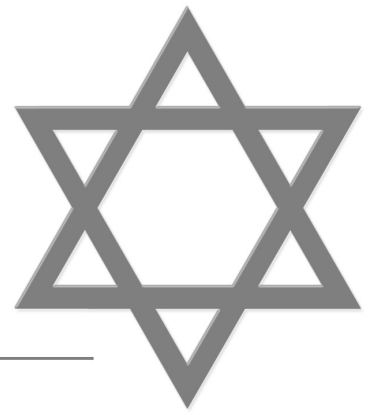




HILLEL

The Star



WASHINGTON AND LEE HILLEL NEWSLETTER

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

hillel.wlu.edu

bschwartz@wlu.edu

(540) 458-8443

DECEMBER 2011

KISLEV 5772

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day...

Genesis 1:1-31

For many, the belief in having everything being created in one day is outrageous. One day out of the creation story can actually be interpreted as one million years or even one hundred million years. Whether we believe that each day was literally one day or a hundred million years, remarkable events happened.

Washington and Lee Hillel is going through the same creation process. The 'first day' Joan Robins, the first Hillel Director, developed a community and built a foundation everyone should be proud of: an active student board, a Hillel advisory board, active and supportive Jewish alumni, and a physical space we can call a 'home away from home'.

Continued on page 2



Simon Levy reading Torah with Josh P., Sammy R., and Ian S.

HIGH HOLIDAYS

*By Sammy Rosier '14
VP Shabbat & Holidays*

For the second year in a row, Hillel hosted High Holiday services in our new Hillel House for students, faculty, and the local community. Over seventy people attended dinners and services held at the Hillel House on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Rabbi Andy Bossov came to Lexington to lead services with the assistance of various students and community members.

The community started off the holidays with a delicious Rosh Hashanah Dinner in Evans Hall. University Dining catered the meal and multiple community members brought side dishes and desserts. The students along with Rabbi Bossov led the blessing before the meal, and the traditional hand washing ceremony took place. After the meal, the Birkat Hamazon

was chanted and everyone walked down the street to the Hillel House together to begin the High Holidays.

Although most services were similar to those conducted last year, this year, for the first time, students and staff members chanted the Torah portions for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur mornings. Other students and community members volunteered to read in English and lead songs for the congregation. Over twenty different students and community members participated in each service.

On Yom Kippur afternoon a few students and community members gathered together for a non-traditional study session about the traditional Yom Kippur haftorah, Jonah. All who came were given parts to act and together they created a trial for Jonah, arguing whether or not he was a good prophet. Hillel Director Brett Schwartz played Jonah while various students were lawyers and witnesses. The group could not reach a decision on Jonah's guilt, but everyone learned a lot about the story of Jonah and why this particular haftorah portion is read on Yom Kippur. To end Yom Kippur, the congregation joined together again for Neilah services and a break-fast meal with a delicious assortment of bagels and spreads provided by the E. Café.

Overall it was wonderful to have the entire community together in one place to celebrate the New Year.

Continued from page 1 (Director's Corner)

It is now the 'second day.' Just as God continued to build from the first day, it is my intention to build upon what Joan has accomplished and created within this community. Washington and Lee Hillel welcomed nearly thirty new Jewish first year students to campus this year, making a total of 80 Jewish students on campus – the largest number in W&L history.

With this 'second day' we, as a community, have goals, aspirations, and vision, and I am excited to be a part of it. Some of those goals include:

- Expanding the scope of programming that Hillel offers on a regular basis to engage a broader range of students.
- Continuing to increase the number of Jewish Students that apply to W&L.

- Developing an innovative leadership track that empowers Jewish student leaders and provides them with the training and resources to create their own campus initiatives and programs.
- Cultivating funding to support essential and innovative programming and support.

I want to get to know each individual in this community – students, alumni, parents, friends, staff and faculty. I want to hear your stories. I would like to see how you envision this 'second day' and I would like us to come together to make this 'second day' an incredible spectacle.



David Fishman introducing Sidney Evans during our first VIP dinner. (Story on page 6)

JLSA – JEWISH LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION UPDATE

By Ariel Brio

President, W&L Jewish Law Student Association

brio.a@law.wlu.edu

The School of Law at W&L has had a Jewish Law Students Association (JLSA) for several years, but this year, our primary goal is to increase our visibility and develop an integrated community within the Law School and with the Hillel House. To do this, we have planned a docket of religious, social, and discussion events and speakers focused at both the Law School and the University communities.

Recently, JLSA partnered with the Middle East and North African Law Society for a dialogue on the Arab Spring. This event, open to the entire University student and faculty community, served as an open and vigorous discourse on topics such as the future of the Middle East and North Africa and the impact of the Arab Spring on United States strategy, on Israel, and on international law. Finally, we served a variety of Middle Eastern foods. We hope to have further such dialogues on both religious and political issues.

