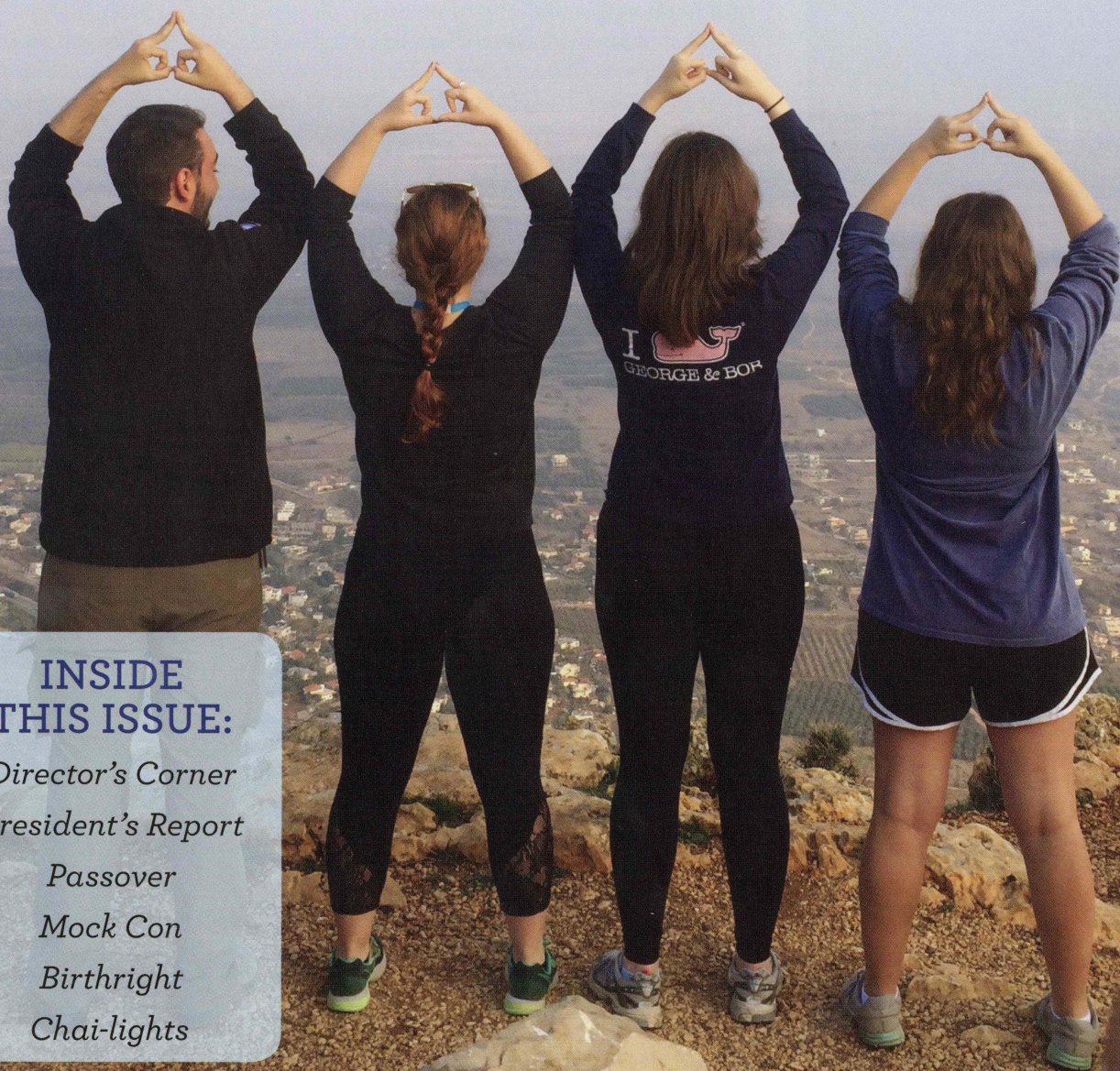


The Star



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On W&L Hillel's 2015/16 Birthright trip, Madeleine Boireau '17, Lauren Michnick '14, '17L and Rachel Reibach '18 celebrate their Pi Phi sisterhood in Israel. And they were able to share American college traditions with their new Israeli friends!

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



It's hard to believe the school year is already over. It feels like Rosh Hashanah was just a few weeks ago. I am so proud of what we did this year. The students have done incredible work, and the community has been so supportive of our programs. Since our last issue we have celebrated Hanukkah, Purim and Passover together as well as countless Shabbats. We hosted an inspiring speaker from Israel, former member of Knesset Dr. Rachel Adato, and what was possibly the liveliest Latke-Hamantash Debate to date. Our weekly

programs — Community Torah Study, Jewcy Details, Modern Hebrew and Shabbat Shalom — have continued throughout the year and welcome any and all participants who wish to join. The first-ever Birthright trip for small Virginia colleges took eight VMI and W&L students and alumni to Israel together. We also took two students to the AIPAC Policy Conference in D.C., where they reunited with old friends, connected with students from all over the country at Hillel International's programs and saw an exceptional array of speakers.

Our Student Board held a successful election, and we are so pleased to see several students continue on the board next year who will be fantastic mentors to our new members. We are now planning our fall board retreat to get the year off to a great start. These students will be instrumental in welcoming the 20 Jewish students who will be joining us from the Class of 2020 (which includes a recipient of the highly competitive Weinstein Scholarship).

