center.

Parents had the opportunity to meet each other, faculty, students, and the Hillel director. We all enjoyed the lox, hummous and pita, stuffed grape leaves, chopped liver and homemade challah!



Kemal Levi '04 chats with David Frankel, Graham's father.

HILLEL OFFICERS: THE JEW CREW

PRESIDENT: GRAHAM FRANKEL '02
VP SHABBAT: YANA KOMORNIK '04
VP HOLIDAYS: ROBIN OKIN '03
VP PUBLIC AWARENESS: LAURA SAMUELS '04
VP EDUCATION: KEMAL LEVI '04
VP SOCIAL: SETH MARTIN '04
SECRETARY: LAURA SAMUELS '04

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Ann and David Frankel
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Joseph Goldsten
Sally and Mark Grunewald
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Mort Robins
Toni and Steve Sandler '70
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Elliot S. Schewel '45
Patricia Schirmer, MD and Scott Dubit, MD
Claudia and Fred Schwab
Soref Initiative for Emerging Campuses
Mr. and Mrs. Barry J. Stein
Washington and Lee Chaplaincy Fund
Paul Weinstein '55
Weinstein Fund

BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL TRIP:

WHAT A DIFFERENCE

10 DAYS MAKE

In June, for the first time, W&L participated in the Birthright Israel program. Yana Komornik joined thousands of college students for this expense-paid journey. Imagine a climb up Masada, hiking in the desert, swimming in the Dead Sea, exploring Jerusalem. Following are Yana's thoughts about the trip.

By Yana Komornik

My birthright trip to Israel last summer, was by far the most profound experience of my entire life. Although I had been to Israel on an earlier occasion, I can now honestly admit that I was blind to what this land and its people were like until last summer. The most important of all that was introduced to me on this trip was the idea of coming together. As the wheels were beginning to turn and the airline was gaining momentum, preparing to take off from Israel, I thought about how I no longer was one among a crowd. That although I was coming back to a country where Jews were a tiny minority, I could now see that if we came together we could literally change the world. Moreover, I began to see myself as a part of a culture so rich and so complex, with so many traditions and yet so many new, emerging movements, that it made me long to come together like we did last summer much more often.

I could now see that Judaism was not simply a religion, but that perhaps it was a way of life. One didn't necessarily need to pray and go to temple every week to be considered Jewish or in order to belong, that one was free to practice this religion in any way, shape or form, that one deemed fit. When I discovered that many of the kids on my bus weren't technically Jewish, and many of them had even grown up attending churches and some had even taken communion, I was in complete shock. I guess I questioned their sincerity in coming to the land of Israel, but as I got to know them better, I could see that these kids had much more courage, determination, and solidarity toward Israel than any average Jewish kid from back home. I started to realize that these kids had made a conscious choice to belong and to believe in Judaism and that to them the prosperity of the land of Israel was just as important as it was to me.

I guess at the bottom of it all it doesn't matter what the circumstances were in your seeking this religion and this way of life, what matters is that while you seek to be Jewish there will always be a second home for you in Israel.

INTERNATIONAL

HILLEL CONSULTANTS MEET WITH STUDENTS, ADVISORY GROUP

On September 24th, Robby Grossman and Jami Trockman from Hillel's International Center met with students at the Sheridan Livery Inn for dinner to discuss Jewish life at W&L. As director of the Soref Initiative for Emerging Campuses, Robby provides guidance, financial assistance, online resources and a communication network for Jewish students at hundreds of campuses with small Jewish populations.

Robby told the students that he was pleased with their program ideas and efforts to build Jewish community at W&L. Students were encouraged to participate in the conference opportunities offered by Hillel International. Robby and Jami explained the Hillel mission to the Advisory Group later that evening, and answered questions about funding and structure. Thanks for coming, Robby and Jami!



Students enjoy dinner with Robby Grossman and Jami Trockman visiting from Hillel's International Center in Washington, DC.

HANUKKAH

Hanukkah fell during finals this year, so Hillel helped energize students by sending a bit of Hanukkah cheer. Parents were invited to purchase Hanukkah Sudy Gift-Bags which were filled with many goodies, including a menorah, candles, gelt, dreidel, and snacks and treats. These gift-bags were hand delivered by the Hillel officers on Sunday, December 9th, the first night of Hanukkah.

