

# The Star



40) 458-8155 JUNE 2010

#### ALTERNATIVE BREAK TRIP TO URUGUAY



**Editor's note**: During February Break, fourteen students and Director Joan Robins and her husband, Malcolm Cothran, traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay. Hillel's first social justice trip was funded by Hillel International, alumni, faculty, staff, community members, and the students themselves. Here are some comments from students, written in our community journal.

"I loved the work we did and I feel like our presence made a considerable difference in the lives of the children." "...I went to the rabbi's house for (Shabbat) dinner. Even though they spoke mostly in Spanish, a language I'm probably the least proficient in among everyone on this trip, it amazed me how similar the whole experience was to my own Friday night dinners with my family. They sang the same prayers, with mostly the same tunes, and even the conversation, politics, what it's like to be a younger sibling, and even grammar, reminded me of home."

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Reunion 2010: After Hillel's reunion reception, alumni toured the new Hillel House, led by Carole Bailey, Project manager. Pictured left to right: (standing) Arthur Blank '60, Karen Sugar, Paul Sugar '70, Linda Sklar '70, Joan Robins. Sydney Childress, (sitting): Sunny Altman '13, Ron Sklar '70, Don Childress '70

#### HILLEL'S REUNION RECEPTION, HONORING DON CHILDRESS By Sunny Altman '13

During Spring Reunion Weekend, Hillel honored Don Childress, class of 1970, for his generous donation towards the new Washington and Lee Hillel house. Mr. Childress, Rector of the Board of Trustees, made his donation as a challenge fund in October, 2008. Because of his donation, Hillel was able to raise the entire amount still needed for the construction of the Hillel house.

Hillel honored Mr. Childress with a reception in the Elrod Commons living room on Friday of reunion weekend. Present were Joan Robins, Director of W&L Hillel, Mr. Childress and his wife, Sydney, returning Jewish alumni, and several current Jewish students. The students discussed the various aspects of the Hillel house that they were most excited about.

After the reception, several alumni, including Mr. Childress, went on a tour of the partially completed Hillel house. Donning hard hats, they explored the construction zone and learned about the various aspects of the house as both a place for Jewish students and the entire Washington and Lee community.

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER By Joan Robins

I am happy to report that this was a breakthrough year for W&L Hillel. With a new Hillel House under construction on schedule to open in August; increased Jewish enrollment; a first ever Alternative Break Trip; two Passover Seders, and Shabbat get-togethers every Friday, Jewish life at W&L feels fresh and exciting.

Did you know that our Shabbat services are student-led, and this year over 60 people packed into the Alumni House each month for services and (free) dinner? Jewish students often bring their non-Jewish friends, and Jewish faculty and staff attend. We are deeply grateful to W&L for the use of the Alumni House, but the building is no longer large enough to accommodate our growing community. Next year we look forward to holding Shabbat services in our new sanctuary, and being able to sit at a table for Shabbat dinner! Thank you again to all of our generous donors who made the new Hillel House a reality.

Did you know that our Hillel has been designated a "Small and Mighty Campus of Excellence" by Hillel International? This support has made it possible for me to network with colleagues, receive valuable training, and attend conferences. Hillel International provided a



Hillel's Passover Seder was a fun, well-attended event, led by Max Chapnick '13 and Lizzie Engel '13. Pictured left to right: Jared Hester '13, Lizzie Engel '13, and Ali Greenberg '13, participating in "Who Knows One", a game of breathless skill.

grant for our amazing social justice trip to Uruguay, and assures that our students have spots on Birthright Israel trips. Special thanks to Deb Geiger, Assistant Director for the Soref Initiative, for her support of W&L Hillel.

Did you know that we have created an endowment for Hillel programming? Our beautiful new Hillel House is central to an active Hillel program that incorporates our mission and values. However, a building cannot provide the funds required for the future: to hire professional staff, purchase supplies and food for cultural events, or support immersion trips. For more information about Hillel's special endowment, please contact Joan Robins at 540-458-8443 or robinsj@wlu.edu.

I hope you enjoy reading about highlights from winter and spring terms. Recently elected student leaders are already planning new initiatives for next year. For the first time ever, we will hold High Holiday services in Lexington, led by a student rabbi, and funded by the Weinstein Fund. We hope to go to the Gulf Coast for an Alternative Break trip. Kosher food will be served in the Hillel House café, and also during Passover. I am looking forward to what the future has in store for such a dynamic and fun organization.



Senior Officers Stephanie Dultz, Emily Martin, and Dinah Danforth receive certificates for their years of Hillel leadership.