I am pleased to report that we are close to reaching our fundraising goals this year. As I am writing this, we have raised \$46,000 towards this year's operating budget (goal: \$54,000) and \$883,000 towards our Programming Endowment Fund (goal \$1.1 million). We are so appreciative of all of our donors. Without these funds, we would not be able to have a Hillel program at Washington and Lee University.

The last two years here have truly been such a blessing to me. I have worked with so many wonderful people — including students, staff, faculty, alumni, parents and community members. And I have been able to oversee fun, educational and enlightening programs. So it is bittersweet for me to announce that this is my last Star newsletter. While I am excited to pursue new opportunities, there are so many people here that I will greatly miss, especially the students who have been my family here in Lexington. I wish you all the best and look forward to watching how W&L Hillel continues to grow and how Jewish life continues to thrive in Lexington.

Questions about W&L Hillel can be directed to hillel@wlu.edu or (540) 458-8443.

Thank you all again for everything you have done to support my work here — it means the world to me.

*With sincere gratitude,
Megan McLean
Director of Hillel*



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Madeleine Boireau '17

The 2015-2016 academic year has truly been an exciting one! W&L Hillel has been involved in many annual events like, the Latke-Hamantash Debate and Avi Shabbat, as well as many new programs, like our Michloach Manot hand-out on Purim, and speakers, like Dr. Rachel Adato. We have had many new students become more involved in Hillel activities as well as many students who regularly attend express desire to be even more involved!

Our student board election featured a great mix of students. The new executive board consists of me returning as president, Vice President Shlomo Honig '18, and returning Treasurer Keith Denning '18. The student board comprises Engagement Chair Alexandra Meilech '18, Social Action Chair Hailey Glick '19, Shabbat Chair Rachel Reibach '18, Holiday Chair Isaac Rosenthal '19, Speakers Chair Max Louman '19, Communications Chair Bryce MacLeod Zaremby '18, Israel Chair Zack Dubit '17, editor-in-chief for the Star newsletter Jordan Goldstein '18, and our VMI liaison, Cadet David Pody (VMI '17). I cannot express how excited I am for this upcoming year. Shlomo will offer a great new perspective to the executive board and with a new Hillel director coming in this fall, I think the consistency is just as important. We also have many rising sophomores on the student board, which is very exciting for the future of W&L Hillel. Hillel has had such an amazing impact on my life, there is no other way I can imagine spending my senior year than working with this amazing group of students.



Communications Chair Rachel Reibach '18 and President Madeleine Boireau '17 light Shabbat candles before we begin the Friday night service.



Students listen to Arthur Goldsmith, professor of economics, during the Avi Shabbat program. Goldsmith's table focused on the question: "Finding a Way Forward that Benefits Israeli and Palestinian People: Is it Right in Front of Us?" The program was sponsored by Masa Israel Journey and the Avi Schaefer Fund.

AVI SHABBAT

by Jordan Goldstein '18

Our second ever Avi Shabbat was a big success! With 42 students in attendance from SVU, VMI and W&L, the conversations remained lively throughout the evening. To honor Avi Schaefer and his legacy of service to Israel and the American conversation about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we had six tables with a professor at each, who had sent out articles relating to their areas of expertise

and the conflict. Blue Phoenix Café made some amazing falafel and hummus for dinner, and we had student-made couscous and baklava from Sweet Treats. Bringing traditionally Israeli and Jewish foods to the table made the night that much more fun! Once everyone arrived, the discussions kicked right off, even before we had a chance to formally introduce the event. I was super excited to hear

many students express their gratitude for the event being hosted, and even more so to hear that a lot of people learned quite a bit from that night. The participants varied greatly, from people who regularly attend Hillel events to individuals who have never attended a W&L Hillel event before. I can't wait to see how this program grows and improves even more next year.

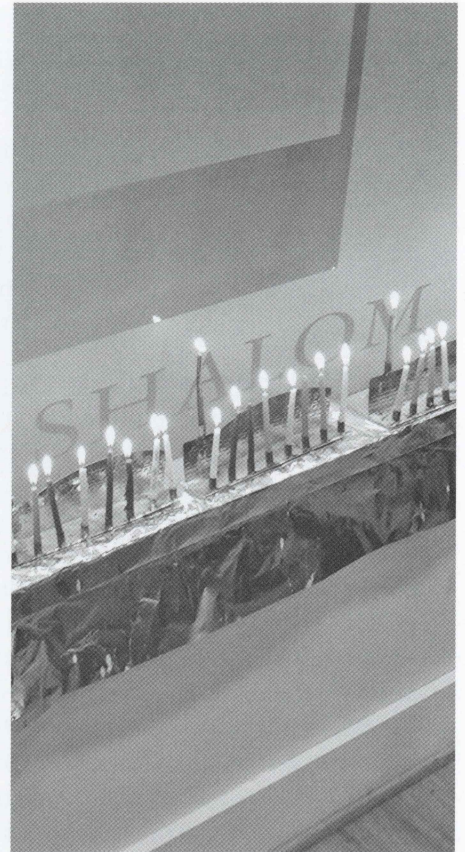
HANUKKAH AND FALL FINALS STUDY BREAK

by Laura E. Wiseman '16

This past Hanukkah fell during the end of Fall Term and teased students with the excitement of returning home for the winter break. While students had to remain on campus for the Jewish Festival of Lights, W&L Hillel made sure they wouldn't miss out on anything. Delicious latkes, giant bowls of gelt, dreidels galore, and nightly candle lightings are all part of the Hanukkah tradition and took place every evening of the holiday in the Hillel House. We kicked off the first night with a community celebration that included candle lighting, songs and, of course, dozens of student-made latkes ready to be covered in sour cream, applesauce or both! Each night we then welcomed students to celebrate each of the wonderful eight nights while they simultaneously finished up classes for the year.

