

JUUF NEWS

Mensch's Guide

to *Campus* Activism



- Meet the Editors
- Stand Up: Jewish Activism
- Seek Peace: Israel Advocacy
- Reach Out: Intergroup Relations
- Give Back: Philanthropy and Volunteering
- Live Jewish: Campus Life

RECIPE FOR A MENSCH'S GUIDE TO CAMPUS ACTIVISM

- 1 Orthodox Jewish Student
- 1 Conservative Jewish Student
- 1 Reform Jewish Student
- 3 Cubicles (without windows)
- 27 Lewis Summer Interns

Dress your college students in business casual clothing and drop them into the windowless cubicles at the Jewish Federation building at 30 S. Wells St. Sprinkle them liberally with other Lewis Summer Interns.

Dearest Readers:

This isn't a cookbook. But you could say we followed a recipe to publish this magazine.

The magazine is divided into sections that address Activism, Intergroup Relations, Israel, Philanthropy, and Jewish Life. We designed the publication to help college students become active on campus and connect their Judaism to worldly issues.

Take this magazine to college and use it as a resource to help you discover what you can accomplish outside of the classroom. Maybe you would like to start an interfaith dorm, plan a Black-Jewish seder, or make your campus more environmentally friendly.

Good luck!

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P.S. If you're not going to college, please give this to someone who is.

Recipe addendum

- 1 Executive Editor

Leave him in his office, humor him with occasional visits, show him the copy, but make sure he lets the interns do their thing.

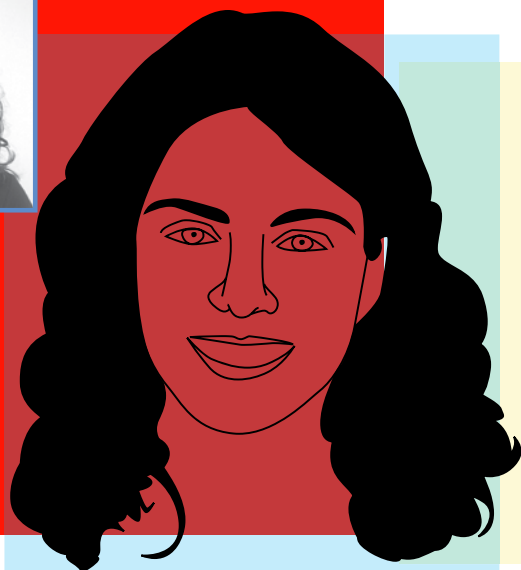
The idea for the Mensch's Guide struck me while serving on an advisory board for Schmooze, a terrifically interesting magazine produced by students at Northwestern University through the auspices of the Louis & Saerree Fiedler Hillel. Might such talent and energy be channeled to produce a small publication about activism on campus?

Although JUF News typically hires one intern during the summer, and occasionally hires two interns, the idea to hire three students must have struck during a fit of mania. "Oh my God," I gasped in a fit of panic. "What am I going to do with those three? And two of them are named Lauren! What was I thinking!"

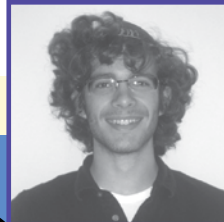
As it happened, Adam, Lauren, and Lauren clicked. And clacked. And clicked some more. They turned the fifth floor of 30 South Wells Street on its head as they schmoozed, brainstormed, researched, and wrote. A funnier, and more compatible group of people I'd never met.

Works for me, this Mensch's Guide. I hope it works for you.

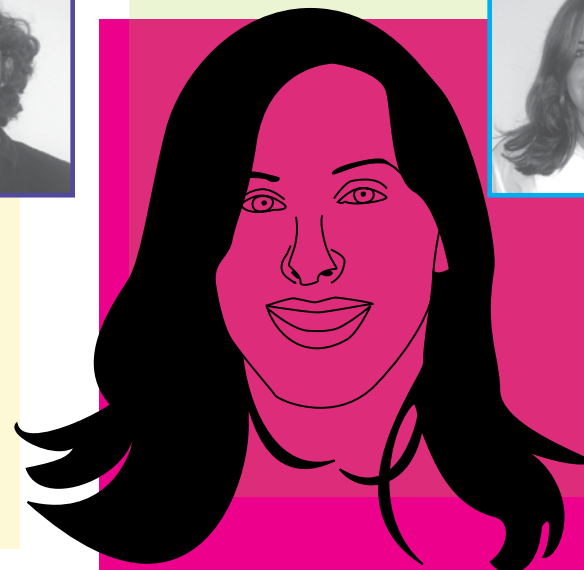
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LAUREN MANGURTEN is a News-Editorial major and an English minor at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. She was a staff writer at the Daily Illini during her sophomore year, and she is working as a copy editor her junior year. Lauren is an active member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority, where she wrote the newsletter for fall 2006. In her free time, she enjoys reading and playing tennis. She is a little obsessed with "Gilmore Girls."



ADAM PALMER is a sophomore at the University of Chicago. His major and minor are officially undecided, but unofficially awesome. If you ever see him around, you should ask him to teach you how to juggle and unicycle at the same time (it's all in the hips). Adam enjoys jogging at night and brushing his teeth by holding the toothbrush still and moving his head really fast.



LAUREN LEVY is a junior at Northwestern University. She is majoring in journalism and minoring in Spanish. When she is not writing articles for the Daily Northwestern and JUF News, she can be spotted playing Frisbee, guitar, watching movies, eating or hanging out with her friends. She enjoys listening to music and has a rather random obsession with superheroes. In fact, she wishes she was one, and most of her friends and family are well aware of it.

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COLLEGE STUDENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TAKE A STAND ON DARFUR



By LAUREN LEVY

While American students go about their lives, alarming numbers of their African counterparts are murdered one by one.

The phrase “Never Again” resonates in many Jews’ minds as a new generation falls victim to genocide. College students across the nation are joining the effort to stop the Sudan government from killing thousands of innocent civilians in Darfur.

“I think it has become our generation’s Vietnam,” said Northwestern junior Alyssa Urish. “Darfur is very far away but also close to home. We have to do something about it because we can’t just stand around and not do anything.”

Emma Kornfeld, a junior at Washington University in St. Louis, joined the Darfur Action Coalition (DAC) on her campus in the second semester of her sophomore year. She said that students should take issue with what they care about.

“It’s a tragedy that it’s even taking place,” Kornfeld said. “Obviously I personally can’t end the genocide, but there is an avenue in which I can aid the crisis, and that’s why I’m involved.”

The DAC is under the umbrella of Students Taking Action Now Darfur, or STAND. According to the STAND Web site, more than 600 college, university and high school chapters have started across the U.S. and around the world. A small group of students at Georgetown University started the first one. One of the students was Ben Bixby, who was also the president of Georgetown’s Jewish Students Association.

Bixby said he realized that if students from all over the country joined STAND, it would be more effective. Eventually, chapters formed at other schools, he said.

“Jewish student associations and Hillels played a large part in STAND not because we [as Jews] are better or more attentive, but many Jewish students have the direct family connection to previous genocides,” Bixby said. “The Jewish students intuitively knew they had to do something, certainly from the very beginning.”

Some Jews might not protest the occurrences in Darfur because it doesn’t involve Jewish people, Urish said. However, she added that it is every Jew’s responsibility to care for humanity and to make the world better for future generations.

“There is so much poverty around us, but there is a difference between poverty and people being systematically killed by their government,” Urish said. “I believe everyone has a right to not fear their government, and it makes me so sad that these people have to flee their homes and are forced to run away.”

Bixby said that after growing up with a Holocaust education, it was easy for him to make the connection to the victims in Darfur who were killed just for being who they are.

“Individuals are targeted, abused and murdered for no other reason,” Bixby said. “It relates to one of the most astounding things about the Holocaust, and that was how little the world did. Everybody knew for years what was happening to the Jews in Germany and Europe.”

