



HILLEL

The Star



WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL NEWSLETTER
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JUNE 2009

Trustee Mark Eaker '69 Inspires Fellow Trustees to Complete Fundraising for the New Hillel House



Mark Eaker '69 and Dennis Cross, VP for University Advancement, and Joan Robins, Hillel Director celebrate the completion of the fund-raising for the new Hillel House.

I have great news to share: fund raising for our new W&L Hillel House is complete! On Friday evening, May 8, the Washington and Lee Board of Trustees made final gifts to reach the goal of \$4 million, which includes an endowment for long-term maintenance.

On Thursday afternoon, May 7, we reported to the Campaign Cabinet that we were \$470,000 short of our goal. The Trustees and the University were pleased with the progress and eager to complete the fund-raising as soon as possible so that we could break ground for the Hillel House on schedule in September. What followed on Friday evening was truly remarkable.

Trustee Mark Eaker '69 of Austin, Texas, a previous supporter of the Hillel House, decided to commit half—or \$235,000—of the \$470,000 needed. Mark wanted his

gift to challenge others to give an equal amount. Fellow Trustees responded immediately. In about 60 minutes, Mark's challenge was met, and the entire \$470,000 was pledged! The Trustees were not only generous, but very enthusiastic in their support of the Hillel House.

One hundred sixty five individuals or couples have supported the Hillel House, and made our achievement possible. Several of the supporters and the gifts committed on Friday evening helped meet the \$500,000 challenge grant made last

September by Don Childress, Rector of the Board of Trustees. Of the four million dollars raised, \$844,000.00 was given by non-Jewish current and emeritus Trustees.

Construction is expected to begin in September, with completion expected in the fall of 2010. Our fund raising can now continue among alumni, parents and friends to build an endowment to support Hillel programming. We will recognize supporters who make gifts during the upcoming construction phase with available naming opportunities in the building and on the donor plaque. The plaque honors commitments of \$25,000 or more.

Thanks to all of you! I'm guessing that you are as thrilled as I am to know that our dream is now a reality. I can't wait for the party! I hope all of you will plan to be on campus for the dedication in the fall of 2010.

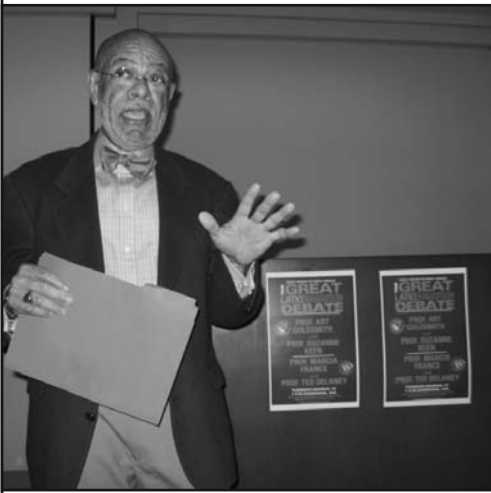
RELAY FOR LIFE

By Josh Posner '12

Washington and Lee University's first Relay for Life event was uncommonly successful for a first relay. We raised almost \$15,000 to donate to the American Cancer Society! In addition, the ceremony for the survivors and the speeches by the survivors and Relay leaders were beautiful displays of support, strength and hope. It was also a lot of fun staying up all night and seeing how long everyone could relay. For such a small university, W&L really made a huge impact, and that is a wonderful achievement.

Washington and Lee Hillel was one of the top fundraising teams, raising over \$600. As a first year student, I was proud to form and lead the Hillel team. Students in Hillel as well as friends and family symbolically and financially supported the event. It was empowering to see such a bold effort against cancer. We all went to sleep about 7AM after the relay, and definitely slept comfortably that night (or day).

Hillel students and friends had a memorable and rewarding experience performing tikkun olam at the first Relay for Life at W&L. Why wouldn't we want to help repair and improve the world? We hope to have another Relay for Life next year!



The Great Latke-Hamantash Debate: Professors Marcia France, Ted Delaney, Suzanne Keen, and Art Goldsmith debated the merits of these two yummy Jewish treats. This year, the Hamantashen won!



Hillel's Reunion Reception honored the ZBT Class of 1959. Their 50th reunion leadership gift to the new Hillel House was over \$1.1 million.



Very Interesting Professors Series: Students discuss international human rights issues with Visiting Professor Jeremy Sarkin.



Graduating senior officers Hila Yashar, Alex Flaster, and Julia Spieler receive certificates from Hillel.