Hanukkah fell not only during the school term, but also on the cusp of final exams. While students were cramming for a

Biology exam or memorizing vocabulary for their French test, we figured it would be much less painful a process were they provided delicious Hanukkah treats to enjoy. With many thanks to the Dreyfus family '13L we celebrated the final night of Hanukkah with a student study break. Along with the latkes and gelt we all indulged in throughout the week, we stocked up on donuts from Pure Eats and more coffee than could be consumed! Creating an event where homework and study materials could be left at the door definitely took the stress off of students while also refueling them for the next round of studying. We even raffled off gift certificates to downtown Lexington restaurants to keep students well-fed through finals week. Interacting with W&L Hillel on social media gave participants multiple chances to win. Who would have thought an overlap of Hanukkah and finals week could be a good thing?



All the menorahs lit on the last night of Hanukkah.



VMI Cadets Horowitz, Chisner and Balson chat before the service. Students from W&L, VMI, SVU, Virginia Tech, Radford and Roanoke College also enjoyed a festive Shabbat meal together that was prepared by the members of Temple Beth Israel.

A CATHOLIC POINT OF VIEW

by Nicole Eldred '18

I have been going to Washington and Lee Hillel's events for a little under a year now. I grew up in a very welcoming and religiously free, but still Catholic, home. As I started going to Hillel events, I was blown away by how inviting everyone was. It was not the standoffish behavior I had seen from other services, but rather a welcoming and giving community.

On November 13th I had the opportunity to go to Roanoke and go to my first Friday Evening Service in a Conservative Jewish Temple. I was shocked at the similarities between a Catholic service and a Shabbat service. Aside from being unable to understand it (unfortunately, I learned Spanish in school and not Hebrew), the service followed the same structure that I had grown up with.

The service started with prayers and teachings and progressed with lots of singing. The middle of the service was dedicated to the mourners and remembering those who had passed. The service ended with a final prayer and song. It was the same structure that I was comfortable with and had come to expect from Pastor John back home.

It was an eye-opening experience to learn how similar Judaism and Catholicism are in their services, further showing that religions are not that different from one another. In addition, it was nice to feel accepted into a community that I am not formally a part of. The temple in Roanoke did not care that I was not Jewish but embraced my quest for knowledge of different cultures.

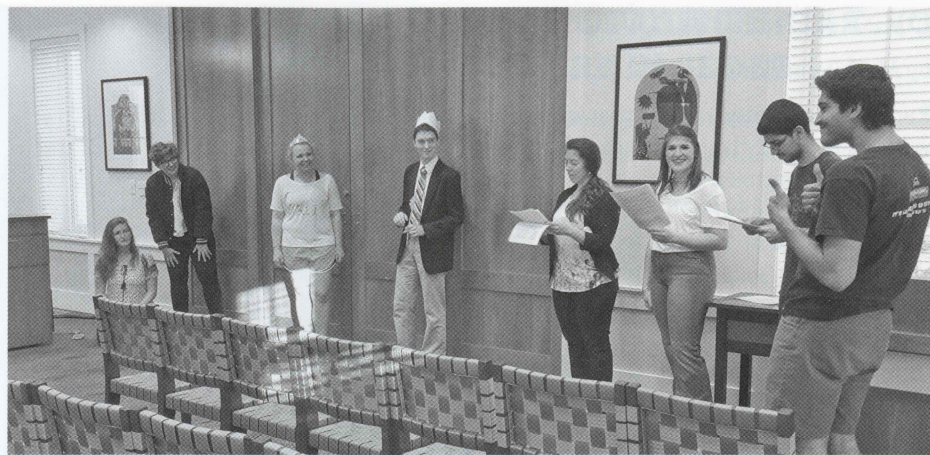
COMMUNITY TORAH STUDY

by Annette Green

One unique aspect of Judaism is that our Torah is best studied in groups. In fact, the Hebrew term for Torah study is “chevre Torah,” which literally means a close network of friends reading Torah together. The reason for this is that we believe that each of us brings our own truth to the meaning of what we read, and by sharing this with others, we can all expand our understanding of the text. It is not important to agree on one interpretation, only to consider the possibilities.

It is in that spirit that a small, informal group of community members meets each week at the Hillel House. We read through the Torah portion designated for that week (in English), pausing to comment on parts that interest, inspire, puzzle or even trouble us. We then look at a variety of commentaries — ranging from Rabbinical times to current day — to find out how Jewish scholars have interpreted the text over the ages. This often helps us better appreciate the beauty and compassion of our story and laws, and also to grapple with some of the more uncomfortable parts of it. We always have plenty of rich fodder for discussion, and for consideration of how we can still apply Torah to our lives thousands of years after it was given to us at Sinai.

We welcome new members. No previous knowledge or Hebrew reading is required, and there is no homework. Just come, join our informal discussion, learn, teach and get inspired! For more information, contact Annette Green at annettezg@hotmail.com.



Hannah Dewing '19, Dana Gary '18, Grace Vianney '16, Matt Reichel '17, Crystal Santos '16, Jordan Goldstein '18, Ron Perets '18 and Murtaza Kapasi '16 read and act out the story of Purim.