ALUMNI NEWS

Steve Greene '74 lives in Birmingham, AL, and writes that his whole family is very active in Jewish life there. His son is at Tulane. His good friend at PIKA, **Neil Lutins, '74** is an oral surgeon in Greensboro, NC. **Edward H. Scherr, MD '43**, is a retired internist after many years of practice in New Haven CT. He has been an attending physician at Yale New Haven Hospital and on the clinical faculty of Yale Medical School. Dr. Scherr writes that he is delighted to see Jewish activities at W&L. **Dr. Ron Abrams '72**, is a consulting ecologist in the New York metropolitan area, working with developers and government in the research and planning that underpins environmental regulation and conservation management. He earned his PhD in Ecology in Africa and found a Jewish wife there. He has a daughter at Columbia and a 14 year old son ("maybe he'll want W&L, I'll try"). **Harry Jay Altman '72** went to law school, U of Georgia (How 'Bout Them Dawgs!) then practiced law in Thomasville until 1994. Since '94 he has been Judge of Superior Court, Southern Judicial Circuit. He is married to Cail Lane Altman, also an attorney, and they have one child, Solesse, age 9. **Steve Sandler '70** is the chairman of L.M.Sandler & Sons, Inc. of Va. Beach. Steve's wife is active in the Tidewater Federation, his son is active at Tufts Hillel, and Steve has been a generous supporter of W&L Hillel. **Louis Greentree '42** hopes W&L will awaken to the need for more Jewish students. He writes from Richmond, Va, "In the spirit of Washington and General Lee this should be done". **Elliot Schewel '45** is a retired Virginia State Senator living in Lynchburg, VA. He writes that he is thrilled to read about the activities of Hillel on the W&L campus. **Charles Helzberg '58** is on the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City. He has been a generous supporter of W&L Hillel. **Jules Shaivitz**, is a portrait artist living in Baltimore. He writes that during his years at W&L "we were major contributors to leadership on the campus. Phi Ep has a distinguished alumnus, **Judge Sol Wachtler '51** who not many years ago gave the commencement address at the university". Bunny Weinstein, wife of **Paul Weinstein '55**, writes from Bethesda, MD that they are both delighted to have the Weinstein Scholarship/Endowment used for Hillel programs. They are hopeful that this will help attract more Jewish students to W&L. Bunny has been involved at the United States Holocaust Museum since its inception and has offered to give a personal tour to W&L students and alums. **Alan Corwin '62**, of Olympia, WA, travelled to Europe in August with his wife. He is featured in our new publicity brochure holding our new Hillel T-shirt! **Michael Okin '76** is a Family Practice Physician in Lynchburg, VA. His daughter, Robin is a junior at W&L and he is a member of the Hillel Advisory Group. **Bill Jacobs '71** is a pediatrician in Lexington, VA and is a member of the W&L Advisory Group. "Bubbie's Cookbook" is Bill's idea! **Arnold Masinter '62** is a business man in Roanoke, VA. Arnold's son Morris will be accompanying Hillel students to Snowshoe for a fabulous ski tip in March.

Have news to share? Contact Joan Robins by e-mail or snail mail!

THE STUDENT PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

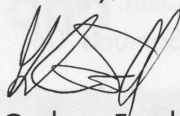
From last year to this year I feel as though I have joined two different clubs. Hillel used to be a group of Jewish students who would get together for dinner every once in a while, or carpool to services in Staunton. This year, we are a community. We have dinners, will go skiing, and are even planning to shoot sporting clays together. We are more than members of a club, we are friends.

There is something about being on a small campus, where you know you are not like the majority of other students, which brings everyone together. We are even finding that the non-Jewish students want to be a part and hear about what that crazy "Hillel" club is about!

One of the main contributions to the success of the club is our director, Joan Robins. She has put 110% of her effort into planning, and pulling off all of our ideas for the year. If I had to describe why Joan has made us so strong this year I would choose three words—attention to detail. She dots all of the i's, crosses all t's, and the best part is that she cooks for us!

I'm excited to watch how the rest of the year goes, because we are off to a wonderful start. I hope you are all having a wonderful New Year so far.

Sincerely,



Graham Frankel

MUSLIM STUDENT'S LEAGUE AND HILLEL HIT IT OFF!