In the Spring, JLSA will bring several national-level speakers to campus. Professor Eugene Kontorovich of Northwestern University School of Law, a recognized expert in international law, will speak at the law school on the legal

"By increasing visibility, partnering with other organizations, and integrating ourselves into Hillel's portfolio of initiatives for the Washington and Lee Jewish community, JLSA will support the small, but burgeoning Jewish community at the Law School while simultaneously helping to attract students and applicants."



issues of the Israeli border. Undersecretary Doug Feith, chief policy advisor at the Pentagon from 2001 through 2005, will speak on the Middle East peace process

and weapons of mass destruction under international treaties.

Finally, JLSA will continue to host Shabbat dinners for law students in addition to Seders and dinners for various holidays. These develop the law school Jewish community by recognizing the holidays in an informal environment. JLSA also intends to host a party for the law school community alongside other parties hosted by law school organizations during the Feb Club period.

The JLSA board hopes to look back at this year as transformational. By increasing visibility, partnering with other organizations, and integrating ourselves into Hillel's portfolio of initiatives for the Washington and Lee Jewish community, JLSA will support the small, but burgeoning Jewish community at the Law School while simultaneously helping to attract students and applicants. If you have questions or ideas, please feel free to get in touch with me or anyone else on the JLSA board.

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PARENTS AND FAMILY WEEKEND

*By Josh Josephson '14
& Ben Brams '15*

Most of us had the treat of seeing our families for the first time in a few months during Parents and Family Weekend. At breakfast on Friday morning, the excitement was palpable—everyone seemed in a happier, friendlier mood, and that enthusiasm carried over into the rest of the day as more and more parents and siblings arrived on campus to greet us.

Hillel hosted two events for Parents and Family Weekend: Friday night Shabbat services and dinner and then a bagel brunch on Sunday morning.

On Friday evening, nearly 70 people gathered in our sanctuary to welcome Shabbat. The student-led service was conducted smoothly, and a delicious pasta dinner was served afterward. The conversation was lively, the laughter was infectious, and the warmth inside Hillel was in stark contrast to the cold, miserable weather outside. It was quite clear that everyone had a fantastic time. It was wonderful to see parents and their children praying in the beautiful Hillel House together.

On Sunday, bagels, lox, three different kinds of cream cheese, vegetables, and an endless coffee selection were set out for everyone to enjoy.

Among the Jewish families, several non-Jewish families attended, and we welcomed over 120 people to savor the spread we had prepared. Everyone loved having time to sit and converse with their families within our Hillel House—our “home away from home.”

“Everyone loved having time to sit and converse with their families within our Hillel House—our ‘home away from home.’”



Students roasting smores and having a good time during Sukkot

SMORE'S, STARS & SUKKOT

For Sukkot students and community members created a sukkah in the yard adjacent to the Hillel House, and students were encouraged to eat meals there all week. We celebrated the last night of Sukkot in the best of ways, with an evening of s'mores in the Sukkah. Those intrepid enough to venture to the Hillel House found themselves amidst a sea of smiles and laughter. Everyone congregated around the fire, where flames illuminated both faces and the Sukkah. The marshmallows emerged

from their bags and soon the jockeying for prime roasting positions began. Each person provided the group with the “best way” to toast a marshmallow to that perfect golden brown, until they noticed that theirs had just burst into flames. The combination of graham crackers, chocolate, and burnt marshmallows brought to light perfectly the sense of community and warmth of Sukkot. Or, maybe it was the fire that supplied the warmth. No worries, nothing quite says Sukkot like good food and good company.



Students in front of our Sukkuah

A FALL OVERVIEW

By Joshua Posner '12, W&L Hillel Co-President

If you thought Hillel would simmer down in Year 2 of the Hillel House era, think again. From the very first bite of a fresh sesame bagel, Jewish Generals have been participating in a variety of activities. Our new director, Brett Schwartz, has quickly demonstrated creative and organized leadership, helping Hillel expand its outreach and programs. Our weekly Shabbat gatherings, during which we say prayers over candles, wine, and Challah and enjoy a delicious meal, have never been so widely attended. It is a beautiful sight to see so many Jewish students come together after a busy week to celebrate Shabbat. It is hard to believe that as little as two years ago, we did not even have weekly Shabbat programs! Our High Holiday services for Rosh

Hashanah and Yom Kippur, led by Rabbi Andy Bossov, were reflective and festive, strongly kicking off year 5772. For Sukkot, we meticulously constructed a Sukkah, to stand proudly next our beautiful Hillel House, in which we ate s'mores under the stars. Our Very Important People/Professors Series has also been exciting; attendees talked student affairs with W&L's new Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Sidney Evans, and discussed the economics of education with Economics Professor Tim Diette over dinner. We eagerly anticipate listening to guest speaker Ted Merwin talk about the history of the Jewish deli on November 15, and we're working on completing our very first FYSH (First-Year Students of Hillel) outing. We are

also in the process of planning our next international service-learning trip and new this term, Hillel has been hosting Sunday Night Football at the Hillel House for students to schmooze over pizza and cheer on their favorite teams. (Be sure to follow us on www.facebook.com/wluhillel and www.twitter.com/jewishgenerals for up-to-date Hillel information.) To put it simply, W&L Hillel is quickly evolving. Through innovative programs and events, Hillel is helping to enrich the intellectual, social, and spiritual lives of Jewish students at Washington and Lee. If not now, when?