PURIM

by Shlomo Honig '18

“Purim? I’ve never heard of it.” “Purim . . . does the university offer that class?” These are just a few of the typical responses I receive when I tell my friends I am going to a Megillah reading for Purim. To give them a five-second summary, I tell them that many years ago the Jewish people were saved from annihilation yet again — a recurrent theme in Judaism. Rather than going into the myriad of details of how our proverbial lot was cast and Queen Esther saved the day centuries ago, I find it easier to let them Google this short yet heroic (and ironically very much still relevant) story on their nearest Apple device.

While the times have changed, it remains the responsibility of this generation of Jews (as well as future generations) to ensure the continuity of our heritage with enthusiasm and pride for what it means to be Jewish. One important way we do so is through expanding traditions. This year’s Megillah reading at the Hillel House was a testament to our will to successfully fulfill that objective.

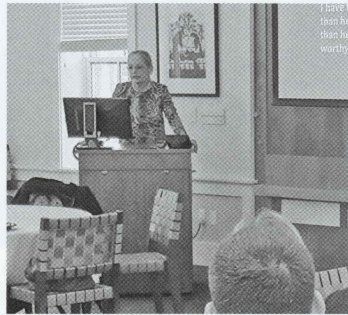
Students from the Theater Department created a festive Purim atmosphere by helping put on an improvisational rendition of the story of Purim. Between laughter at the wonderful acting and appropriately timed booing whenever the original He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named was mentioned, there was a welcoming feeling to this Megillah reading that made it both accessible and exciting to Jews of all levels of observance, as well as to non-Jews. This could clearly be gauged by the smartphone activity in the room, which was kept to a minimum of its own accord (a miraculous feat in and of itself).

At the end of our most entertaining Megillah reading, yet another Jewish tradition was kept alive: joyful communal eating to honor our festivities. The audience and actors eagerly made their ways to the table covered with delectable Hamentashen filled with chocolate or strawberry jam in celebration of the Purim holiday. All who attended had a memorable time while keeping our Jewish traditions alive.

DR. RACHEL ADATO'S VISIT TO W&L

by Madeleine Boireau '17

Rachel Adato's story is one that men and women around the world should hear. We at Washington and Lee Hillel were lucky enough to hear it in person. Adato was the first female gynecologist in Israel, practicing in the women's department of Hadassah Medical Center and eventually becoming the deputy director of the Hadassah Hospital. Later in life, Adato became the first woman in the Knesset leading a law, commonly referred to as the Photoshop Law. The law banned models with a BMI lower than 18.5 as well as banning the use of Photoshop to make any model look smaller, without a clear declaration that Photoshop was used. Washington and Lee Hillel, the Department of Sociology



A group of students, faculty and community members intently listen to Dr. Adato's presentation on body image.

and Anthropology, the Shepherd Poverty Program, the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program and Hillel International sponsored the event. The event was also live streamed so anyone could share the experience of hearing this amazing woman speak.

After the talk, the sponsoring faculty and students who wrote the winning Hillel Hinenu grant had dinner in with Dr. Adato. The

opportunity to spend time with Adato in a smaller, informal setting was an invaluable experience. Washington and Lee has brought countless remarkable people to campus, and it was a privilege to be able to work as part of Hillel to add a woman of such caliber to that list of people.

JEWCY DETAILS

by Maya Epelbaum '16

After three years of coming to Hillel, enjoying the community, and eating with my fellow students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, I realized I felt like Hillel was missing something. What could it be — I had the community, I celebrated the holidays, and I participated in Tikkun Olam, or community service. Then one day I went to Generals' Christian Fellowship small group meeting, and I realized what it was: I missed learning. I missed thinking about my religion as more than just something I do because it was fun and because I was born into this community, but as a way of life that I consciously choose to think about it.

This year I started Hillel's first small group/Torah study/place to think about religion. Our group started off without a name because we weren't sure quite what we were. We wanted to have an outlet to talk about Judaism, our faith and our questions in a non-academic setting. We wanted a place where we could build a community based not just

on a shared heritage but where we could have weekly meetings to let out our feelings and thoughts both related and unrelated to our religion. While the themes all centered on Judaism, people of all faiths came to participate and eat food. Some days we took on a prayer to discuss; for others the focus was on the story of the current holiday or Torah portion. We called ourselves Jewcy Details because we discussed things that may be taboo in Hebrew school, and grew close enough to share highs and lows that we might not have been comfortable sharing with a large group at Shabbat dinner. While Jewcy Details is still new and does not have too many active members, we hope to continue it next year under the leadership of Ron Perets '18 and Batsheva Honig '17 in order to provide a community of continued learning and connections within Hillel. Since Jewcy Details is meant to be a place of religious expression, I hope it continues and grows to foster friendships, spirituality and faith in ourselves, our God and our religion.

MY EXPERIENCE AT THE AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE

by Ron Perets '18

AIPAC, or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is a pro-Israel citizen lobby group that aims to increase support for Israel in American politics. AIPAC meets once a year in Washington, D.C. to educate citizens on the hardships currently being faced by Israel and teaches them how they can be a voice in helping maintain stable U.S.-Israeli relations.

I attended the conference this year in an attempt to gain insight on how pro-Israel Americans are dealing with the excessive scrutiny Israel has received in recent years. The AIPAC conference attempts to show Israel as a country that can do no wrong, and as a beacon of hope in a repressive and intolerant Middle East. While this view isn't necessarily wrong, the extremely high praise given to Israel is excessive and in some ways bizarre. While I agree that Israel is a wonderful country full of wonderful people that is demonized by the media excessively for its faults, Israel is far from perfect, and AIPAC's attempt at making Israel seem perfect is probably doing more harm than good.