Kornfeld said she is involved with the effort because she believes that it pertains to her Judaism and to her humanity. The phrase “Never Again,” which originated from the Holocaust, is just a mantra until people start acting on it, she said.

“Through Darfur, how will history judge us?” Kornfeld asked. “How will my children and my children’s children judge me? My grandchildren will be learning about this genocide for years and they’ll ask me, ‘What were you doing about

it?’ and ‘Did you care?’”

Northwestern junior Sam Schiller is active in the Northwestern

University Darfur Action Coalition (NUDAC). He said that the genocide affects him because as a Jew, the terrors of genocide have been ingrained in him from a young age.

“I think that as the world expands, the failure of our world to prevent harm shouldn’t be taken lightly,” Schiller said. “We live in a very cynical world, but we can win even the biggest battles.”

Schiller said that for him, Judaism is a rich language of social justice issues and understanding, welcoming the stranger and tikkun olam – repairing the world.

“The core values of Judaism like reaching out to those that aren’t directly connected to us and seeing how we could help them, that is a dialogue we can use,” Schiller said.

As part of DAC, Kornfeld participated in the paper plate campaign in which students wrote letters on plates voicing their opinions to their senators.

“During the 1960s in America there existed an ‘I could change the world’ mentality, and I feel like that attitude is not necessarily as ubiquitous as it was back then when people don’t necessarily identify with how they can reach tangible change,” Kornfeld said. “However, one student can gather with other students and change things...If you can’t solve

the overwhelming problem, you can help the symptoms.”

At Northwestern, Urish signed petitions, gave money to the cause and participated in the Chicago rally, she said.

“I’ve been to Chicago before, but to see a huge student body come together with such passion for a cause while yelling and screaming, it was just very powerful for me to know what we were doing,” Urish said.

When Bixby and his peers started STAND in 2004, they imagined it would only last six months because they thought the violence would eventually stop, he said. Although Bixby is disappointed that STAND still needs to exist, he is proud that STAND continues to be loud about Darfur.

“In 2004, only a small group of people could probably point to Darfur on the map, but that’s not the case anymore,” Bixby said. “If genocide continues to take place in Sudan and these people are not vanishing quietly into the night, we are making sure that people hear about it.”

As for students who are interested in being activists for Darfur on their campuses, Schiller suggests that they look for non-traditional ways to make people aware of the issue.

“Your creativity is open and there are so many different avenues to take,” Schiller said. “You shouldn’t limit yourself to the kind of person you see yourself as ...

The opportunities are endless.” *

“Darfur is very far away but also close to home. We have to do something about it because we can’t just stand around and not do anything.”

Northwestern University student Sam Schiller protests the genocide in Darfur.



IMMIGRATION ISSUE SPARKS ACTIVIST PASSION



By LAUREN LEVY

Although the current immigration debate involves mostly Hispanics, American Jews can easily relate. Jews throughout the country are supporting or helping immigrants, even if they cross the border illegally. Some feel compassion for the immigrants because of the historical parallels between Hispanic and Jewish immigrants in America.

The Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA), which is based in California, is an advocacy organization that "seeks to assert an authentic progressive Jewish presence in the campaigns for social justice," according to its Web site. To the PJA, social justice includes immigrant rights.

"The Jewish community is heir to and bearer of an immigrant tradition. Jews have been a diasporic people for almost 2000 years," the Web site said. "Our tradition informs our vision of what constitutes a just and compassionate America, one that reflects the best of what we are and what we can be as a country."

Rachel Biale, the Bay Area regional director of

PJA, said she identifies with another statement in PJA's immigration policy, "Our [Jewish] history commands us to recognize the humanity of migrants and the underlying reason for their migration."

Biale said that Jewish history has been predominantly an immigrant history forged by the Diaspora. The issue of immigration hits close to home for Biale, who is an immigrant herself. Additionally, her parents were illegal immigrants to Palestine and were expelled.

"The historical legacy of being immigrants should weigh very heavily on our shoulders," Biale said. "It starts as early as the biblical stories when we first entered the land of Canaan, then Egypt and back to the promised land."

Northern California is home to many immigrants from many different countries, Biale said. The Jewish community, for example, has an established legacy in the Bay Area. However, during California's gold rush, the Jews didn't defend the poorly treated Chinese immigrants like they are now defending the Hispanics, Biale said.

"This should weigh on our consciences, and we should correct them by trying to defend the rights of today's immigrants," Biale said. "We were once immigrants, and we know what it's like."

Jews migrated for various economic and political reasons. The history of U.S. Jewish immigration dates back to colonial years.

During colonization, the number of Jewish immigrants in America was low, according to the American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF) Web site. The first recorded Jewish immigrant came to America about 50 years after the founding of Jamestown. By the time of the American Revolution, the size of the Jewish population in America had not grown much. In 1789, Jewish immigrants had established communities in only five cities: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Charleston and Newport.

The majority of immigrants in the first half of the 19th century were German, both Jewish and non-Jewish, the website said. The initial group came because of scarcity of land, rural poverty and government restrictions in Germany. A second wave of older,

more educated Jews came after the failed German revolution in 1848. The German Jews helped develop the Midwest.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a wave of Jews fleeing the pogroms in Russia and Poland immigrated to America. Many of these immigrants were merchants, shopkeepers, craftsmen and professionals.

The post-WWII era saw an influx of Jewish Holocaust survivors after the Roosevelt Administration lifted restrictions on immigration in 1944.

"There seems to be a constant fear of new immigrants throughout the history of this country and I can't explain it. It baffles me," said Northwestern junior Benjamin Weiss. "Some of my family members were illegal immigrants back in the day. Many years ago some of my now deceased relatives brought other family members from Europe across

the Canada/U.S. border in the trunk of a car." Jewish college students around the country are taking an active role in the current immigration debate. Recent Wesleyan graduate Aaron Sussman helped to start Incite Magazine with two other students in 2006. According to its Website, Incite Magazine is an online progressive magazine that features political commentary on current issues like immigrant rights.

Sussman said that as a Jew, he understands why it's important to fight for immigrant rights.

"To think about [immigration] in a perspective from one's own personal history, whether Jewish or anything else, makes people aware that this is a very large issue and any attempt to simplify it is very problematic," Sussman said.

Although Sussman said he doesn't think there is any clear-cut solution to the immigration debate, he believes it is important to guarantee certain civil rights and liberties.

"The hope is that people would be concerned about the welfare of others," Sussman said. "Everyone has a stake in showing a basic level of human dignity...but unfortunately that gets overlooked by people trying to benefit economically or politically, which distracts people from what should be a priority of human rights."

There is also no reason why the Jewish people should be more involved in the immigration debate than other ethnic and religious groups because human dignity is valued in all of them, Sussman said.

For students who want to be active in the current immigration debate, Biale suggests to look in their own Jewish communities. Students can talk to people in local agencies or write to congress representatives.

"I think that [the immigration debate] has mobilized a large number of diverse groups, especially young people," Sussman said. "A lot of people are realizing that this is affecting people they know." ✽

"The historical legacy of being immigrants should weigh very heavily on our shoulders"

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STUDENT GROUPS COUNTER IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM



By LAUREN MANGURTEN

As the threat of a nuclear Iran comes to the forefront for Israel advocacy groups, students across the nation join the movement to halt Iran's progress.

Steven Dishler, director of Israel and International Affairs at the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) explained that Iran wants hegemony over the Persian Gulf region, and a nuclear program could give Iran that power. Israel advocacy groups at colleges and at large see this as a substantial threat, and many group leaders are working to spread awareness and lobby their congressional representatives to implement effective policies.

Dishler said Iran has already threatened to destroy Israel.

"Every country is concerned that gaining nuclear capacity is not only a threat to Israel but is a destabilizing factor in the region," he said

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT) states that any state that signed it has a right to develop civil nuclear energy, but the industry and plants need to be transparent, Dishler said. Iran has been hiding part of their nuclear program for the past 22 years, he added.

