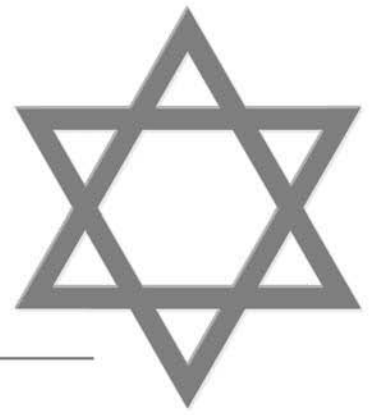




HILLEL

The Star



WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL NEWSLETTER

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DECEMBER 2009

Update on The Washington and Lee Hillel House —Dedication Date Set



WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY BEGAN construction in October 2009 for the magnificent new Hillel House. The 7,000 square foot building is centrally located on Washington Street, close to the residence halls, the Commons, and the surrounding town.

The new facility will feature a sanctuary adaptable for educational and social events, a student lounge, a conference room/library, staff and student offices, community kitchen, and a Kosher café, available to students on the meal plan.

More than 165 individuals or couples have supported the \$4 million Hillel House, and made this achievement possible. Major donors included the ZBT Class of 1959, and several members of the W&L Board of Trustees, especially Rector Don Childress '70, and Mark Eaker '69. In addition to alumni, W&L parents and members of the local Jewish community generously contributed.

"Coming to Washington and Lee has enhanced my interest in Judaism and involvement in the Jewish community," explains senior Stephanie Dultz, Co-President of W&L Hillel. "The Hillel

House will provide our community not only with a much needed home, but also a place to explore what it means to be Jewish."

According to Hillel Director Joan Robins, the new Hillel House will add new vibrancy to the cultural and religious experiences of our Jewish students. "A thriving Jewish community will enrich the intellectual and social life of the entire University."

W&L President Ken Ruscio has supported this project from the start, and spoke at the informal groundbreaking. "Having a Hillel House at Washington and Lee represents a commitment on the part of the University to building a welcoming Jewish community on campus. While W&L has a vibrant Hillel organization, a building dedicated to Jewish life will strengthen the University's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. It will have the added benefit of providing a resource for the Jewish members of the Lexington and Rockbridge County communities.

A formal dedication of the Hillel House has been scheduled for September 24-25, 2010.

¡Estudiantes judíos ir al Uruguay!

by Ali Greenberg '13

Sixteen Washington and Lee University students will be traveling to Montevideo, Uruguay during February Break (February 21st–28th) to take part in Hillel's International Alternative Break program. This is the first trip of its kind for W&L Hillel, as we will be volunteering in the local community and assisting with a variety of projects. From rebuilding shantytowns to working in the local soup kitchen, we will be immersed into a week of service and learning with our peers. Apart from volunteering, we will have the opportunity to interact personally with the local Jewish community, attending Shabbat services with host families, eating kosher meals at the Montevideo Hillel, and visiting the Holocaust Museum.

This is a huge leap and an incredible growth for the W&L Hillel; we are all incredibly excited to be taking part in this groundbreaking new program and are eager to board the plane and head south. This trip gives us the opportunity to not only serve the Montevideo community, but it also provides us with a time to bond with our W&L peers and develop stronger relationships with those in our collegiate and Jewish community.

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life and the SOREF Initiative has agreed to fund $\frac{1}{3}$ of our trip costs, with W&L Hillel matching that commitment, but we still have \$600-800 to raise per student to make this trip a reality. **If you are interested in helping to fund our efforts, please contact Joan Robins at robinsj@wlu.edu**



Planning for W&L Traveller's trip to Israel scheduled for March 2011. (left to right) Marcia Gordon, domestic tour company director, Joan Robins, Hillel Director, Amir Orly, Israeli guide, and Rob Fure, Director of Special Programs.

Planning W&L Traveller's trip: "Israel: The Heritage and the Hope"

by Joan Robins

In November I traveled with Rob Fure, Director of Special Programs at W&L, to visit Israel in order to help him plan the W&L Traveller's "Israel: The Heritage and the Hope," scheduled for March 12–26, 2011.