"Through innovative programs and events, Hillel is helping to enrich the intellectual, social, and spiritual lives of Jewish students at Washington and Lee."

VIP DINNER SERIES – DEAN EVANS & PROFESSOR DIETTE

By Ali Greenberg '13

The first semester has been packed with programming for Washington and Lee Hillel, and while most food-related programs are popular (naturally), one of our favorite events is the monthly Very Interesting Professor (VIP) Dinners.

We kicked off this year's VIP series with a delicious catered dinner at the Hillel House. About 15 students came to dine with our guest, the new Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Sidney Evans. Dean Evans took questions about the current state of student life as well as future plans for the school and campus.

Our second VIP Dinner was held in town at The Sheridan Livery, with our guest Professor Tim Diette of the Economics Department. Professor Diette has been a member of the Washington and Lee University faculty since 2004. Several of the students in attendance had taken one of Professor Diette's classes, and some had even



VIP dinner with everyone enjoying the conversation

worked with him on research during the summer. The food was wonderful, and we learned a lot about Professor Diette's research on education and poverty, connecting unemployment and mental health, traumas and mental health, incentives for giving to nonprofits, and immigrant student effects on native student test scores.

These dinners are an opportunity for the students to sit down to a nice meal with various faculty members and learn a little more about each special guest's job, research, and interests. VIP Dinners are a great chance to break from the routine of our Dining Hall, and it is another way to form relationships and mentorships that can extend beyond the classroom.

NEW FYSH IN THE POND

Lauren Michnick '14, VP of New Membership, VP of Social Events

This year at Washington and Lee University's Hillel, we have implemented a new program called FYSH, for First-Year Students at Hillel. FYSH was started as a way to help first-year students adjust to college life. Coming into a new environment is always hard, especially if it is the first time away from home, and FYSH hopes to make this adjustment for new students as smooth as possible by giving them a sense of belonging within our Jewish organization.

Hillel consists of students from many different backgrounds and many different levels of Jewish involvement and traditions. For me personally, the hardest part of adjusting to Washington and Lee was finding my social niche, but after attending my first Hillel event, I immediately felt extremely welcomed and comfortable. This is our goal for all future incoming Jewish first years. There are many students from multiple sororities, fraternities, sports teams, and clubs that



Lev R. hanging up the Hillel sign on the Sukkah

are here to help the first years make the transition into their new home. Hillel is the place to go to simply be yourself and feel at ease. The best thing about Hillel is that you can create the experience that you want. Because there are so many activities that take place, students can choose to be as involved as they please.

We recently selected a FYSH board so that first years could map out

their own activities for Hillel and get involved. The new board consists of a president, vice president, two social chairs, two holiday chairs, and as a fitness instructor. FYSH enables first-year students to make the programs they want to see happen at Hillel. With many ideas in the works for future events, we expect to have a great rest of the year!

JEWISH CULTURE PROGRAMMING IS CONTINUING TO GROW

By Jared Hester '13

In the middle of October, the Hillel House saw two wonderful celebrations of the vibrancy and magnificence of Jewish culture. On Wednesday, the sanctuary was opened and the Torah was displayed to the public in honor of Simchat Torah.

For the holiday, students snacked on bagels and cream cheese, listened to Jewish music (including a medley of hits by the Maccabeats), and learned to write their names in Hebrew with the help of instructors Professor Richard Marks, Ian Shaw '13, Rimona Cartun '13, and Samantha Rosier '14. Overall, the day was a joyous success.



Students enjoying themselves during Simchat Torah

Two days later the Hillel House was filled with the aromas of home cooked food as Hillel hosted its first ever potluck Shabbat Shalom. Students from every year came together in the Hillel Community Kitchen to prepare a bountiful feast for all to share.

Menu items included Sunny Altman '14 and Kathryn Marsh-Soloway's '13 rockin' latkes, Josh Josephson's '14 sublime schnitzel, Lizzie Engel's '13 killer kugel, Marissa Gubler's '15 heavenly hummus, Samantha Rosier '14 and Lauren Michnick's '14 delectable desserts, Mariel Pearl's '15 hearty haroset, and Jared Hester's '13 scintillating

smorgasbord of tantalizing tabouleh, riveting roasted vegetable couscous, and down-right delicious dried fruit salad.

We are excited about planning future Jewish culture programming for the entire community to enjoy.



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Howard Rosenbloom '61

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Betty Taylor

Mitch Wapner

Hon Paul Weinstein '55

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