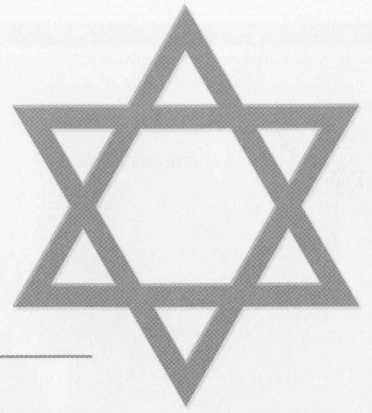




HILLEL

# The Star



WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL NEWSLETTER

W&L Hillel House, 204 W. Washington St., Lexington, VA 24450-2116

[hillel.wlu.edu](http://hillel.wlu.edu)

Editor: Ben Brams '15

(540) 458-8443

WINTER 2014

5775



Zoe's Birthingright group in Jerusalem

## Birthingright Israel

by Zoe Stein '17

In June, I participated in Taglit Birthingright Israel, a program that sends Jewish young adults to Israel for ten days and reunites them with their Jewish heritage. I went on a trip sponsored by Hillel, so my peers were college students, recent graduates, and six Israeli soldiers who were around my age.

Each Hillel Birthingright group heard a speech by Avraham Infeld, former president of Hillel International. Throughout the rest of the trip, I kept Avraham's words in mind. He described the "five legs of the table" which are memory, family, the three commitments at Mount Sinai, the state and the land of Israel and the Hebrew language. Avraham said as long as each Jew relates to three legs of the

table, (s)he will have something in common with every Jew (s)he meets. The three legs I related to most on the trip were memory, family, and the land and the state of Israel.

The first leg of the table, memory, was most prominent when we visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum, and Mount Herzl, the national cemetery. Yad Vashem is designed like a tunnel that is deepest and darkest in the middle, during the worst times of the Holocaust. One end represents Jewish culture in Europe beforehand and the other end overlooks Jerusalem.

Mount Herzl is where Israeli soldiers and citizens who died fighting for Israel are buried, as well as prime ministers, presidents and other important political figures. As Avraham

Infeld says, "History means knowing what happened in the past. Memory means asking how what happened in the past influences me and my life today". Yad Vashem and Mount Herzl help us remember Jewish history in a personal way and reflect on how it influences our lives.

The second leg, family, was noticed during our visits to Jerusalem and Masada. Walking through the Old City of Jerusalem, we passed by a Bar Mitzvah celebration. The boy was being carried around in a chair, surrounded by people dancing and singing. As they marched through the street, more and more people joined in, including the 40 Americans on my trip.

As we climbed Masada, we witnessed another Bar Mitzvah. We saw the boy saying the blessing over the Torah in the oldest synagogue on top of the mountain, surrounded by five or six other men. Then, some members of our trip decided to learn the blessings and have their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies at Masada. "The essence of our Jewishness is being a family," says Avraham Infeld. This held true as the boy in Jerusalem celebrated with any Jew who passed by him as well as when my peers decided to share their ceremonies with people they had only known for a week, but considered family.

I most noticed the third leg, the state and the land of Israel, when we visited Independence Hall and the Negev. At Independence Hall, we heard the recording of David Ben Gurion reading the Proclamation of Independence. We sat in the same room where he originally delivered the speech,

*Continued on page 3*



## Director's Corner

I've only been in Lexington for three months, but I already feel at home here. I am so grateful to this incredible community for welcoming me with open arms and open hearts. When I came here for my interview in June, almost everyone I met described Washington and Lee as "a very special place" and I couldn't agree more!

I thought I'd start my first Star article by telling you a little bit about my background and

why I moved to Lexington. I have many years of experience working in the Jewish community, at Jewish Family Service of New Mexico and at Congregation Albert, a reform synagogue in Albuquerque. I've managed communications and marketing, taught all ages from pre-school to adults, led youth groups and Birthright trips, directed summer camps, supported isolated Jewish communities in rural areas, provided services to seniors aging at home and collaborated with Jewish community leaders from all over.