The conference involved different sessions that attendees could participate in. Some were serious, such as combatting the BDS movement on college campuses, while others less so, such as a cooking demonstration by Israeli food journalist Gil Hovav. The main attraction was a series of general sessions that involved speeches by prominent figures in politics such as Joe Biden, Paul Ryan, Benjamin Netanyahu, Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz, John Kasich and Donald Trump. The speeches given by these figures called for stronger American-Israeli relations but offered little in terms of actual ways to strengthen that relationship. Ultimately, attending AIPAC felt more like an attempt to demonstrate Israeli greatness than to provide citizens with the tools necessary to rectify the injustice done to Israel through disproportionate scrutiny by the media, political organizations and foreign governments.



This year's Passover Seder in Evans Dining Hall.

PASSOVER

by Cadet Amber Levy VMI '19

I had a wonderful time at Passover dinner this year. I was really excited to attend because I knew that there would be good food, and I wanted to share my religion with my dykes (senior mentors at VMI). All of my dykes are Christians, and throughout the ratline (the first year at VMI), they embraced and experienced Judaism with me. I thought inviting them to Passover dinner would be a nice way to share my culture. All of my dykes had a lovely time learning about the traditions and the religion itself. W&L Hillel has been a wonderful community to be a part of this year, and I can't wait to enjoy more events.

by Cadet Michaela Wright VMI '16

My experience at the Passover Seder was very educational, to say the least. As the female cadet chaplain at VMI this year, one of my goals was to explore religious beliefs and traditions other than my own, Christianity, and participating in the Seder helped me achieve that goal. There were a few moments during the ceremony that I wasn't quite sure what was going on or what it all meant, but in those moments there was always someone close by who was willing to explain it, which made the experience that much more enjoyable. The haggadahs that were at each place setting are what I found to be the most helpful in not only obviously following along, but that gave some extra readings as to the stories, meanings and much more to each little detail that was in the dinner. Overall, it was a great experience that I was honored to have been invited to and to have been a part of this Passover season.

SVU STUDENTS SHARE IN SEDER

*by David Cox, Adjunct Professor of
History, Southern Virginia University*

For a class from Southern Virginia University that spent the semester surveying the history of American religion, the invitation to participate in the community Seder could not have been more welcome. For it to fall, too, on our last day of class made it a perfect celebratory conclusion. So it was.

About half of the class members gladly broke away from finishing papers and studying for exams. Two faculty members came too, one with family, and shared in the great experience.

For that is what it was. Having traced the history of Judaism in America from colonial days to the present, observing Passover provided the rare opportunity to participate in something we have studied. "It was great to see people together to celebrate ancient tradition," one student commented. "You can see why the tradition has lasted," another concurred, citing the "literal connection" between symbols of the meal with events being recalled, and the immediacy of experience that symbol and story produced. But it became more than just academic. The Seder provided firsthand the chance to take part in the age-old remembrance of God's mighty acts that are central to Jewish history—and are also part of their own.

They gratefully agreed that the food was "delicious."

Most SVU students are active Mormons. They brought to the course a keen interest in religion in general. To share in the Seder, then, became not just an educational exercise, but also an opportunity to reflect on their own experience of a past in which they, too, share. Joining the celebration of faith at the Seder gave them the chance to deepen their own.

Thank you to all our hosts.

MOCK CONVENTION 2016

by Megan McLean, Director of Hillel

It was such an honor to be asked to give an invocation and benediction at the third session of this year's Mock Convention. Having never done this before and not being an ordained clergy person, I did what any Hillel director would do for inspiration and affirmation — I crowdsourced. I reached out to my Hillel colleagues and within minutes was inundated with suggestions. I am so fortunate to be part of that incredible group of passionate Jewish professionals! I wanted to share my remarks with you, in case you missed the livestream (which I believe is still available online), and also express my deep gratitude to the organizers of the Mock Convention for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I received so much positive feedback from attendees and so appreciated the chance to share some Jewish wisdom and learning with the W&L community. I felt so much pride wearing my W&L Hillel kippah on the Warner Center stage and sharing the blessings that we all hold so dear.

INVOCATION:

The Schecheyanu — a Blessing of Praise — is said the first time we do something each calendar year or to mark joyous or special occasions.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu
Melech haolam, shehecheyanu,
v'kiy'manu, v'higianu
laz'man hazeh.*

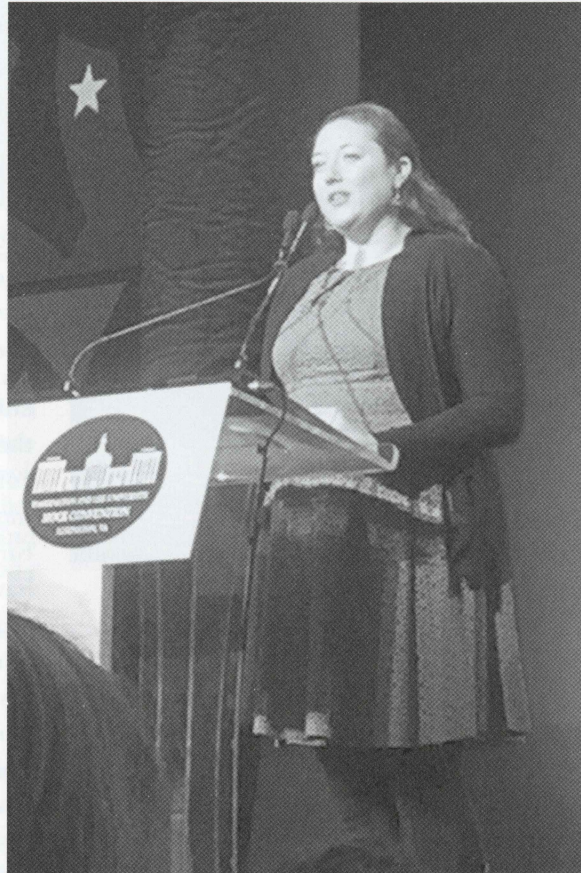
Thank you, Adonai, for giving us life, sustaining us and enabling us to reach this season.