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# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE WEEK By Tracy Richardson '11

This year the Holocaust Remembrance Week Committee planned an excellent week to remember the tragic events of the Holocaust. Starting off the week on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, Michael Marder, a Polish Holocaust survivor, spoke to the campus community about his incredible story of surviving the Holocaust. Mr. Marder, along with his wife and grandson, travelled to Lexington from Florida. A delightful addition to the week, Mr. Marder delivered a moving story with a sense of optimism and strength that was impressive to all who heard him. Several Hillel students were fortunate to join Mr. Marder and his family for dinner and get to know him in a less formal setting.

On Wednesday, working with both the university chorus and university orchestra, the Holocaust Remembrance Committee planned the annual "Vigil Against Oppression." The Vigil was more elaborate than years past, incorporating choral and orchestral pieces with the reading of Holocaust survivor names and

poems that remember those who perished in genocides across the globe. With a somber, yet poignant mood, the Vigil was very effective in conveying the importance of remembering the Holocaust not only for the lives lost during that human tragedy but also for increasing awareness of oppression and human cruelties that still occur today. To conclude the week,

the annual Yom HaShoah service was held in the University Commons. Led by Dean Hank Dobin, students, faculty, and Lexington community members gathered together to light candles and commemorate the dead. Everyone on the Holocaust Remembrance Week committee would like to thank everyone who helped with the week and attended events.



Hannah Schwartzstein '10 played a moving violin solo of selections from Schindler's List during Hillel's Vigil Against Oppression.

# MY FRESHMAN HILLEL EXPERIENCE By Melissa Horadam '13

My name is Melissa Horadam, and I am a Jewish Texan. I lived my whole life in Dallas (born n' raised) and went to the same school for 15 years. I was nervous about moving to a new and distant state and I was petrified about how I was going to make new friends because I hadn't had to do that since I was three years old. I eventually did make friends and I absolutely love Washington and Lee, but it was a rough start and I can attribute a lot of my social success and happiness here to Hillel.

When I arrived on campus and knew absolutely no one, my mother had encouraged me to find people who shared something in common with me. Basically,

she really just pushed me towards the campus Hillel. Don't get me wrong, there are tons of Jews in Texas and I've had lots of Jewish friends but I wasn't sure if I really wanted to join a religious group on campus, and I was especially weary to let it dictate my social life. To appease my mom, I visited the Hillel table at the activities fair and went to the bagel brunch during orientation week. I was immediately impressed and captivated by everyone. It was kind of love at first sight. I have been going to every Hillel event I can since that first bagel brunch. I even went on a community service trip to Uruguay with the Hillel! Some of my best friends I met through Hillel and some

of my happiest times at this school have been Hillel events. I never would have expected for Hillel to be such a central part of my happiness at this school, but it really is.

I am so glad I decided to be a part of W&L Hillel and I am even more excited about my new responsibilities as co- New Students/Social Chair for the upcoming year. I eagerly await the completion of the fabulous Hillel House and I am looking forward to sharing some yummy bagels with my Jewish and non-Jewish friends!

Basically, I've come to love W&L Hillel and everyone who is a part of it. I hope it will always be a part of my life.

Continued from front page

#### "I HAD A GREAT TIME AND WOULD DO IT AGAIN IN A HEARTBEAT."

"It was incredible to meet all the children and learn their stories, hopes and dreams...I can only do so much...One day, I hope this world can be a better place."

"...WE GOT TO SEE THE URUGUAYAN NIGHT LIFE...I HAD A VERY FUN TIME AND DANCED WITH URUGUAYAN GUYS WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO SALSA."

# "...Very inspiring...a Jewish text session about the foundations of Judaism..."

"...I never knew (beef) could taste so good and be so tender. It actually melted in our mouths. We paired our entrees with a nice Uruguayan merlot and finished our meal with very rich desserts..."

"I LOVED EVERY MINUTE. IT WAS A PHENOMENAL AND EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE."

## "...Orthodox Uruguayan Shabbat was a very different experience for me..."

"At the Jewish home for the elderly we played a rockin' game of bingo...We met quite the vivacious Grandma Rosie, who gave us some very sage advice, 'enjoy life' and 'don't marry too young and then marry for love'. She sent us off with a Yiddish song..."

"...IN THE OLD CITY WE SAW A WALL MURAL OF PRIMARY COLORS BY TORRES..."

"...an amazing day at Punta del Este, a beach city two hours from Montevideo..., gorgeous views..."

"ONE OF THE BEST AND MOST REWARDING TRIPS I HAVE EVER BEEN ON."



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SHABBAT AND HOLIDAYS: Max Chapnick '13, Lizzie Engel '13 and Violette Chartock '13

SPEAKERS/VERY INTERESTING PROFESSORS SERIES: Nora Wallenius '13

NEW STUDENTS/SOCIAL: Melissa Horadam'13 and Ali Greenberg'13

COMMUNITY SERVICE/ASB: Jared Hester '13 and Nora Wallenius '13

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE WEEK:
AJ Miller '13
ALUMNI LIAISON: Sunny Altman '13

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