This was my second visit to Israel. Because I had visited Israel eight years ago with my family, I didn't expect to feel that initial rush of emotions this time, that immediate connection to the land. And yet this new experience proved to deepen my attachment to the nation, especially to the people of Israel. We met so many bright, lovely individuals along the way, including Niv Goldberg '93 and Hila Yashar '09 and her family. Hila is serving in the military now, and her younger brother will soon serve as well. On our trip in 2011, we are all invited to their home in Modiin for Shabbat dinner!

By following the itinerary of our 2011 trip, we were able to experience so many different aspects of this marvelously diverse land. Through our wonderful guide, Amir Orly, the history of Israel

came to life. A fifth-generation Israeli Jew, Amir engaged us with stories of heroism, many of which he has observed first hand. He also helped us to appreciate some of the brilliant new architecture in Israel and several of the latest archaeological discoveries. Amir also helped me understand the complexity of Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Our trip in March 2011 will focus primarily on the cities of Jerusalem and Haifa, with visits to the Golan Heights, Safed, a kibbutz, Masada, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv included. Among the many personal highlights were hearing from a Palestinian journalist, a walk through the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, and the chance to place a prayer in the cracks in the ancient stones of the Western Wall. Clearly, my affection for Israel deepened during this experience. As soon as we landed at Dulles Airport, I began thinking about returning to Israel. I'm happy that W&L has decided to travel to Israel, and I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to host the trip.



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A First Year Law Student's Experience at W&L

By *Jordan Rothman '12L*

I have always wanted to attend Washington and Lee University. Ever since I started applying to undergraduate institutions, W&L was one of my top choices. The small community, the rich history, and the congenial atmosphere all motivated me to apply to the university. I do, however, come from a family that cherishes a strong connection to the Jewish community. Although I received numerous mailings from W&L's Hillel during my senior year of high school, my parents were skeptical about the Jewish presence in Lexington. They rather urged me to attend Brandeis University, a Jewish-sponsored institution in Waltham, Massachusetts. I truly enjoyed my experience at Brandeis, and cherish the four years I spent there. At Brandeis, I was able to see what immersion in the Jewish community looks like, and got a truly unique college education. Yet, my religious experiences at Washington and Lee have perhaps been more fulfilling, and

this is in large part due to the efforts of W&L's Hillel.

When I decided to go to law school, I knew that I wanted to apply to Washington and Lee. Having connections with other Jews is important to me, and seeing that W&L was building a Hillel house increased my belief that the school had a burgeoning Jewish presence. I eventually applied to W&L and was accepted to the school of law last May. Overall, I have been extremely satisfied with my religious experiences at W&L.

The Hillel here is committed to fulfilling the spiritual needs of Jewish students, as they arrange services and trips to synagogues during Jewish holidays. Furthermore, W&L's Hillel is a great way to get to know other Jews, as there are ample social and cultural events through which I can meet other Jewish community members. Additionally, our Hillel ensures that non-Jewish W&L students can better understand our

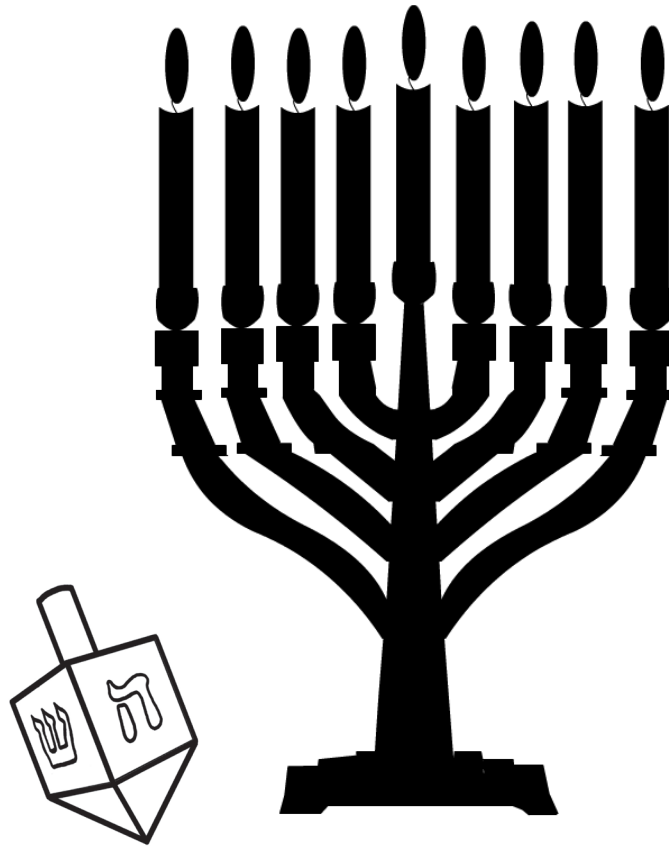
traditions, as its open Shabbat services, Sukkah-building, and other activities enlighten community members of Jewish observances.