"The fact that they are hiding part of their program, there's a reason for it," Dishler said.

He said Iran has been a long-time supporter of Hezbollah, the Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

Nuclear power in the hands of the Iranian regime is especially dangerous because we cannot rely on religious fanatics to act responsibly, he said.

The human rights violations in Iran are some of the worst, Dishler said. Amnesty International has reported Iran's abuse of children. Iran is one of the few countries with capital punishment for children. Iran is also one of the worst abusers of women and other minorities, he said.

Dishler said the JCRC is calling for stronger economic measures to be taken against Iran's nuclear program. He said the JCRC worked with state legislators to pass a bill that called for direct divestment from companies doing business with the weapons industries in Iran.

"Student groups can also come out in favor of economic sanctions against Iran so other actions don't have to be taken," he said.

Some Israel advocacy groups on college campuses have taken measures to lobby their congressional representatives, as well as other measures to spread awareness.

Nuclear power in the hands of the Iranian regime is especially dangerous because we cannot rely on religious fanatics to act responsibly.

Asher Tanenbaum, a senior at Brandeis and president of the Brandeis Israel Public Affairs Committee (BIPAC) said 50 Brandeis students went to Washington D.C. to lobby their congressmen. He said the group thinks that going to D.C. is more effective than holding protests.

Sam Kleiner, a junior at Northwestern University and former co-president of Students for Israel, said Students for Israel has also done some congressional lobbying and that it is the most important thing people can do to help.

"It's not just to lobby these members of congress once, but to create a continuous relationship with these congressmen to ensure that this issue stays at the forefront of congressional agenda," Kleiner said.

The Pro-Israel Terrapin Alliance (PITA) at the University of Maryland (U of M) has also been active in lobbying, said Omri Arens, a junior at U of M and president of the PITA. This was one activity of many during the "Iran Awareness Week" the group held.

He said the group planned the week to spread awareness about the Iran nuclear program. The week also included cultural events through discussions and films.

The group asked for the input of the Iranian Students' Foundation on campus, Arens said.

"We felt it was important to make sure we had their support before going ahead with some kind of political agenda," he said.

Arens said PITA wanted to emphasize that they were not anti-Iran but instead against the current Iranian regime.

"It was very important for us to make sure we had their consent," he said. "We didn't want to offend them. We didn't want them to take it the wrong way what we were doing ... they were willing to work with us."

Arens and Kleiner both said the groups on their campuses brought in professors and speakers with political ties to lecture on Iran's nuclear program.

"Lectures are important when they operate in a larger framework for Israel advocacy on campus," Kleiner said.

Lectures are a way to reach a large group of students and to help them conceptualize Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship, he said.

Kleiner described the effect of a lecture as a ripple effect. He said a couple of students became involved in Israel advocacy after attending one of the lectures, and for every student who gets involved, another 100 or 200 have a conversation about the event with their parents.

Kleiner emphasized the need to spread awareness and involve as many people as possible in the Israel advocacy movement.

Not all of the members of Students for Israel at Northwestern are Jewish, he said. In fact, key leaders in the group are not Jewish. He added that this is the case for Israel advocacy groups at other colleges as well.

"We think it is important to engage student leaders about the U.S.-Israel relationship because in thirty or forty years those will be the leaders deciding the nature of the U.S.-Israel relationship," Kleiner said.

Arens said that planning the "Israel Awareness Week" at U of M in coordination with the Iranian Students' Foundation made the event significant. Other students see the views of PITA in more of an unbiased way when they see Jewish and Iranian students working together.

"We took advantage of our diverse campus and made the most of it," Arens said. "Don't be afraid to reach out to different groups and work it out with them, as well." *



Pro-Israel students meet with Congressman Mark Kirk in Washington.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM GOES HAND IN HAND WITH JEWISH ACTIVISM



By ADAM PALMER

College is the first time that many people find themselves in a position to vote for elected officials. Jewish students are discovering that political activism is an important part of being a Jew in America.

Jake Velleman said he was not involved in politics in high school, but got involved as soon as he arrived on campus. On his second day at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin, he saw a flyer advertising internships for the Kerry-Edwards campaign.

He wanted to get involved in the election, so Velleman called the number on the flyer. Just one week later he was setting up a new chapter of College Democrats and hosting John Edwards.

After his freshman year, Velleman transferred to the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, where he continued his political activism. During his sophomore year, he went on an AIPAC-led birthright Israel trip.

"That was pretty life changing," Velleman said of the Israel experience. "I got more religiously active and I got very excited about doing pro-Israel work."

After that trip, he did more work with AIPAC, and is currently interning at their office in Washington D.C. He is also working for the Obama campaign, he said.

University of Maryland junior Mike Rosen agreed that Israel is important to Jewish political activists, but he said Jewish students should be involved in every stream of politics.

"We have a large percentage of Jews going to college and going into the professional world and our opinions vary," Rosen said. "It's important for Jews not to get stereotyped into one group."

Along those lines, Rosen is interested not only in U.S.-Israel relations, but also in the politics surrounding stem cell research, he said.

Rosen said the way some college students approach politics bothers him.

"I think that a lot of college students say, 'We don't like George Bush,' 'We don't like this,' 'We don't like that,' and most of them don't do anything," Rosen said. "What's the point of even bashing the person if you don't act on your opinion?"

That's why Rosen worked two-and-a-half days out of the week at a senator's office in Washington D.C. during his sophomore year. This summer,

he had a full-time internship at another senator's office, he said.

Political activism is important because political issues can

affect each person at the individual level, said Syracuse University sophomore Marshall Spevak.

"Most of the issues that are going on right now are going to affect people when they're out of college: social security, the war in Iraq, health care, students' loans," Spevak said. "It's important to be politically active because the things that are going on in Washington right now, in the long run, are going to affect you."

Spevak is involved in politics through a number of organizations, including College Democrats, Young Democrats of America (YDA), and the Young Democrats of America Jewish Caucus (YDAJC). He is also director of Students for Barack Obama at Syracuse.

Stephanie Hausner is vice chair of Jewish Outreach for YDAJC, and is also Campus and Programs coordinator for Israel Advocacy Initiative at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. In both positions, she works extensively with politically-involved college students.

She stressed the importance of young people, especially college students, being active in the political process.

"Students do vote, and they do have a voice," she said. "The more students who speak up, the larger that voice will be and the more impact it will have."

And there is even more motivation for Jewish college students to get involved in

"It's important to be politically active because the things that are going on in Washington right now, in the long run, are going to affect you."

"The ideas of social justice and tikkun olam and helping others are major tenets of our religion."

Jake Velleman is working on the campaign of Sen. Barack Obama.



politics, Hausner said.

"It's kind of inherent in Judaism that Jews are active people. The ideas of social justice and tikkun olam and helping others are major tenets of our religion," she said. "Politics is a major avenue where people can fulfill those."

Aaron Keyak, who just graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, added to Hausner's reasons for Jews to get involved.

"If we look at Jewish history, too often we see that Jews became marginalized by the society that they were involved in," he said. "As Jews get more involved, we make sure that we as a community are involved in the government and that the issues that are important to us get paid attention to."

It's especially important for college students to be politically active, Keyak said.

"It's an age group that's underrepresented to the elected officials," Keyak said of college-age voters. He also worried that students are not always committed to being active.

"Too often, college students who are at all interested in politics might go out for a day, but that's not enough," Keyak said. "You have to stay there, you have to continually work on campaigns and get your voice heard."

Students who are interested in being politically active should sign up for any political group

as soon as they get to campus, Keyak said. It does not have to be a partisan group like the College Democrats or

College Republicans, he said. It can be any group that does political work.

"What's most important is to do stuff that you believe in; that's the kind of stuff that you're really going to succeed in," Keyak said. "Figure out what you like to do, what you feel most passionately about politically, and just go for it." *

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MANY TOURS, ONE HOMELAND



By LAUREN MANGURTEN Liz Friedman, a sophomore at Tufts

University, went on a Chicago Community Project/Shorashim High School Summer Program in the summer of 2006.