I have a B.A. from the University of Colorado in political science, international affairs and French and an M.P.A. (Masters of Public Administration) from the University of New Mexico. I also have certificates in advanced French (from IFALPES-Institut Francais des Alpes), Hebrew language and literature and Middle Eastern Studies (from WUJS-World Union of Jewish Students) and human resources (from the HR Certification Institute). I've thought for about the last five years or so that being a Hillel director would be the absolute perfect job and was thrilled to see this opening at Washington and Lee!

I look forward to applying all of my various studies and work experiences to the programming and events we'll host here at Washington and Lee Hillel. You should have received a welcome letter from me in some form or another. If you haven't, please let me know so that I can add you to our mailing list.

As you may already know, this fall we welcomed our largest ever class of Jewish first years to W&L (31!). As our community grows, I want to ensure that Hillel remains a warm, welcoming place where students of all backgrounds can come and feel like they are part of a community. There are so many people who have come together to make Washington and Lee Hillel the very special place that it is and I thank each and everyone one of you for all that you do.

Our year has gotten off to a great start! I was able to attend (along with a few current Hillel participants) many of the events that welcomed students to campus such as the Religious Life Fair, Undergraduate Student Activities Fair, Law School Student Activities Fair and VMI's Rat Sunday (a day for the Virginia

Military Institute's first year students to connect with their faith communities). Our Hillel Student Board Officers were also able to connect with new students by bringing them all welcoming gift baskets to their dorm rooms. I'm happy to report that many of the students we met the first week of school have become regulars at Hillel events.

I've also had the great pleasure of meeting many prospective students. Almost every week we'll have a high school student or two come by to check out Hillel. I'll give the student and their family a tour of the building, answer any questions they have about W&L Hillel, and introduce them to any students who are around at the time. We also have an incredible program through the Admissions Department that allows for Jewish high school seniors to come and spend a couple days with our current students, to see if W&L is the right place for them. Twelve students came in October and we expect a good number to come out for the second program in January. I have also been attending College Admissions Fairs along with W&L admissions counselors and have really enjoyed talking to prospective students from all over about what we have to offer them. The Jewish students I meet are always pleasantly surprised to hear about our "small and mighty" Hillel.

It's also been a lot of fun (and incredibly helpful) for me to meet with so many W&L alumni and supporters of Hillel. I love hearing their stories of what the campus and Jewish community were like when they were here and am proud to share with them how their support has helped our community flourish. I can't express how truly grateful I am for our alumni. There wouldn't be a Hillel at W&L without them. When the Board of Trustees and 5 Star Generals were here on campus, I was able to talk with several of them, all of whom had exceptional things to say about W&L Hillel and its growth and development over the last few years. Everyone I talked to was proud to be a Hillel supporter and excited to see how Jewish life continues to thrive here at W&L.

I have already started to build relationships with so many students, faculty, staff and community members here and I'm meeting more and more people every day! I've been collaborating with different departments all across campus and have been pitched quite a few really exciting ideas for new programs. I also have lots of ideas of my own that I hope you all will like. I am thoroughly enjoying working with the students to plan all of these events and look forward to sharing them with all of you. While continuing with the much-loved programs (don't worry – I won't touch the Latke-Hamantashen debate!) I also want to bring a different perspective to W&L and hopefully increase student participation in Hillel by trying some new things.

Please feel free to contact me at any time. I am available by phone (540) 458-8443, email [mmclean@wlu.edu](mailto:mmclean@wlu.edu) or in person at the Hillel house. I welcome any feedback or questions you might have about Washington and Lee Hillel. This is going to be a great year!

*L'Shalom*

*Megan McLean, Director of Hillel*



Night sky in the Negev Desert.



Bar Mitzvah celebration in Jerusalem.