This translation of the Prayer for Our Country — said on Shabbat and holidays — is adapted from Siddur Kol Haneshema.

Source of life, mercifully receive our prayer for our land and its government. Let your blessing pour out on this land and on all officials of this country who

are occupied, in good faith, with the public needs. Instruct them, enable them to understand principles of justice, so that peace and tranquility, happiness and freedom, might never turn away from our

and enmity, all jealousy and vying for supremacy. Fulfill the yearning of all the people of our country to speak proudly in its honor. Fulfill their desire to see it become a light to all nations.



Director of Hillel Megan McLean giving the Invocation at the third session of the 2016 Mock Convention.
Photo Credit: Madeleine Boireau '17

“IF I AM NOT FOR MYSELF, WHO WILL BE FOR ME? IF I AM NOT FOR OTHERS, WHAT AM I? AND IF NOT NOW, WHEN?”

land. Giver of Knowledge, waken your spirit within all inhabitants of our land, and plant among the peoples of different nationalities and faiths who dwell here, love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. Uproot from their hearts all hatred

Therefore, may it be that our land should be a blessing to all inhabitants of the globe. Cause to dwell among all peoples friendship and freedom. And soon fulfill this vision: “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Let them learn no longer ways of war.” And let us say: Amen.

BENEDICTION:

Rabbi Hillel said, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?”

So today, let us take bold stands against hateful voices, and love our neighbors through speaking out and taking action. We know that the world is broken in so many ways, and humanity has been tasked with its repair. We have been endowed with the gift of spirit and the gift of the mind; with the gift for learning and accomplishing wondrous things; with the gift of the ability to save our world or destroy it. May we be guided by our spirits to use our knowledge and skills for good and not for evil, to heal and not

to harm, to build and not to tear down, to make peace and not to fight, to love and not to hate. Let it be our hope today, that we fulfill our potential by maximizing the potential of our intellect while giving our full measure of

compassion to our fellow human beings and the world in which we live.

May you all go from strength to strength and achievement to achievement.

Shabbat Shalom, y'all.

THE LATKE-HAMANTASH DEBATE

by Isaac Rosenthal '19 and Hailey Glick '19



Hailey Glick '19, Colonel Wade Bell, Professor Lynn Chin, Professor Sara Sprenkle, Colonel Greg Hartman and Isaac Rosenthal '19 before the debate.

This year marked the first W&L vs. VMI Latke-Hamentashen Debate at Hillel House. This zany event pitted Colonels Greg Hartman and Wade Bell against Professors Sara Sprenkle and Lynn Chin.

The event began with four spitfire introductions delivered by first-year team captains Hailey Glick and Isaac Rosenthal while the professors paraded into the sanctuary, in full academic regalia,

while themed music played in the background. Things quickly turned serious as each professor took the podium to defend their traditional Jewish food of choice. VMI professors touted the latke as the supreme treat using mathematical and biological arguments, respectively. On the other side, W&L professors used their subjective specialties of computer science and sociology to convince the audience of the superiority of the hamantash.

In the end, the home-field advantage proved too much for VMI to overcome. Those in attendance voted team hamantash the winner with an enthusiastic ovation. However, all team members, team captains and audience members put aside their differences at the end of the day, and enjoyed both latkes and hamantashen together. Overall, the event was a huge success and proved a great opportunity to blow off some mid-March steam and share some laughs and, of course, great food.

HILLEL COFFEE HOUSE NIGHT

by Hannah Falchuk '18

With the help of singer/songwriter Micah and the E. Café baristas, the morning and daytime café located inside the Hillel House was transformed into a late-night coffeehouse on November 8.

Students were able to take a break from studying with made-to-order coffee drinks and hot chocolate and house-made pastries, while some brought their books and computers for a more relaxed atmosphere than the main floor of the library. Everyone, though, got the chance to enjoy some good company and conversation, as students filled the café throughout the evening. One of the most

unexpected treats of the night ended up being the E. Café's newest addition to its desert menu — the Hill-O, a type of cronut made specially by the E. Café chefs. Although the desserts went quickly, the soft sound of Micah's acoustic guitar helped students unwind slowly before the week ahead.

Micah is becoming a regular in Lexington; he played to an enthusiastic crowd last year at the Hillel-sponsored Gaines Gathering in the dorm's newly completed rotunda. This year, though, the extra tables and booths of the E. Café allowed more students to spend time at the coffeehouse, and they were able

to work or relax while listening to the music and sipping coffee.

When Micah finished his last song, he was happy to give out free copies of his EP, wishing the students another successful school year. With a new study soundtrack, I am definitely prepared for more late-night study sessions.



Emily Danzig '16 and Jacqueline Carson '16 share doughnuts while enjoying Micah's music at the coffeehouse event on November 8.