I believe that being at this school truly connects students to their Jewish identities in a way not possible at other institutions. At Brandeis, 50% of the students are Jewish, classes are cancelled for all major Jewish holidays, and Jewish identity is all around. However being in the minority at W&L can be beneficial in connecting us to our faith and traditions. Our community is strong and vibrant, yet welcoming and open. W&L's Hillel is a valuable organization, which ensures that every Jewish student has a place to pray and a place in our community. I am very fortunate to be at W&L, not just for the academic enrichment, but because it has reconnected me with my Jewish identity. W&L's Hillel has positively impacted my experience as a student at Washington and Lee, and for this I am very grateful.



Jordan Rothman 2012 L helps build Hillel's sukkah. After construction, students celebrated with the lulav and etrog, followed by "Pizza-in-the-hut."

Happy Chanukah from Washington and Lee Hillel



Blessed are You,
Lord our God,
King of the
universe, Who
sanctified us with
His
commandments
and commanded
us to kindle the
Chanukah lights."

ברוך
אתה יי
אלוהינו
מלך
העולם
אשר
קדשנו
במצוותיו
וציוונו
להדליק נר
של
חנוכה:

baruch atah
adonai eloheinu
melech haolam
asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu l'hadlik
ner shel
chanukah.

מעוז צור ישועתי
לך נאה לשבח.
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*Mao'z Tzur y'shu-ah-ti
L'kha na-eh, li'shaebei-ach
Tikkon beit t'filati
V'sham today n'zabeiach
Mitzar ham'nabeiah
Az egmore b'shir mizmor
Hanukat hamiz'beiach*

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A TORAH FOR WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL

A Torah scroll, rescued from Central Asia during the Holocaust, and restored by Rabbi Bernard Honan of Alabama, has a new home at Washington and Lee Hillel.

According to Rabbi Honan, a migration of Jews from Poland fleeing the Nazi invasion and Holocaust of the Second World War chose to settle in Samarkand of the former Soviet Union. They found welcome in the midst of an established Jewish community and although their cultural ties differed, there was peace between the new comers and the older community. The new comers lived comfortably in Samarkand until a Soviet policy of repression led to a confiscation of the personal possessions of the Jewish community, including the scrolls. The scribes in their midst determined that they would not permit the Soviets to benefit from this confiscation and



Cliff Kern '70 admires W&L's Torah, rescued from the Holocaust.

deliberately defaced the scrolls in such a way that they would be usable but be unattractive.

Our Torah eventually made its way to America, and was restored by Rabbi Honan. The blue stains on the back of the parchment remain as evidence of a community that defied the unjust plundering by the Soviets. The scroll is printed

on ox hide and should endure for at least another 100 years. The lettering is exquisite and indicates the influence of eastern European scribes. The new rollers complete the restoration, and Hillel will purchase a *mantel* (cover), breastplate, and *yad* (pointer) in time for the Hillel House dedication in September, 2010.

The Torah for Hillel was made possible by Dan Einstein '83, Bennett Ross '83, Buddy Kullman '58, and Cliff Kern '70. Kern's dream was to locate a special Torah for W&L,

and when he found this one, he worked tirelessly with Rabbi Honan and Joan Robins to ensure its delivery.