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Director's Corner

By Joan Robins

It has been a wonderful and busy year at W&L Hillel. Our student leaders have organized a great variety of programs for everyone to enjoy. Whether it was discussing the impact of the Israeli elections, laughing so hard that our faces hurt during the Great Latke-Hamantashen Debate, participating in meaningful services, discussing human rights issues with visiting law professor Jeremy Sarkin, traveling to Israel on the birthright trip, reading names at a vigil for those who lost their lives in the Holocaust, or celebrating Passover at the huge community Seder, students were involved and enriched by their Hillel experience.

Exciting news: fund raising is complete for our new Hillel House and construction is expected to begin in the fall. This beautiful building would not have been possible without the support of many alumni, parents, W&L Board of Trustees, and the local community. We are deeply grateful to all of you for your generosity, time, and commitment.

I would like to recognize the two graduating Co-Presidents, Hila Yashar and Julia Spieler for a job well done. We will miss both of you, and wish you the very best. We hope you will return for the Hillel House Dedication in the fall of 2010! We congratulate the recently elected Co-Presidents, Emily Martin and Stephanie Dultz. Emily is the third member of the Martin family to be Hillel president! Both Emily and Stephanie have shown amazing leadership skills, already planning new initiatives including an alternative Spring Break. I look forward to working with them next year.

First Year Experience

By Lev Raslin '12 aka DJ Levitown

My name is Lev Raslin and I am a Russian-Jewish first-year, class of 2012, hailing from Queens, NY. Coming to college is a life changing experience, but I was not ready for what was to come. At first, I felt a lot of skepticism and contempt for life here. I felt like I would not fit in, my style was not that of the other students, and I was definitely not used to the fraternity scene. Then I gave it a chance, and now I love it.

Something that tremendously helped was my introduction to the Hillel at W & L. It definitely gave me a sense of home and I met a bunch of really cool people who I am glad to call my good friends; one became one of my best friends and fraternity brothers. Hillel has not only helped me develop a clearer sense of identity but has put me back in touch with my culture. Joan is a great Director of Hillel and has not only facilitated my activity within the organization but has also been very supportive of my personal endeavors as well as academics. I could not ask for a better set of peers and a mentor to work with. One of my most memorable moments in Hillel was our trip to Staunton. After a great dinner we went to go see "The Reader." It was a very moving film and it helped to be able to have people to discuss it with on a more personal level. Interestingly, Bernard Schlink, the author of the novel on which the film was based, spoke at W&L several days later.

Choosing a single word to encapsulate my experience at Washington and Lee and Hillel would not suffice, but ask me to tell you a story about any First Friday or outing and I would be glad to make you laugh and smile.



Taglit Birthright Israel: Three students travelled to Israel over Winter Break: Graham Sheridan '12, Brian Cherry '12, and Hugo Clifford '09 in the Negev Desert.

Birthright Israel Trip

By Brian Cherry '11

This past winter break, I, along with two other Jewish students, Hugo Clifford '09 and Graham Sheridan '11, traveled to Israel on the Taglit-Birthright Israel program. The trip provides Jewish students between the ages of 18–26 a free 10-day tour of Israel. Sponsored by Jewish philanthropists and the State of Israel, the program gave us the opportunity to travel around the entire country, staying in cities such as Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, the Negev Desert in the South, and Tiberias, where our hotel overlooked the Sea of Galilee. Along with students from other universities on the East coast, we became engrossed in Israeli culture, interacting with soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces, eating falafel and schwarma from street vendors, and praying in a Jerusalem synagogue on Shabbat. Additional highlights of the trip included the Old City and Western Wall in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem (a Holocaust memorial), the Dead Sea, and Massada, an ancient fortress atop a plateau in the Judean Desert. The trip was an incredible experience, and all three of us hope to return to Israel soon.

Recent Hillel Events



The recent Israeli election and its implications were discussed at a forum led by Graham Sheridan '12 and Professor Zarakol.



Passover: Over 100 people attended Hillel's Community Seder.



Hila Yashar '09 receives an award for Celebrating Student Success. Hila served as Hillel Co-President and was active in many other organizations on campus.



Leading the Passover Seder are Lev Raslin '12 and Josh Posner '12



Hillel's Yom Ha-Shoah service begins with the sounding of the shofar by Lev Raslin '12.



Holocaust survivor, George Salton, speaks with students after his talk at Rockbridge County High School.



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Jew Crew '09-'10



Ten Hillel Officers were elected for 2009-2010.

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Co Vice Presidents: Brian Cherry '11 and Graham Sheridan '11

Co-Secretary/Treasurer: Dinal Danforth '10 and David Sternlicht '11

VP Chairs: Shabbat and Holidays: Josh Posner '12

Speakers/Very Interesting Professors: Joe Gannett '12

Holocaust Remembrance: Tracy Richardson '11

New Students/Co-Sponsorships: Lev Raslin '12

Community Service/Alternative Spring Break: Shared by officers

Social: Shared by officers

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