Birthright

Photo Credits:

(1) Madeleine Boireau '17 (2) Alex Meilech '18 and Jessie Meilech (3) Lauren Michnick '14 '17L and Simon Michnick '17

by Rachel Reibach '18

Israel has always been special to me. I visited as a teenager and learned as much as I could about its history and culture. I could talk to anyone about Israel and defend it if I had to. In high school all of my Jewish friends knew about Israel and had most likely visited with summer camps or youth group programs. I never really had to explain why I felt such a connection to the country. After visiting as a college student, I had a completely new experience.

This past Winter Break on Birthright, I got to return to one of my favorite places and see it through the eyes of people who had never been there, including my best friend. Even the places I had already been (Tel Aviv, Dead Sea, Bedouin tents, etc.) felt new and exciting because I was able to see a completely new set of reactions, even my own.

Coming to college and leaving my built-in Jewish community forced me to think about my life and how much I wanted to prioritize my Judaism. As I stood at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, I realized how much my faith meant to me. As I met a group of Israeli soldiers who had selflessly dedicated their efforts to protecting the state of Israel, I remembered how important it was to be Jewish.

Birthright came into my life at a time when I needed inspiration, and I was not disappointed. I made friends at nearby colleges as well as halfway around the world. I was able to challenge and strengthen my beliefs while making memories with an amazing group of people.





by Daniel Boccio '14

My younger brother and I joined the Virginia Israel Free Spirit trip. He had visited W&L only a handful of times, and I had not been back since graduation, and it was, simply put, an unforgettable experience. It was great reuniting with fellow Generals and a Veemee, and the rest of the crew on this trip was fantastic. Writing this in the days after Pesach, one can't help reflect on the idea of being a stranger in a strange land. Certainly this was new terrain for us, my first time in the Eretz as well as

the Middle East after many years going back and forth between Europe, New York, Lex and Brazil. However, every time someone would greet us, after we introduced ourselves as on Birthright, with a warm "welcome home," whether from a tchotchke vender in the HaCarmel Market of Tel Aviv or a Chabad Rabbi at the Kotel in Jerusalem, everyone seemed to make you feel at home. It was also nice hearing it in a familiar accent, like that of the Kabbalah artist Avraham Loewenthal in Tzfat. While my younger brother and I

didn't have the most observant upbringing, every time we would hear Avi say his classic "4,000 years of history, man. This is awesome," or daven at the Kotel, or observe Shabbos in Jerusalem, we not only felt at home, but also felt and lived and kept that tradition of our grandmother, her family back in the old country, and before that and before that. That is what visiting Israel on Birthright meant to us.

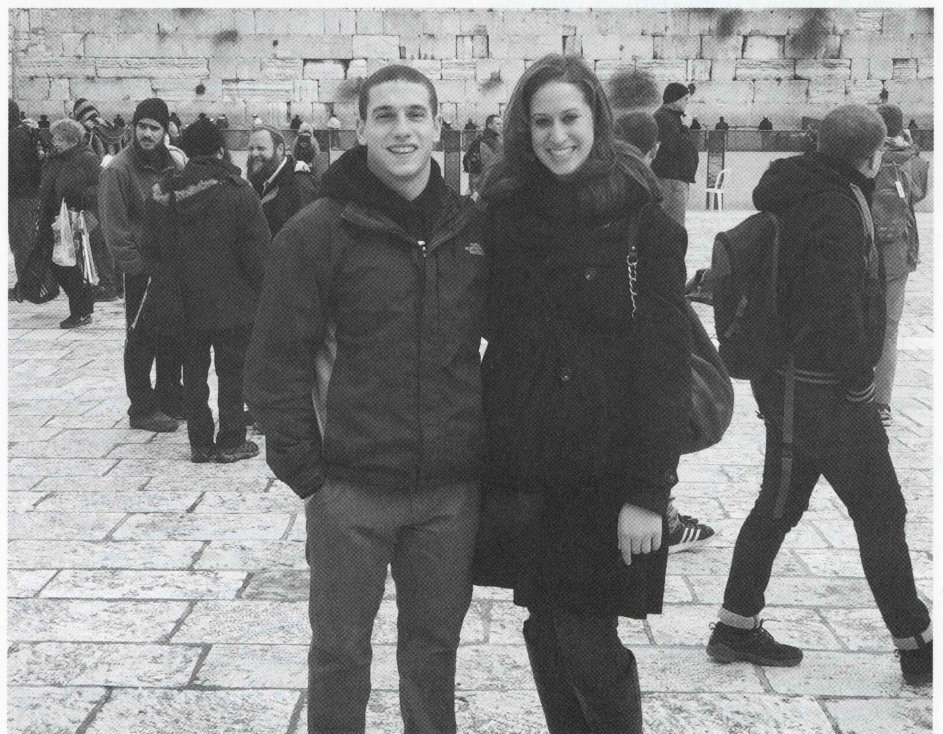
by Madeleine Boireau '17

I had the amazing opportunity to see Israel on Birthright this past winter. The minute I arrived, countless people welcomed me home. I didn't get it. I was adamantly opposed to accepting it. Being stubborn by nature, I refused to even try to understand why Israel would be my home. Every day, it continued. Every minute of the trip was either spent with the group doing some sort of activity or spent sleeping. We hiked around and I was welcomed home, we discussed how Judaism affects our lives and I was welcomed home, and I still didn't get it. Then we went to the Old City, and it clicked. Israel is important. Many will read that as an understatement, and I, think it is as well, but I don't know how else to put it.