Birthright participant, Mia, becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

*continued from page 1, Birthright Israel*

and learned the ceremony was put together in one day and held in the basement of an art museum because they were afraid of being attacked. After hearing the Proclamation of Independence, we stood and sang Hatikvah, the national anthem, along with the recording of the people who were there on Independence Day. “You do not arrive in Israel as a tourist. You come to Israel to explore your soul, and to meet the place that converted your family from refugees to those who will never again

lack a homeland” (Avraham Infeld). Hearing the Proclamation of Independence and speaking with Israeli citizens showed me why the state of Israel is important to Judaism. The reason Israel feels like a home to me is because I am surrounded by other Jews, Hebrew and despite the conflicts, I felt safe. The Negev is where I felt a connection to the land of Israel. Sitting in the desert and staring at the night sky, I was reminded of Abraham being told his descendants would be as many as stars in

the sky and grains of sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17). I found it amazing that after years of diaspora and assimilation, millions of Jews have returned to the land of Israel or feel a connection to it.

Visiting Israel on Birthright gave me a chance to reflect on my Jewish heritage and relate to three legs of the table, memory, family, and Israel. I am happy to say that as a member of Hillel, I see people relating to all five legs.

## Fly-In Program

by Emily Danzig '16  
and Deanna Schreiber '17

On October 23rd and 24th, the W&L Admissions Office, brought 12 students to Lexington for their wildly popular Jewish prospective student fly-in program. First-year students graciously hosted the prospective students in their dorm rooms, guiding them around campus, and sharing insight about Jewish life at W&L. First-year Hannah Falchuk hosted a student this year in her Gaines room: “I wanted to host because I had such a good experience last year when I participated in the program as a prospective

student...the best part was sharing with my prospective student what I've learned about W&L so far and hearing how excited she was to apply now.”

During the day on Friday, the prospective students had a packed schedule, exploring Washington and Lee landmarks on a campus tour led by Hillel President Ben Brams, and sitting in on classes for subjects in which they're interested. On Friday night, the prospectives, their hosts, VMI cadets and other W&L Hillel members from all class years celebrated Shabbat together with challah, candles, a delicious pasta dinner and cupcakes baked in the Hillel community kitchen. Each

table was a mix of visiting and current students discussing college searches and W&L culture, naturally mixed with many interruptions of Jewish geography. It was amazing to hear current first-year students excitedly describing their experiences so far, from High Holy Days services to bagel brunches to Friday night dinners. Later that night, everyone reconvened back at Hillel for a delicious spread of ice cream and toppings, generously served by the Admissions Office. As hosts to prospective Jewish students in past years, it is so exciting to watch new classes of Jewish Generals join the growing community on campus!

## ☞ Hillel Donor Roll ☞

*Gifts made to the Annual Hillel Fund Immediately contribute to the exceptional religious, cultural, educational, social, leadership development and community service programming at Hillel. The Hillel fund is what keeps Jewish student life viable at W&L. Our diverse quality programs and opportunities depend on the financial support of alumni, parents, community members and friends.*

*Thank you to all those who made contributions to Hillel!*

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*No matter how careful we try to be, occasionally we inadvertently fail to note all of our supporters. Please forgive us and let us know of any errors or omissions.*



*Reunion, 2014: Eric White '74 and John Zamoiski '74 hosted a brunch for their class to celebrate their 40th reunion in May. The brunch was held on the Hillel House terrace, named for White and Zamoiski and honoring their fathers, also alumni of W&L. It featured delicious lox and bagels from Russ and Daughters, our favorite shop in NY for smoked fish. Pictured are Sammy Rosier '14, president of Hillel, White, Zamoiski, and Joan Robins, interim director of Hillel.*

## 2014-2015: COMMITMENTS MADE AS OF NOVEMBER 7, 2014

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## L'Shanah Tovah: High Holy Days at W&L

*by Keith Denning '18*

The fall season means the leaves begin changing and the weather grows colder, but for the Jewish people, this time of year is even more significant: it's time for the High Holy Days. Students, staff and community members alike donned their *tallits* and their *yarmulkes* and headed to the Hillel House on campus for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—two of the most important holidays on the Jewish calendar.