This extraordinary Torah honors Betty Kahn Taylor, who graciously opened her home to many W&L students over the years, and Joe Goldsten, beloved Professor of Economics during the '80s and '90s.



Professor Greta McCaughrin was our featured guest at November's "Very Interesting Professors" series. Seventeen students, including Lizzie Engel '13 (pictured with Professor McCaughrin) attended the lively discussion about Russian Jews.



Ian Shaw '13 calls prospective students to answer questions about Jewish life at W&L during our phon-a-thon.

Birthright Israel

By David Sternlicht '11

This past summer, I spent 10 unforgettable days on a Taglit-Birthright trip to Israel. For those who are unfamiliar with this organization, Birthright Israel is a free trip to Israel funded by Jewish philanthropists and the Israeli government. The organization sponsors thousands of trips to Israel every year. Birthright requires only 3 things of its participants: they must be Jewish, this one must be their first trip to Israel with a peer group, and they must be between ages 18–26. Needless to say, it is very easy for most Jewish students to qualify, and I could not pass up this opportunity.

Once we arrived in Israel, the trip was quite organized. The scheduling allows for no wasted time—we were up before 7am every morning, and usually did not finish our last scheduled event until around 11pm. Because it was so busy, time flew by faster than I could have imagined. We went to Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Tzfat, the Dead Sea, Masada, and Jerusalem in a matter of 10 days, but it was gone in the wink of an eye. It is astounding to have such an experience seem like a blur, because it was filled with so many moving spiritual experiences. At Mount Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem, I had the most emotional experience of my life. There was a funeral taking place while we were getting our tour, and I was truly moved by the pain that the fallen soldier's family was experiencing. It was a contagious emotional atmosphere; I've never seen so many grown men cry, and this was mourning about people they did not know. This experience symbolizes the feeling of brotherhood and inclusion that I felt in Israel. Even though I did not know these soldiers, I

felt more extreme sympathy than I ever have before. Empathetic experiences like this dominated my emotions while in Israel. The sense of belonging that I felt was a remarkable eye-opening experience for me.

Since I left Israel, all I have been able to think about is returning. The fun I had, the friends I made, and the emotional connection I felt made Israel feel like an addictive drug—a desire that I needed to fulfill. And, in the first week of November, my wishes were granted: I was accepted to Tel Aviv University to study abroad from January through May of 2010. My experience in Israel was completely invaluable, and I cannot wait to build on this experience with more freedom to explore the rest of what Israel has to offer.

Editor's note: Four W&L students will be travelling to Israel on the Birthright trip in December.



David Sternlicht '11 travelled to Israel on the Taglit-Birthright program in July.



Hillel's Yom Kippur concluding service (Ne'ilah) was well attended this year. Professor Marks led the service, with assistance by students. Afterwards, the community enjoyed a huge Break-the-Fast.



New students learn about Hillel activities at the Student Activities Fair in September.



The Star



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Hillel Officers 2009-2010



Hillel Officers were elected for 2009-2010.

Co-presidents: Stephanie Dultz '10 and Emily Martin '10

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

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

VP CHAIRS: Shabbat and Holidays: Josh Posner '12

Speakers/Very Interesting Professors: Joe Gannett '12 and Brian Cherry '11

Holocaust Remembrance: Tracy Richardson '11

New Students/Social: Lev Raslin '12

Community Service/Alternative Break: Max Chapnick '13

Advisory Board '09-'10

Prof. Mark Grunewald, *Chair*

Joan Robins, *Director*

Prof. Marcia France

Ian Kaufman

Prof. Barry Kolman

Prof. Simon Levy, *Advisor*

Prof. Richard Marks

Prof. David Novack

Michael Okin, MD '76

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Marc Schewel '69

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Betty Taylor

Mitch Wapner

Hon. Paul Weinstein '55

Eric White '74 (parent)

Stephanie Dultz '10

Emily Martin '10

Dinah Danforth '10

Graham Sheridan '11

Brian Cherry '11

David Sternlicht '11