According to its Website (www.shorashim.org), Shorashim is a non-profit organization committed to bringing North American and Israeli Jews together.

Friedman attended the trip for high school students. She said half of the participants on the trip were from Chicago and the other half were from Kiryat Gat, Israel. Many of the American participants were going to be seniors in high school, and the Israeli participants were preparing to enter the army.

She said the Americans traveled to Poland for five days to tour the concentration camps. They then flew to Israel, where the Israeli group members greeted them with singing and dancing.

When Friedman arrived in Israel, she saw it as a place very alive with Jewish culture.

"It was just the most amazing feeling coming from the places of total death and destruction," she said.

The group toured Israel for about four-and-a-half weeks, she said.

Friedman was in Israel at the beginning of the war against Hezbollah. She said her group was near the border of Lebanon, and they heard the first machine guns and bombs of the war.

Many tour groups left Israel, but hers decided to stay, Friedman said. The group altered their itinerary and traveled south. The American participants were stunned by the onset of the war, but violence was not out of the ordinary for the Israelis, Friedman said. Friedman said she was completely happy with her trip.

"I really felt that Israel was a second home for me," she said. "I just felt so much more spiritual as well, especially on Shabbat."

The American participants each went home with an Israeli participant for a Shabbat and the rest of the weekend. Being Jewish gave her a strong link to the family she stayed with for Shabbat, she said.

Friedman said she was the only Jewish person in her high school of 800 in Naperville, Ill., where there were strong anti-Zionist and anti-Israel sentiments.

Experiencing Israel with her Jewish peers led her to realize "what an important thing [Israel] is for us to have and keep safe and cherish," she said.

It is important for other young adults to go on an Israel trip, Friedman said.

"Find a trip that's right for you," she said. "If you only want to go for a week, go for a week, if you want to go for longer, go for longer."

Many students travel to Israel on free, 10-day *Taglit-birthright israel* trips while in college. According to JUF, the founders began the program to bring young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 to Israel to diminish the growing gap between Israeli Jews and Jews from other parts of the world. The trip is funded by the Israeli government, local Jewish communities (North American Jewish federations through the United Jewish Communities, Keren Hayesod, and the Jewish Agency for Israel) and private philanthropists through the *birthright israel* Foundation.

Jesse Menachem, a senior at Indiana University went on a birthright trip in the winter of 2006. Menachem said the trip exceeded his expectations. He had fun with the people he met and enjoyed touring the country.

His dad goes to Israel on business trips occasionally, and was in Israel on a business trip during Menachem's birthright trip, Menachem said. His father was able to meet up with him in

"I would encourage all Jews to go," Spett said. "I think it's a great opportunity ... They should just go with an open mind and experience as much as they can."

Jerusalem at the Western Wall, enhancing the significance of being at the Western Wall for the first time.

"Other than that, just from growing up and learning about Israel, I knew most of the sights, vaguely," Menachem said. "But it definitely helped to learn more about them with our tour guide."

After touring during the days, the group had the opportunity to visit bars and clubs at night.

There were about seven Israeli soldiers who joined the group half way through the trip and stayed for the remainder of the trip, Menachem said.

"It was just a great experience conversing with them," Menachem said.

Menachem said he could have signed up for a trip with many other students at his school, but he wanted to meet new people.

There were students on his trip from all over the country, and he enjoyed meeting people with different opinions and religious beliefs, he said.

"I don't think it's really necessary to go with someone you know well," Menachem said. "Just meeting new people is a great way to go about it."

On the other hand, some students prefer to travel with others from their communities.



Participants on a birthright israel trip enjoy a jaunt in the desert.

The Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago gives Shorashim additional funds to run Chicago community trips, said Paula Harris, assistant vice president of Interdepartmental Projects. The Chicago trips accommodate students from the area and demonstrate the Chicago Jewish community connections in Israel.

David Spett, a senior at Northwestern University, decided to go on a birthright trip with a number of students from his school.

"I liked having time to get to know other Northwestern students," Spett said.

He said he knew two or three

participants going into the trip, and the trip gave him the opportunity to make friends he could stay in touch with easily when he returned to campus.

Spett said the provider of his trip was Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Life. Hillel campus staff members were the American trip leaders for the group.

"I learned a little bit about the country and what it's like and the things to see and do there," Spett said. "I learned a little about the people and the culture that you can't get from reading a book or newspaper."

He learned that Israelis do not let violence and terrorism govern their lives, he said. Spett also said the speakers and tour guide gave him a better understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Spett said he roomed with an Israeli soldier, and conversing with the soldiers helped him learn about Israel on a personal level, in a way he could not from the speakers and tour guides.

"I would encourage all Jews to go," Spett said. "I think it's a great opportunity ... They should just go with an open mind and experience as much as they can." *

ISRAEL ADVOCACY IS THE GOAL OF COLLEGE CLUBS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



By ADAM PALMER

Pro-Israel groups on college campuses approach Israel advocacy from many different perspectives.

“Advocacy can come in unexpected forms,” said Sarah Krupa, an Israel Initiative associate at the Jewish United

Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (JUF/JF). “Everything we do – whether it’s hosting a speaker, a movie night or putting together a regional conference – is advocacy in that it highlights some part of Israel.”

Israel Initiative—a partnership of Jewish United Fund’s Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) and The Hillels of Illinois—serves many campuses around Illinois and Wisconsin. The program aims to motivate and educate college students to promote support for Israel on campus and beyond.

The Israel Intern program, which is part of Israel Initiative, is a paid internship in which a student organizes events, plans advocacy programs and raises general awareness of Israel in accordance to what he or she feels would be best received on campus.

“The [Israel Intern] program is multifaceted and is going to look different on each campus,” said Marla Baker, Hillel Director at University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC). “The programs can be political, cultural, advocacy training or education, and they can be from any Israel perspective. Through this program, our

students have the backing of a very sophisticated organization that makes them able to churn out some very meaningful programs.”

Baker said that one of UIC’s recent programs was a lecture series on Israel’s neighbors, spurred by the Israel Intern’s assessment that many students on campus were informed about Israel but wanted to become more knowledgeable about other dynamics in the Middle East.

“There were about four lectures organized, and experts on Israel’s neighbors came in to speak about each country,” Baker stated. “It gave a broad range of students an opportunity to really learn about the Middle East from a different perspective than they had in the past.”

For Deena Moskowitz, a junior at Washington University in St. Louis (Wash U.), “Israel advocacy means falafel.” As president of Wash U Students for Israel (WSI), she puts this support for Israel’s culture into practice. At IFest, a WSI-sponsored celebration of Israel, students enjoyed a drum circle, basic lessons in the Israeli martial art of krav maga, and, of course, enough free falafel for 800 people.

“At the college level, you have a lot of people from different areas of the U.S. and the world,” Moskowitz said. “Some of them have never heard about Israel.”

That’s why WSI strives not only to promote Israel, but also to educate students about the country, she says.

Moskowitz said there is little organized opposition to Israel at Wash U. The situation is different

for Steven Slivnick, president of IlliniPAC at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, who also served as a Lewis Summer Intern with JCRC in 2007. On his campus, Palestinian activists have gone so far as to dress as Israeli soldiers and act out a scene in which they beat a ‘Palestinian.’

Slivnick recognizes that such demonstrations can damage Israel’s image, but he stresses that IlliniPAC is “positive and pro-active, not negative and reactionary.”

The group brings in speakers, sponsors cultural events, and publishes a weekly newsletter, “Newsrael,” regardless of anti-Israel activity on campus. At the same time, “We try to defend Israel when it needs defending,” Slivnick says.

An organization at Columbia University, Garin Lavi, takes Israel advocacy several steps further by staging small events and building a support network for students who plan not only to change Israel, but to move there.