by *Graham Frankel*

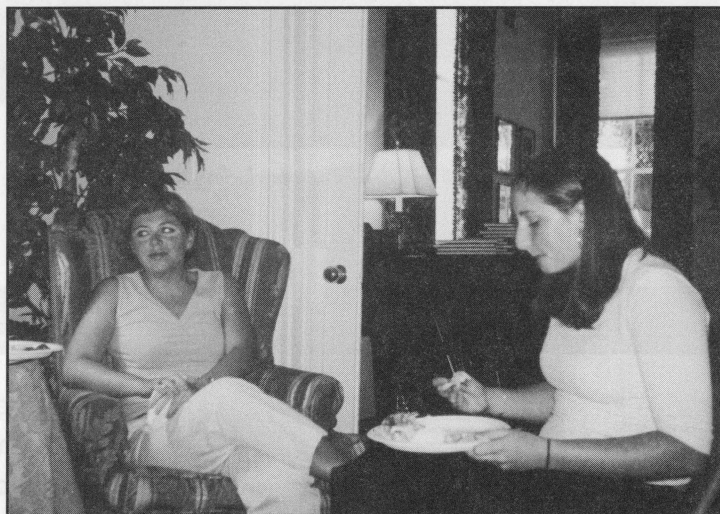
During a time where national tensions are high, and people are not sure if they can trust their neighbors, Hillel decided that it would not take that route. Hillel invited the Muslim students of W&L to join them in a pre-party get together. Over hummus and brie cheese, we talked politics, campus life, religion, and of course, the next episode of Friends. No one really knew each other at first, but four hours later when the last guests left, all unfamiliar faces seemed like old friends.

The get together was so successful, the Muslim League invited us to again get together a month later. It was yet another well attended party where we have exchanged phone numbers and are working on the next get together.

FIRST FRIDAYS AT FIVE

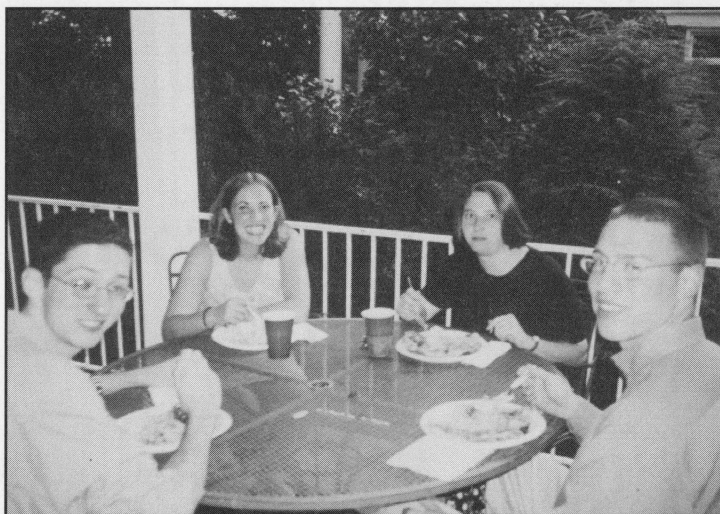
By *Robin Okin*

This year W&L Hillel has started the monthly tradition of Shabbat services, which we have proudly coined as "First Fridays at Five." On the first Friday of every month at 5:00 p.m., W&L faculty, VMI students, the Lexington Jewish community, family and friends, join the Hillel in welcoming Shabbat. Rabbi Joe Blair of Charlottesville and Alicia Yaffe, our songleader from UVA Hillel, lead services. Eventually, our goal is for W&L's Hillel to lead the services ourselves.



(L to r:) Laura Samuels '04, Mel Harris '05 at "First Fridays" held at the Alumni House.

At the conclusion of prayer everyone gathers for a delicious, home-cooked dinner, which is graciously provided by the Lexington Jewish community. From challah to lasagna to loaves and bagels and kugel, there is always something for everyone. But don't think that the students only come for the food! First Fridays at Five has been a wonderful opportunity for each of us to remember the Sabbath and get together as a greater Jewish family.



(L to r:) Jesse Rockoff '02, Alicia Yaffe from UVA, Professor Marcia France, Brian Tinklepaugh '03.

YOM KIPPUR



Professor Richard Marks led the Yom Kippur concluding service on campus. Lexington area children participated.



Leah Greenberg '05 and Booth Samuels '03 attend Yom Kippur services at Fairfax Lounge. Over sixty people participated in the service and break-the-fast: W&L students and faculty, VMI students, and the Lexington Jewish community.

ADVISORY GROUP

Joan Robins, Director • Mark Grunewald
Barry Kolman • Jan Kaufman
Sascha Goluboff • Richard Marks
Tom Peck • Louise Halper
David Novak • Marcia France
Maryann Fleming • Arnold Masinter '62
Bill Jacobs '71 • Michael Okin '76
Graham Frankel '02 • Laura Samuels '04

BUBBIE'S COOKBOOK



What is your Jewish mother's favorite recipe?

Hillel would like to publish a cookbook comprised of recipes from Washington and Lee alumni, parents, faculty, and staff.

Please send us your recipe to make your mother's cooking cherished forever.

Feel free to include additional information to 'spice' up the recipe, such as W&L class, where you are now living, and family anecdotes.

Proceeds from the cookbook will benefit our Hillel.

Purchase information will be available shortly.

Please send recipes to:
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Newcomb Hall
Lexington, VA 24450

Washington and Lee University

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