The history of Jerusalem truly blew me away. I still don't know if I believe it all as fact, but the respect I have for those who do has magnified exponentially. I will always remember sitting on the beaches of Tel Aviv and watching the

sunrise in the Brussels airport with a group of young adults that I will keep in touch with for years. Birthright taught me

that by not considering myself a religious Jew, I am not any less Jewish. Israel is for all of us.



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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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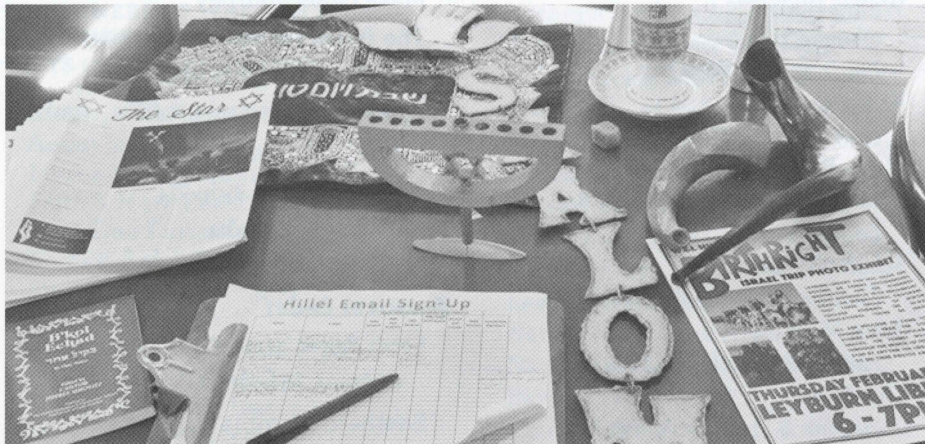
Scott Apter '69 *in memory*
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✧ = *of Blessed Memory*

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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.

ה' Chai-Lights



DIVERSITY DAY

Diversity Day was celebrated at W&L in January this year and featured displays from various student organizations — including W&L Hillel. Our Hillel student leadership works with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion board to promote diversity at W&L throughout the year.



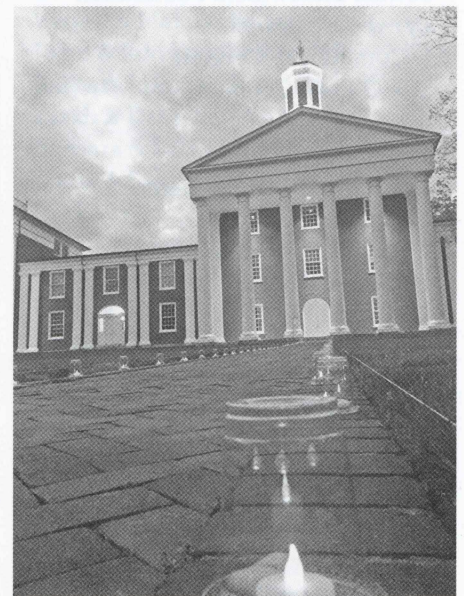
MISHLOACH MANOT

W&L Hillel students assembled a build-your-own mishloach manot buffet in front of Elrod Commons. Students could create care packages of food for their friends that included information about Purim, an explanation of what mishloach manot are, and an invitation to our Megillah reading.



GAN KATAN

Our Gan Katan students had a great time celebrating Purim with us! They made mishloach manot for their families, enjoyed hamantashen, read stories about how Purim is celebrated around the world and then read and acted out the (kid-friendly) story of Esther.



YOM HASHOAH

W&L Hillel students lined the walkway from the Colonnade to Lee Chapel with candles to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

Photo credit:

Madeleine Boireau '17



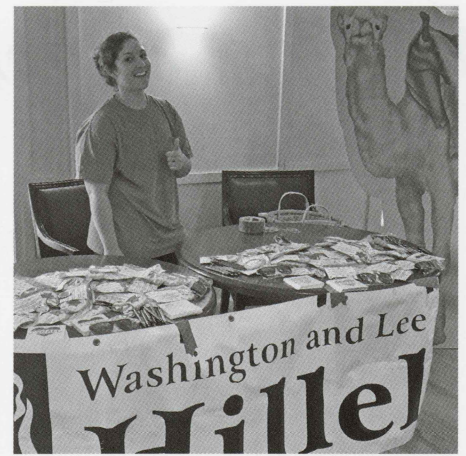
SHABBAT AT VMI

We had a very special guest from Hillel International, Dan Rosenberg, join us for a very special Shabbat dinner at the Virginia Military Institute! We are so grateful to the VMI chaplain's office for continuing the tradition this year. It is such a blessing to share the celebration of Shabbat with our friends and neighbors.



INTERNATIONAL LUNCH

The Center for International Education hosts a special lunch in the Marketplace once a month to highlight different food cultures from around the world, and in March, Israel was one of the countries featured. W&L Hillel was happy to help with the menu and provide artifacts for an exhibit to teach the Washington and Lee community about Israel and Jewish holidays.



YOM HA'AZTMAUT

W&L Hillel students handed out cookies in the Commons decorated to look like Israel's flag in honor of Israel Independence Day. The cookies came in bags with a label explaining the holiday. We also handed out fun Israel tchotchkes – stickers, buttons, pens and sunglasses. And our mascot #JamalHaGamal was excited to see another part of the campus!



VIP DINNER

Our VIP (Very Important Professor) this year was Kim Cowgill, professor of environmental studies and director of sustainability. W&L undergrad and law students gathered at the Southern Inn to enjoy dinner together and learn about Cowgill's research and work on campus.

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