Alexandra Polsky, co-president of Garin Lavi, says that four or five students are certain of their plans to make aliyah, and about fifteen are strongly considering the move. Polsky says that being a member of Garin Lavi gives her a special perspective on Israel advocacy.

“I think a criticism that we have of a lot of Israel advocacy is that they just try to paint Israel as a good picture and gloss over things that I don’t think are okay,” she said. “Anti-Israel people see right through that, and it only weakens us.” *

STUDENTS MUST TAKE NOTE OF ISRAEL’S PORTRAYAL IN COLLEGE MEDIA



By LAUREN LEVY

Some college students have no reservations about bashing Israel.

Israel’s critics have used their First Amendment rights for years, especially when it comes to expressing opinions in a college newspaper. The Daily Illini at the University of Illinois

at Urbana-Champaign (U of I) has had to be careful with what it chooses to publish, especially in light of the recent controversy on campus over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the fall of 2003, a Daily Illini columnist, Mariam Sobh, included a false quote in one of her columns. The quote consisted of violent and false statements that portrayed then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as wanting to wipe out the Palestinians, according to the Daily Illini Website. Sobh didn’t acknowledge the inaccuracy until April of 2004.

The Daily Illini editor and U of I junior Kathleen Foody said that the conflict is the paper’s biggest concern because students on both sides have staged demonstrations and protests. She also said that when these students read an article in the paper that upsets them, they complain about it immediately.

“We have to be really careful to balance both opinions and not take what people say for granted,” Foody said. “People tend to hyperbolize when they feel strongly about something, and as an editor it is my duty to point things out. If it isn’t factual, we aren’t going to print it.”

Foody said the biggest difficulty with editing a college newspaper is covering current events in a

balanced way that readers would perceive as unfair. Editors run the risk of offending a lot of people, especially at a bigger school like U of I.

“Many [students] have cultural ties to Israel, either by faith or nationality, so you don’t want to turn them off to anything else you have to say,” Foody said. “You have to make sure you are presenting everything in a fair light so your readers can feel like they can trust you and that you aren’t trying to advocate one side over the other.”

When Foody edits stories that mention the conflict, she is sure to go over them with a “fine toothed comb,” she said. She verifies each fact with the reporter and checks where he or she received the information.

Andrew Mason, junior opinions

editor of the Daily Illini, chooses which columns and letters that students write to the paper should be published. He said that the previous opinions editors had an informal rule that columns about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be original, not overly offensive and “exceptionally good.”

Letters to the editor are fact-checked heavily, Mason said. In a semester, Mason said he receives about 12 letters on the conflict, and that the paper didn’t print many of them because a majority were from IlliniPAC or Students for Justice in Palestine.

“They would be at each other’s throats, rhetorically speaking,” Mason said. “I can see the viewpoints of each side and each side is neither 100 percent right or wrong, but people sometimes argue in bad blood.

“The college campus is a breeding ground for the future leaders of America.”

You should take what they say with a grain of salt.”

During the past couple of years, the pro-Israel community has changed, said Eli Wald, former president of IlliniPAC. When he was in office, Wald met with the Daily Illini editorial board on a frequent basis. Eventually, new staff came to work for the paper and things changed for the better, he said.

“A lot of [the anti-Israel rhetoric] at this point is non-intentional but ignorance,” Wald said. “A lot of the Daily Illini staff will ask Palestinians to write about Israel, and these reporters aren’t well-versed enough to know what is going on to make it factually correct.”

There are obvious implications when college newspapers portray Israel in a negative light,

Wald said.

“The college campus is a breeding ground for the future leaders of America, so if my

college is exposed to something that can threaten the positive U.S.-Israel alliance, I guess that is what’s at stake,” Wald said. “There’s always the risk that people are being deceived by the media or with people’s alternative motives.”

Foody suggests that if student readers are upset with stories about Israel in any college newspaper, they should write a letter to the editor and tell the paper why they think the article was unfair.

“If you are just kind of ranting, then it’s not to say that your letter isn’t going to be printed, but it won’t be taken seriously by everybody else,” Foody said. “If you are trying to convince the middle man, take a factual approach instead of just expressing your own opinions.” *

NONIE DARWISH SPEAKS OUT AGAINST THE PAST, ADVOCATES FOR THE FUTURE



By ADAM PALMER

Nonie Darwish has stood in front of university audiences across the country and proclaimed her support for the State of Israel. This would not be so unusual, except that she was raised in Egypt and taught from a young age to fear and hate all Jews.

As a young girl, Darwish attended school in Gaza, where her father was a high-ranking military officer.

"Education never mentioned peace," she said. "It was not even an option."

To the contrary, Darwish and her classmates were instilled with love of jihad and retaliation, she said. She remembers seeing a girl stand in front of the class every morning, crying and reciting poetry about 'martyrs.'

The students were also told not to accept candy from strangers because, "It might be a Jew trying to poison you," Darwish said.

During her childhood, Darwish's father headed the newly-formed fedayeen; a government-funded terrorist organization that sent raids into Israel in the 1950s. In 1956, the Israeli army assassinated Darwish's father.

Darwish's widowed mother took her five children to live in Cairo where she was criticized as a loose woman because she drove a car, Darwish said.

At the American University in Cairo Darwish studied sociology and anthropology. American professors who were concerned with educating their students, not with instilling in them a hatred of Jews, taught the classes, Darwish said. But Egyptian culture was still oppressive for a college student.

"Very few activities were available for young people," Darwish said. "Dating was not allowed, going out late was not allowed."

The anti-Semitism that no longer pervaded Darwish's classroom life also still surrounded her.

"You cannot escape anti-Semitism," Darwish said of Egypt. "Art, cartoons, movies, stories, newspapers, books, conversation all festered with hatred of Jews."

Throughout her time in Egypt, she questioned the basis of the hatred that she was taught, but she was ashamed of voicing her opinion, she said. When she moved to America after college, however, her first boss was

Jewish.

"These are very good people, decent people, honest people," Darwish realized.

From then, she began studying Jewish history, reading editorial columns, and learning the other side of the story of the Jewish people.

In 1995, Darwish's brother, who was still living in Egypt, suffered a stroke. Though there are hospitals in Egypt, his family and doctors – all anti-Zionists – unanimously agreed on sending him to Hadassah hospital in Israel for treatment.

"In times of trouble, Arabs trust Jews," Darwish said about the incident. "They don't even believe in their own lies."

After hearing that her brother was being treated in Israel, Darwish wanted to publicly acknowledge Israel's good will, she said. But, as she puts it, "Why rock the boat?"

Listening to her Egyptian friends' responses to the September 11 attacks finally made Darwish speak out.

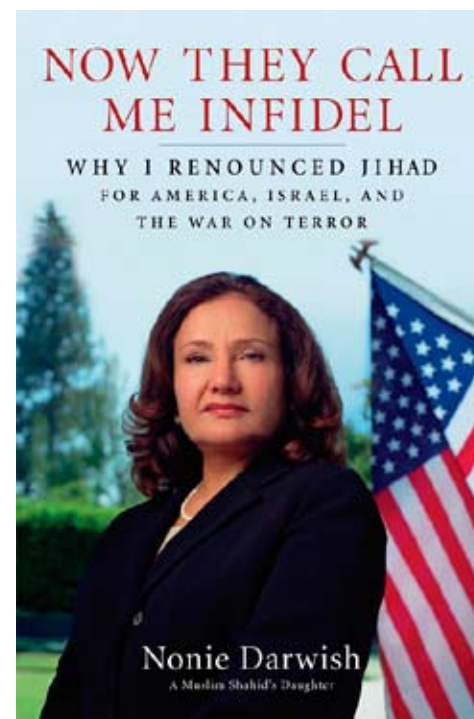
She called Egypt hoping that her friends would comfort her by telling her that it was only a few radicals, not the whole population, she said. Instead, they assured her, "Don't you know that this is all a Jewish conspiracy?"