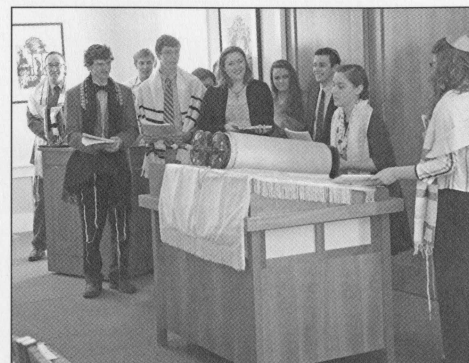
This year, the service was led and organized by a visiting HUC (Hebrew Union College) rabbinical student, Stephanie Crawley, and a first-year student, Jordan Goldstein, who was a regional song leader for her high school youth group. Stephanie and Jordan worked tirelessly in order to make sure that the services went smoothly.

The High Holy Days kicked off with an erev Rosh Hashanah dinner in Evans Dining Hall. Students from W&L, VMI as well as other guests, bonded over apples, sweet honey and a delicious meal. After the dinner, Hillel held a nice evening service. The next morning, songs were sung and prayers were said in order to celebrate the start of a new year. After having a picnic lunch in the E. Café, we all set out to Woods Creek for the Tashlich service.

Ten days later, it was time for Yom Kippur. Before the fasting began, a scrumptious dinner was served followed by the Kol Nidre service. The next morning, over the growling of stomachs, we listened to the beautiful service conducted by Stephanie and Jordan. Yom Kippur was further observed with a Yizchor memorial service and a Ne'ilah service. And then finally, it was time to break the fast with an awesome dinner!

As a first-year, experiencing the High Holy Days was a great way to be introduced

to Jewish life at W&L. I decided to ask my fellow classmate, Jordan, what her favorite part about services at W&L were. She said that "It's a really awesome community to lead for...everyone is very supportive and receptive." Even though I greatly miss the services at my hometown synagogue, I truly love the tight-knit and intimate service that W&L Hillel provides. I cannot wait until next year!



*Rabbinical Student Stephanie Crawley and Hillel Students blessing the Torah during the Rosh Hashanah Morning Service.*

## Parents' Weekend

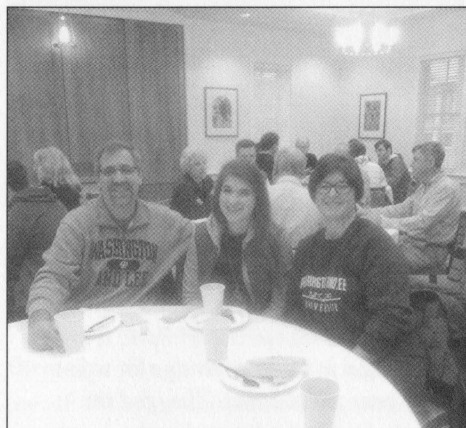
by Hannah Falchuk '18

For this year's Parents' Weekend, the Hillel House offered many a respite from the rainy weather. Throughout the weekend, Hillel hosted many events for students, parents and the community. The time was particularly enjoyable for first-year students, many of whom welcomed the chance to see their parents and show them what W&L is like "in action."