That's when Darwish resolved to be heard. She wrote an essay, "Why I Support the State of Israel," which was published online.

Just five years later, she is a nationally recognized speaker and the author of "Now they Call me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel, and the War on Terror."

Darwish made headlines when the Hillel at Brown University, in conjunction with the women's rights group on campus,

"It's important to stand up, extend your hand of friendship, extend your wish for friendship and brotherhood, but not at the expense of your own principles."



invited her and then cancelled the invitation. The women's group backed out first, and Brown Hillel felt it would be controversial to be the sole sponsor of the event. According to the "Brown Daily Herald," she was brought to campus one semester later by The Office of Campus Life and Student Services and the Political Theory Project.

Chicago Friends of Israel (CFI), a pro-Israel organization at the University of Chicago, sponsored Darwish to speak during the 2006-2007 academic year. Nathalie Gorman, president of CFI, said that Darwish's perspective does not seem controversial.

"It's coming from a totally different perspective, one that it's difficult for someone to call biased or uneducated," Gorman said. "It's difficult for someone to say she hasn't examined different narratives."

There were those in the audience who harangued Darwish, but Gorman said she was expecting this.

"There are always a few people who come to our events, don't listen to a word, and then yell at the speaker for being pro-Israel," she said.

Steven Slivnick is the president of IlliniPAC, a pro-Israel organization at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Like Gorman, Slivnick said that he did not think Darwish's message was controversial, as it focused on peace and coexistence. But he still advised that campus groups who invite Darwish to speak be cautious.

"Be cognizant of the fact that there's going to be controversy," he said.

Darwish said she knows that pro-Israel students are often wary of offending their anti-Israel peers, and she understands that students are afraid of ruining productive intergroup relationships. But she advised students never to lose sight of supporting Israel.

"It's important to stand up, extend your hand of friendship, extend your wish for friendship and brotherhood, but not at the expense of your own principles," she said. "Don't look the other way when you hear things against Israel. Be active, even with your friends." *



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LEARNING WITH PEERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE



By ADAM PALMER

College students are taking an increased interest in their own faiths and in the religions of their peers, launching and participating in a great breadth of interfaith projects at campuses across the country.

Danielle Josephs, who recently graduated from Rutgers University, is the founder of the Mid-East Coexistence House, a dormitory that strives "to train women to become ambassadors in their community and go on to make a difference," Josephs said. The house's administrators pick out students with opinions on every side of the Middle East conflict and push them into the intimacy of a college dorm.

When Josephs first arrived at Rutgers, the Jewish and Arab-Muslim communities were warring about the situation in the Middle East, she said. Wanting to help, Josephs dedicated time to pro-Israel programming through Hillel. Educating the campus about Israel made the situation seem better, but it did not ease the tension between the two communities.

It was then that Josephs realized, "If you're not building bridges, then it won't work."

At first, Josephs founded a group to encourage dialogue between Jews and Muslims. But she quickly identified the two reasons that the group was not succeeding the way she hoped it would: there was no reinforcement, and there was no

context. She found a solution: build a place where students can converse on a 24/7 basis.

The Rutgers administration was enthusiastic about Josephs' project, but she had trouble recruiting students to live in the new house, she said.

"This is not a project formed to make one comfortable," she says. "It's supposed to push you out of your comfort zone."

Nonetheless, Josephs found 12 women – herself included – to live in the Mid-East Coexistence House during the 2006-2007 academic year. In addition to living together, the residents took a weekly class about the conflict, planned programs for the entire campus and even took a fully-funded trip to Turkey to study the history of the Jewish and Muslim communities there.

Josephs devoted her senior thesis to studying the viability of the house as a general model for conflict resolution. She found that residents of the house have undergone critical changes in mindset about issues that are central to the Middle East conflict. They were prepared to listen to each other and aim for peace.

Josephs said that her Jewish identity is largely based on her love for the state of Israel and her hope for peace in the Middle East. Living in the Coexistence House strengthened this identity.

"I look at coexistence as a pro-Israel activity," she said.

As a result of her work, Josephs has been the subject of articles in nearly every major American newspaper. She was featured in "Glamour Magazine" and was even invited to the White House Chanukah party.

Amanda Glassman, a senior at Brown University, said that she knew she wanted to find her faith in college but didn't want to just study religion in the classroom. She wanted to see how different people actually live what they believe.

Glassman found that religion was not a regular conversation topic in the general student population.

"It's too deep, it's too personal," she said. "It's kind of not fashionable to talk about God."

She moved into Brown's Interfaith House at the beginning of her sophomore year. She said she enjoyed everything from panel discussions on issues like afterlife to casual 'toothbrush debates' – late-night discussions about faith.

During Glassman's time in Interfaith House, the residents decided to throw a party with a holiday theme.

Being an interfaith environment, they prepared to decorate rooms for holidays from all religions and all seasons. In the end, they chose to add holidays that aren't considered religious, such as Valentine's Day, to the more religious holidays. Looking back, Glassman said, although it sounds silly, she still knows why they included St. Patrick's Day along with Easter.

"Knowing our differences we chose to practice things that are the same," Glassman said.

Interfaith living isn't the only way to get involved in interfaith projects. Smaller projects can be just as effective as means of starting dialogue.

Nathan Render, a junior at Tufts University, helped start a government-funded interfaith initiative called Pathways. In addition to planning events and bringing speakers for the entire campus to enjoy, Pathways has added two classes to the Tufts course catalog: The Power of

Narrative: Exploring the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict through Literature and Film and Pathways to Faith: Religious Pluralism Dialogue. The classes can be taken for credit.

"The leaders of all the communities never had a way to collaborate," Render said. "This has given them a forum to talk."

For Render, interfaith projects are particularly important for Jewish college students.

"It's important to understand our position in the world, and to understand it in relation to other faiths, especially on college campuses," he said. "Since we're all in the same place, it's important to really understand each other and how we're all working together toward a common goal."

Render has seen the effect that Pathways has had on Jewish students who came from either very strong or very weak Jewish communities.

"In both those extremes it's had a really positive impact in forming a positive Jewish identity," he said.

It takes a lot of work and time to convince a university administration to start a major program like interfaith living or Pathways. But something as simple as inviting non-Jewish students to Shabbat dinner can start up a healthy dialogue.

Alexandra Ash, a senior at the University of Chicago, organized the fourth annual Interfaith Shabbat. She said the event promoted religious discussion and social networking among students who might not usually meet. Ash attributes the event's success to the Shabbat atmosphere.

"Shabbat's a time for spending with people," Ash said. *



Jewish and Muslim students do find common ground on campus.

"It's important to understand our position in the world, and to understand it in relation to other faiths."

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JEWISH AND MUSLIM STUDENTS CAN BUILD FRIENDSHIPS, TALK ABOUT IMPORTANT ISSUES



Jewish and Muslim women at Loyola University bonded over "Grey's Anatomy," their classes, favorite movies and other interests at an event called "Tea, Taboo and Fondue."

By LAUREN MANGURTEN

The event was one of the many activities sponsored by Hillel and the Muslim

Students Association (MSA) at Loyola to bring Jewish and Muslim students together. Patti Ray, director of Hillel at Loyola, said other past events included "Breaking the Fast, Building the Peace," a dinner after a shared day of fast, and "A Bright Idea! - Lightbulb Exchange," a chance for students across the campus to replace their incandescent light bulbs with longer lasting, more energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). She said the Jewish and Muslim students have also sponsored a dialogue on the Middle East for the past two years.

"Tea, Taboo and Fondue," featured teas from around the world, the Taboo game and chocolate fondue with fruit and candy, Ray said.

"The most valuable thing is getting us to sit down and talk to each other," said Lisette Zaid, a recent Loyola graduate and former president of the Hillel at Loyola. "I don't mean about the conflict or about religion but getting us to spend time to bond."

Sukaina Hussain, a recent Loyola graduate and former campus liaison for the MSA, said that students at other campuses who want to build relationships between Jewish and Muslim students should start small.