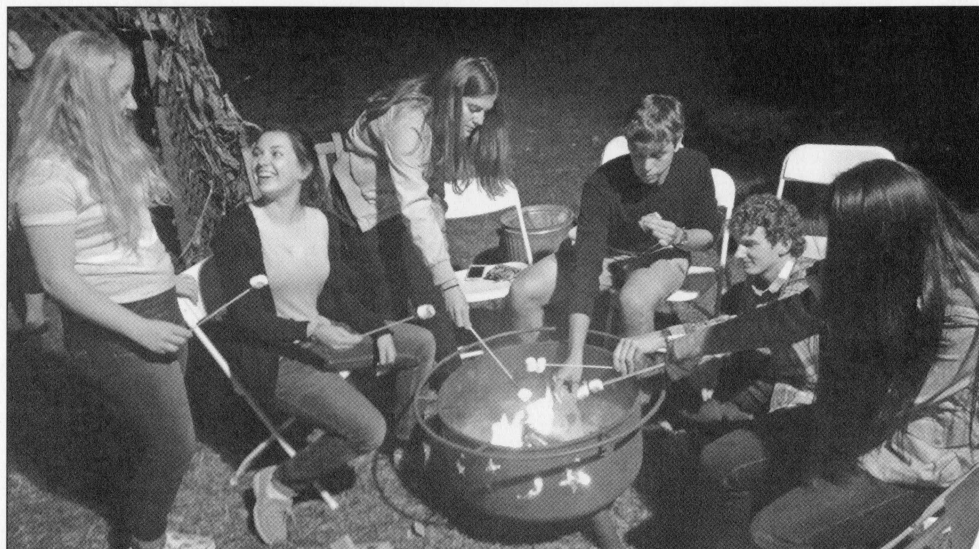
Members of the Hillel community shared a special Friday evening service on the Shabbat of Parents' Weekend. This was led by talented first-year student Jordan Goldstein, who also helped lead High Holiday services just a few weeks earlier. After prayers over the wine and challah, all enjoyed dinner in a packed E. Café.

On Sunday morning, many members of the Hillel, Washington and Lee and Lexington communities were back in the multi-purpose room, this time sharing bagels and lox, as well as hot coffee, to stave off the cold weather that had accompanied the weekend rain.

In between the festivities at Hillel, parents were treated to all forms of entertainment: music by the University Singers and a capella groups, a college football game and several other sporting events and swing dancing at favorite locations Davidson Park and Red Square. The weekend was a break for work-worn undergraduates and a sort of homecoming for many parents and alums. Ultimately, it gave us the chance to relax with family, both those who had travelled from home and those we have found here in Lexington.



The Goldstein Family enjoying the Bagel Brunch.



Students roasting marshmallows at the "S'mores, Stars and Sukkot" party outside of the Sukkah.

## Sukkot

by Haley Archer-McClellan '15

In middle of October, we celebrated Sukkot, the weeklong holiday festival during the Hebrew month of Tishrei. Many students met to help build the Sukkah and decorate it with branches, leaves and gourds. Later, many students came together to eat meals in the Sukkah. While Sukkot is a festival holiday, it also memorializes the forty days and nights the people of Israel walked through the desert. The Sukkah, or "booth," symbolizes the huts built by the people of Israel while in the desert. A handful of students helped Hillel Advisory Board member Mitch Wapner build the Sukkah, using wooden beams, lattices and power tools. Using branches from Zach Dubit's family's pine trees, we then built a

canopy and decorated the hut with pumpkins, gourds and corn. We invited friends into the Sukkah to share meals with us and held our annual Sukkot event, "S'mores, Stars and Sukkot," on the first night of the holiday. We built a campfire outside the Sukkah, roasted s'mores, talked and laughed, and stayed up long into the night with friends.

As Sukkot wore on, the trees surrounding the Sukkah began to turn from green to shades of yellow and red, matching the decorations of the hut itself. In spite of a few rainstorms, our handiwork paid off, and the Sukkah withstood the week, acting as shelter to many Washington and Lee students in the process.



Students enjoying "pizza in the hut" after building the Sukkah.

## Farewell to Hillel

by *Samantha Rosier '14*

Four years ago, the High Holidays fell during Orientation week. I came to Lexington and before ever stepping foot into a classroom or academic building, I walked over to the then brand new Hillel House for Erev Rosh Hashanah services. On the way over, the new Jews were easy to spot. Everyone else was dressed for a traditional O-Week Old House party while we walked down the hill in suits and nice dresses. Over the next two weeks, full of holidays and events, I met people who would become both my closest friends and best mentors.