"Once you develop friendships, it is very easy to discuss more complicated issues," Hussain said.

When it comes to the more complicated issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Jews and Muslims often misunderstand each other, Zaid said. Forging friendships helps the students at Loyola look beyond the

generalizations to learn about each other's religions. "It really humanizes the other faith and helps you open up to who they are and what they believe by focusing on an individual rather than on a population," Hussain said.

Hussain said that for the "Dialogue on the Middle East," Hillel and the MSA chose a topic to discuss every two weeks, such as security, violence, personal experiences, history and peace agreements.

"I liked the debates because they allowed us to clear up some stereotypes," Hussain said. "They allowed us to present personal stories to each other and bring up important topics that are usually hush hush. We were able to do it in a respectful way."

In addition, making friends helped the Jewish and Muslim students at Loyola see that they are passionate about some of the same causes.

For example, Zaid said she and one of her Muslim friends realized they shared a similar passion for the environment.

This shared value led to Hillel and the MSA co-sponsoring "A Bright Idea! - Lightbulb Exchange." Zaid said a charitable local organization donated \$1000 in CFLs and Loyola donated another \$1000 in the bulbs. Students could exchange up to three incandescent light bulbs for CFLs, she said.

"It was beautiful," she said.

Another successful event was the "Breaking the Fast, Building the Peace" dinner, sponsored by Jewish, Muslim and Hindu students last fall. Ray said the dinner took place on Tzom Gedaliah, the Fast of Gedaliah, which occurs the day after Rosh Hashanah. The date of Tzom Gedaliah was at the beginning of Ramadan, which is the Islamic month of fasting, she said, and it

"It really humanizes the other faith and helps you open up to who they are and what they believe by focusing on an individual rather than on a population."

was also the day after a Hindu fast.

The students joined together to break the fast at the end of the day, Ray said.

The event gave students the opportunity to partake in one another's cultures, Zaid said.

"If you want to look at the symbolism of all this, everything was kosher, everything was vegetarian, everything was halal," she said.

Hindu scriptures recommend vegetarian food, while halal food is acceptable under Islamic law.

"I thought it was a great way for us to connect with each other, not just on a personal or friendship level but on a spiritual level," Hussain said.

The dinner allowed the attendees to discuss what peace meant in all of their religions, she added.

"A lot of people showed up and did fast on that day, showing that people on campus do want peace

between religions and cultures," said Ajay Patel, a senior at Loyola and president of the Hindu Students Organization.

Zaid said that students at Hillels on other campuses that want to build relationships with the other religious organizations should be the first to trust.

"Once you learn to have some trust you have that open line to see what you have to say," she said. "It is no longer being afraid of what the other person has to say but rather listening to what the other person says and reconciling the differences rather than polarizing ourselves."

Her positive experience with multiculturalism influenced her job choice after college, Zaid said. She is the Midwest campus coordinator at StandWithUs, a grassroots Israel advocacy organization.

"My experience at Loyola has inspired me to take this job," Zaid said. "It has let me know that peace is possible and that campus is the first place that we're going to find it." *



Students attend a black-Jewish seder at Northwestern.

different perspectives to the table is an important part of the college experience."

Northeastern University in Boston also had its own Black-Jewish Seder in 2002 and in 2005, said Northeastern's Hillel Director Beth Meltzer.

"It was gratifying to see everyone enjoying themselves and it was exciting to see that we pulled it off when we first did it," Meltzer said. "It was really successful because people were talking about it for years after. It was something that I thought put Hillel on the map."

For students who want to plan a Black-Jewish Seder on their own campuses, Meltzer advises to start early and to make connections right away.

"Talk with different student groups and find out what they would get out of it too," Meltzer said. "You should have shared goals from the beginning." *

USING THE SEDER TO CELEBRATE FREEDOM



A Passover seder is traditionally about Jews' freedom from slavery, but some campuses are using the seder to celebrate other people's freedoms as well. Northwestern University (NU) hosts an annual Black-Jewish Seder in order to connect Jews with another minority group that

By LAUREN LEVY

has suffered from persecution and injustice.

About 100 people attended NU's fifth Black-Jewish Seder in April 2007. NU's Hillel service group, Tzedek, planned the seder. They changed the Haggadah to make it more relevant to modern times, said one of the planners, junior Heather Langerman. The seder had the traditional seder plate and the meal served included soul food like kosher fried chicken.

"We wanted to look toward the future and have the two communities feel closer on campus," Langerman said. "We thought it was a good opportunity to reach out, to learn something new, to meet new people and just to see the common bond that Jews and Blacks have because of the common history of

enslavement and persecution."

NU senior Julian Hill planned and attended the seder. He said that it was a good opportunity for the two groups to work together.

"There isn't a lot of interaction between the individual minority groups," Hill said. "I figured we should support each other because a lot of times, we minority groups face similar problems."

Another seder planner, NU junior Mara Botman, said she agrees that one can always learn something from another group of people. She added that one of the purposes of the seder was initiating discourse between the two groups.

"We aren't that different, and it's important to meet people even if they didn't grow up in the same environment," Botman said. "[The seder] wasn't about bringing diverse people together, it was about starting structured conversations. Because we go to NU, we have similar endeavors."

After working on the NU seder for three years, Hill said he still wants to create ways for minority groups to get to know each other and resolve their issues.

"Specifically with the Jewish and Black backgrounds, their similarities are obvious," Hill said. "To bring

"I figured we should support each other because a lot of times, we minority groups face similar problems."

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL BREAK TRIPS HELP THE NEEDY AND INSPIRE STUDENTS



By LAUREN MANGURTEN

For some students, school breaks mean lying on the beach at a tropical vacation hotspot. For others, school breaks provide an unconventional opportunity for service trips.

Hillels across the nation offer alternative school break trips to national and global destinations, giving students the opportunity to fulfill the task of tikkun olam, repairing the world.

Abbey Greenberg, Tzedek program associate at the Weinberg Tzedek Hillel, said Hillels at 125 campuses each sent at least one alternative break trip in the last school year.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of I) is one of the many schools sending trips to repair Hurricane Katrina damage.

Melissa Cohen, program coordinator at U of I's Hillel, led trips to the Gulf Coast region for the past two spring breaks. She said the 2006 trip went to Biloxi and Gulfport, Miss., where students worked to build 19 roofs. In 2007, the group worked to gut homes in New Orleans, La.

The main goal of the trips was "to provide relief to victims from this natural, national disaster," Cohen said. The secondary goal was "to get Jewish students to understand the beauty of giving."

What makes a Hillel alternative break trip unique from other similar trips is the opportunity for Jewish learning, Cohen said. While students work at different sites during the day, they come together in the evenings to share reflections and discuss giving from a Jewish perspective. Cohen said she would begin the discussions with an initial thought from biblical or scholarly texts tied to giving.

Rayna Schaff, a junior at the U of I, was a student participant on the trip Cohen led in 2007.

"It was one of the most eye opening, life changing experiences that I've ever had," Schaff said. "It's really rough because you hear things on the news just about how intense the situation was in New Orleans. There was a whole lot of media attention at first but over time other things became more important in the media ... it's easy to let it slip your mind."

It was rewarding to help people in the country who are figuratively your neighbors, Cohen said. People do not have to go far to find those in need of help.

"Every time I look back on it I remember the unbelievable feeling you get when you see a homeowner's face and you know you gave them the best gift you could," Schaff said. "You gave them hope."

In addition to the numerous Hillel trips providing

services to communities in the U.S., Hillels across the nation also give students the option to help globally. Joel Schwitzer, executive director at U of I's Hillel, said past alternative break destinations included Montevideo, Uruguay and Santiago, Chile.

Last spring, Andrea Jacobs, Doppelt director of engagement at Northwestern University's Hillel, led a group of 26 students to bring medical supplies to the Patronato, the Jewish center in Havana, Cuba, which has a pharmacy.