It is crazy to think about my four years at W&L coming to a close. When I look back, so many of my memories happened inside the walls of Hillel. I learned how to order food for a group that could be 12 or could be 50, how to do a bit of event planning, and that all

events are well attended when there is free food. I was lucky enough to serve on Hillel's board for three and a half years and be president for two. I worked with some extremely dedicated students and two wonderful directors.

Washington and Lee Hillel is a community unlike any other, inside a place like no other. We have the benefit of caring and generous alumni and an administration that jumps through hoops to give Hillel every chance it can at thriving and growing. And we are growing. The class of 2018 has the largest number of incoming Jewish freshmen in W&L history and we could not be prouder.

I don't think I could say thank you enough for the amazing experience I had as a member of Hillel, but I need to give special recognition to a few people. Lizzie and Sunny, thank you for pulling me in and making sure I stayed

there. Student boards, thank you for the time and dedication you put in. Dean Tammy easily dealt with many panicked 5:45 p.m. phone calls about not having the right amount of food. Brett gave so much to the organization for two and a half years and developed many new programs. And Joan, it is fitting that you brought the class of 2014 into Hillel and then came back for our last semester. W&L is lucky to have you for as long as it can. Thank you for being a mentor and friend to me.

I am excited to see where W&L Hillel goes in the future. I know future members will have a wonderful experience like I did.

For one last time, Shalom Y'all.

*Sammy*



Students enjoy dinner at the Southern Inn with Holocaust survivor, Henry Ruston, his daughter, and his granddaughter, Mariel Pearl '15. Mr. Ruston spoke to a standing room only crowd at the Hillel House about his experiences during the Holocaust in the Lodz Ghetto and at Auschwitz.



Students in costume for Purim: left – right: Joan Robins, interim director, Maya Epelbaum '16, Batsheva Honig '17, Caroline Birdrow '16 and Marissa Gubler '15.



Haley Archer-McClellan '15 and a group of 20 students visited Safari Park, a drive-through zoo in Natural Bridge for a fun end-of-year social event. They fed the animals, laughed a lot and had a meal at the Pink Cadillac Diner. The event was sponsored by Daniel Dreyfuss P' 13L.



## Latke-Hamentashen Debate

by Ben Brams '15

On Tuesday, March 18, students and professors gathered in an attempt to answer one of the culinary world's most hotly contested questions—that of Jewish food superiority. Who would carry the night: the sweet and crumbly hamentashen or the fried and delicious latke? Two teams of faculty, Dean Marcia France and Professor Simon Levy for Team Hamentashen, and Dean Hank Dobin and W&L Law Professor Mark Grunewald representing Team Latke, squared off in what was a very spirited affair.

Professor Levy led off Team Hamentashen with an unconventional presentation that hailed the more cryptographic side of the

three-cornered pastry. In rebuttal, Professor Grunewald recalled Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' affinity for the potato pancake. It was too close to call after the first round, and while there was much laughter from the audience, the bragging rights at stake were certainly no laughing matter. To open the second round, Dean France used her scientific expertise to extoll the chemical perfection of the hamentashen, while Dean Dobin followed up with the earth-shattering discovery of William Shakespeare's lost latke folios.

After the teams were finished presenting and all the busted guts in the room were repaired, our trusty Applause-o-Meter was called into service in order to decide a very close debate. Although it appeared to be back and forth for a

few moments, eventually a winner was chosen: the winner, and new champion of the Latke-Hamentashen Debate...Team Hamentashen! The winners were congratulated, but in the end, we were all winners because we were able to sample both foods in question, and if I do say so myself, both were very enjoyable. On a more serious note, I'd like to thank our debate participants because without them, there is no debate. It's awesome to see diverse academic fields like chemistry, computer science, law, and literature come together for one night of playful mockery. No amount of screaming or slandering, hair-pulling or name-calling, could take away from the laughter and fun that unfolded on that night. As the old saying goes—some must win, some must lose, but by the end, all must eat!



Caroline at her desk at the detention center.

## Internship

by Caroline Birdow '16

This summer, I participated in Washington and Lee's Shepherd Internship Program which connects students with agencies that address issues related to poverty. I was chosen to work with the volunteer coordinator at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center in Cleveland, Ohio. As an intern, my role was to develop and facilitate programming for the youth that would help them form and foster a sense of self-confidence, a concern for the community and a desire to live healthy lives.

During my time working with the youth, there was one question that I kept asking myself: "Why are kids committing crimes?" An exposure to the factors associated with poverty and a lack of capability were explanations with

which I tried to reason, but these answers did not completely satisfy me. I felt that these ideas could not explain every case. Some children grow up with sufficient resources and engaged parents but still manage to find themselves in trouble.

After speaking with some of the children's parents, who were just as confused as I was, I began to come to an answer that I finally could accept. Some children may try to fit in with a particular group or find themselves in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Perhaps nothing was wrong at home or at school, and the children only wanted to explore and take risks. Perhaps something was wrong.

What occurred to me is that there is no way to generalize the experiences of these children and that each of them has a different story. I could not think of a single explanation for why kids commit crimes, and I also could not visualize only one solution. I did, however, have some ideas.

Even if there is nothing specifically "wrong" with a child's life, the community has the power and responsibility to shape the child's experience and keep him or her on the right track. Whether kids simply are curious or are faced with more serious barriers, there needs to be a supportive community around them to intervene and offer guidance. A holistic approach needs to be taken to catch problems when they begin and to actively keep children leading healthy lives.

As the Co-Social Justice/Tikkun Olam Vice President of Hillel, I want to share these realizations with my fellow students. My goal is to involve them with service projects that will help strengthen the community of Rockbridge County. My belief is that the stronger a community is as a whole, the stronger are the individual members. With efforts such as the Novack Fund (which helps W&L students purchase clothing for children in need) and other projects, Hillel will play its role in building and maintaining a wonderful community.

## Kickball Article – Hillel

by Joe Yank '15



*“Shoeless Joe” Yank giving the Hillel Bagels and Lox a pep-talk before their game against the undefeated RA’s.*

On Sunday, October 26, a squad of intrepid Hillel members took the field for the Relay for Life charity kickball tournament to support cancer research. With beautiful skies above, the Hillel Bagels and Lox played two games, winning the first by a wide margin and losing the second by a similarly humorous score. However, success in charity kickball is not measured in runs and wins.

We tried to set ourselves apart from the competition by fostering a culture of

professionalism. Our uniform consisted of gym shorts or sweatpants, white t-shirts and neckties. This ensemble allowed us the mobility necessary for the intense athletic rigors of kickball, while sending a clear message to our opponents that they faced a no-nonsense, disciplined unit.

In order to further dominate the psychological aspects of kickball, we also made use of codenames, a tactic no other team employed. They were, in order of batting appearance:

1. Caroline “Iron Boot” Birdrow
2. Ellie “Fortune Favors the...” Bold
3. Spencer “Aces” Borwick
4. Zachary “Whirlwind” Dubit
5. Keith “The Hammer” Denning
6. Jordan “Golden Pipes” Goldstein
7. Shlomo “Brass Knuckles” Honig
8. Rebecca “Into Orbit” Orsak
9. Rachel “Big Shot” Reibach
10. “Shoeless Joe” Yank

Beyond our nicknames, we received a further boost from the presence of Hillel director Megan McLean, making us the only team with a dedicated fan. Megan kept our heads in the game with probing questions such as “who’s winning?” and “why didn’t you kick it farther?” Thank you, Megan.

Not only was it a fun event, but the kickball tournament gave Hillel an opportunity to support a great cause. W&L’s Relay for Life group does excellent work raising awareness and money for cancer research and we at Hillel were all very happy to kick some butt (or balls, whatever) for charity.

## The Novack Fund

by Caroline Birdrow '16

For several years, Lesley and David Novack have provided the funding necessary for Hillel to purchase clothing for Rockbridge County’s children in need. The Novacks, with the effort of volunteers from Washington and Lee, seek to help four children every year. They are identified by Michelle Hughes, a teacher at Central Elementary School.

Because Hughes has worked with the Novack Fund for several years and has witnessed its impact, Hillel decided to interview her. Hillel wanted to learn about the poverty issues she encounters as a teacher and the positive effects she thinks the Novack Fund is having on the children served. Hughes

began the conversation by describing the rural poverty from which some children come, poverty that includes dirt floors, no heating in homes and a limited amount of food. She claimed that this type of environment affects the performance of many students, as they may arrive to school cold and hungry. Hughes emphasized the fact that these factors lower levels of concentration in the classroom and impair social interactions among students of differing financial backgrounds.

In spite of the poverty that the children face, Hughes stated that they have very hardworking parents who lead respectable careers. However, what might be a highly regarded job in Rockbridge County, Hughes points out, may not provide the income

needed to sustain a family in today’s economy.

Hughes truly believes that the efforts of the Novacks and Hillel are benefiting students in this community. Through the program, children are given the clothing required to live healthy lives and develop confidence among peers. Hughes described the reaction of one boy, who upon opening a large bag of clothes, exclaimed, “Oh, I wish I could pick them all.” His disbelief that all of the clothes now belonged to him represents the gratitude and joy of many of the other children who are receiving gifts that they never would have expected. Hillel is thankful for the Novacks’ generosity and happy to serve as a helping hand in such a grateful and deserving community.



Students making new friends while waiting in line for bagels at the "Welcome to Hillel! Bagel Brunch."

**The State of Hillel**  
*by Ben Brams '15,*  
*Hillel Student President*

Hillel at Washington and Lee is back and better than ever!

First and foremost, we hired a new Hillel Director. Her name is Megan McLean, and she comes to us after many successful years as a youth leader in New Mexico. Megan is engaging, thoughtful and enthusiastic, and we are so lucky to have her.

Building off of Megan's appointment, Hillel has done a great job of maintaining the momentum generated from last year. We have our biggest class of Jewish first-years ever, and many of them continue to be familiar faces at our events. We had a wonderful High Holy Days—first-year Jordan Goldstein and Rabbi Stephanie, imported from Hebrew Union College, did an amazing job of leading services.

Looking forward, we have many exciting upcoming programs on our calendar. Hebrew classes have started and our VIP (Very Important Professor) dinner series begins next week. Next week, we will also be going to Roanoke for Shabbat with other Hillel students from Radford University, Roanoke College and Virginia Tech. Rabbi Werbin, who teaches our Hebrew classes here on campus, will lead that service in Roanoke and has promised all attendees another awesome night. Our winter Birthright trip is set; in

addition to students from Temple University, we have four students going from W&L, and I know they are all very excited.

I am struck by a recent conversation I had with a prospective Jewish student and his family with whom I had dinner. We got to talking about W&L in general and, more specifically, how unique our Hillel truly is when compared to other schools. When I explained to the father of the prospective student about the positive, constructive interaction between the seniors and first-years, his shock was evident; it seemed as though he had yet to encounter a school where the older students looked out for and nurtured the younger ones. And in this moment, words from my mother came back to me: "There is something to be said for being a *mensch*." His amazement made me feel proud to be a part of W&L Hillel and everything we—as students, as an organization and as a community—have to offer.

And if the start to this year provides any indicator of that appreciation, I'd say we are doing just fine.

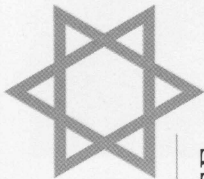


Over 80 students came to Hillel's first Shabbat dinner of the year!



Washington and Lee Law students, Dirk Chilcote, Rebecca Reed, Tiffany Lee, Shahnam Yazdani, and Stephanie Fox, traveled to Israel in April as part of the Transnational Access to Justice practicum. While in Israel, the students met with the Israeli Public Defender's office in Jerusalem and its clinical law intern students to discuss criminal justice system issues.

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