She said each student participant collected 20 pounds of medical aid to bring to Cuba. In addition, each student brought 15 pounds of non-medical supplies to Cuba, including Hebrew books, crayons and markers.

The Northwestern students also met people in the Cuban Jewish community, celebrated Shabbat with their new Cuban friends and took their Cuban peers to the beach, which is otherwise only for tourists.

The group helped to clean a Jewish cemetery in Havana,

Jacobs said. They also saw a baseball game and toured other sites.

"It was important to see just everyday life in Cuba," Jacobs said.

Arielle Gottlieb, a junior at Northwestern, was a participant in this trip. She said she did not know there were Jews in Cuba before she heard about the trip.

"When I got past the surprise and novelty of Jews in Cuba, they were just like every other Jewish community you walk into," Gottlieb said. "They welcomed us."

Gottlieb said Jewish life in the U.S. can be taken for granted, but because communism kept Cuban Jews from practicing for a long time, the Jews she met in Cuba really appreciated their Judaism.

"I didn't expect to be as affected by it as I was," Gottlieb said. "It was a vacation. It was

spring break. But at the same time, there were a lot of ideas to grasp."

She said that after learning about the public education system and the health system in Cuba, the idea of offering these services to everyone does not seem so bad. At the same time, there are also people struggling to support their families because the country cannot provide necessary services.

"In examining Cuba, it also forced me to think about the U.S.," she said.

She said she realized that even though the U.S. has the resources, money and surpluses that Cuba does not have, there are also people starving and not going to school here.

Gottlieb said she would be interested in going back to Cuba again. She is studying abroad in Argentina for the year, and learning about the Jewish community in Cuba increased her excitement to explore Argentina's Jewish community.

The experience is not about going somewhere glamorous, but it is about helping a community in need – tikkun olam, Jacobs said.

"We have to take care of each other in Israel and in the Diaspora," Jacobs said. "It's important to help Jews all over the world." *

"Every time I look back on it I remember the unbelievable feeling you get when you see a homeowner's face and you know you gave them the best gift you could"

University of Illinois students help repair homes damaged by Katrina.



SO, WE ARE POOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

By LAUREN LEVY,
LAUREN MANGURTEN,
AND ADAM PALMER

The interns, Lauren, Lauren and Adam sit in Lauren's cubicle. There are no windows, but the interns are as chummy as ever.

LM: So Lauren, I like the completely plain and normal polo shirt you're wearing. Where is it from?

LL: It's one of my favorite shirts, actually. I really like the crocodile in the left hand corner. I have a different color for each day of the week.

AP: Hey, isn't that one of those Lacoste shirts? My roommate has one. Doesn't that cost like \$75?

LL: I mean I wear it. I get a lot of use out of it. Also, the blue one, the pink one, the red one and the white one. But everyone spends a lot of money on things they don't really need. Why are we picking on me? What about Lauren! Hasn't she spent hundreds of dollars on books and DVDs?

LM: I enjoy them. I was an English major for the first year of college, after all. I take an interest.

LL: And the DVDs?

LM: Yeah... Well, Adam spent \$200 on his unicycle. I mean come on, honestly. This isn't the circus.

AP: I use that unicycle to ride to class, and it's fun. You guys are just envious because you don't know how to ride a unicycle.

Maybe you don't spend that much money on

indulgences. But maybe you've spent \$30 on a Family Guy DVD. So why is it so hard for college students to give the same \$30 to charity?

IT'S NOT MY MONEY

Many students rationalize that they don't earn their own money and they'll donate later when they have the resources. What some students fail to recognize, is that it is important to get into the habit of giving. If you give now, you will definitely give later. And it doesn't matter that you're giving your parents' money to charity; it still makes the same amount of difference, even if it's only a small donation.

For example, let's say your parents pay for your tuition and books and give you \$250 per semester as spending money. You don't have much money to squander away. But if you give just \$5 to the Jewish United Fund, you can provide one of the following:

- Two hot meals at a soup kitchen for a poor senior in Russia.
- Art supplies to engage a poor Israeli child
- Hot lunch for an Israeli preschooler
- A ride to the grocery store, dentist or other errand for a local senior

The same \$5 you might dish out for a café grande white chocolate mocha from can go a long way.

I ALREADY VOLUNTEER MY TIME

Giving time to help others is important, but you have to remember that every charity needs both volunteers and financial support. Think about the resources you use when you volunteer at a food program like JUF's

Uptown Café, for example. A donor helped buy the food you serve, the facility you use and any utensils. Without that donor, the food program would not be able to operate.

Imagine how much more meaningful your volunteering experience would be if you help fund the facility.

I'M ON A BUDGET

Giving money to charity might mean giving up seeing a movie with your friends or buying a cup of coffee. We hope that all of your basic needs are already met. If so, imagine what giving up an hour and a half of entertainment at a movie can do for a starving child. Try setting aside 10 percent of your budget for charity. It won't be difficult to stick to your budget if you factor this in ahead of time. Once you get in the habit of giving, you won't have to think twice about it, but your actions will make a world of difference for someone in need.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO CHOOSE A CHARITY

Choose a cause you are passionate about. Consider contacting a foundation to ask what their fundraising expenses are. You want to know how much of every dollar you give is going to help run the charity versus how much is going to the charity itself. For example, at a highly efficient charity like JUF only about 7 percent of every dollar donated supports the fundraising campaign. Look for an umbrella foundation that supports both well known and lesser-known causes. ✱

THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY



By LAUREN LEVY

Every big Jewish United Fund (JUF) donor had to start somewhere.

"For Jewish college students, giving back to the broader community is important because you are getting in the habit of giving money

annually and making it a part of your life," said Northwestern University (NU) senior Gabe Rich.

The Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago is the largest not-for-profit social welfare institution in Illinois and the central address of Chicago's Jewish community. JUF provides critical resources that provide food, refuge, health care, education and emergency assistance to 300,000 Chicagoans of all faiths and two million Jews around the world.

Although adults in the Chicago Jewish community are aware of JUF, too few Jewish college students know what it is, let alone how important its role is in helping the Jewish community. NU is trying to remedy that through its Jewish United Fund Campus Campaign (JUFCC), also known as JUF on Campus. Director of Student Life at NU's Hillel and JUF

Being a part of JUFCC is a great way to stay involved with the Jewish community regardless of religious observance.

employee Cydney Topaz helps run JUFCC. Topaz said that the Federation is important because it addresses the needs of local, national and international Jewish communities.

"There is no other organization that is so effective in addressing those needs on such a grand level that affects the young, old, teens and young adults in such an impactful and positive way," Topaz said.

Rich said that the money that goes to the federation is distributed wherever it's needed, not to just one place.

It also provides many opportunities for college students that include birthright Israel and Israel advocacy, Topaz said. JUF also financially supports

Hillels on Illinois campuses.

"JUF does anything from turning on the lights in our Jewish institutions to providing free kosher meals to people in need," Topaz said.

In order to raise money in the past, NU's JUFCC held a fashion show with college celebrities, hosted bar parties and hosted professional dinners. JUFCC is planning a coffee house and talent show this coming fall, Topaz said. At each event there is a suggested donation at the door.

Rich said that being a part of JUFCC is a great way to stay involved with the Jewish community regardless of religious observance.

"I like what we do and I like how JUFCC isn't too serious of a group because we can have fun with it while doing what we can," Rich said. "It doesn't matter what kind of Jew you are, everybody can do it; it's not exclusive. JUF wants to have help, and it's a great uniting organization for Jews everywhere."

Despite the positive aspects of NU's JUFCC, there is a major challenge to running it at NU, Topaz said.

"The act of educating students about the variety of programs and opportunities that JUF funds all over the world is hard," Topaz said. "It's also hard to ask students for money because college students don't always have the funds available for donations."

Because JUFCCs aren't common, Topaz made some suggestions for students who want to start one at their university. First of all, she advised students to contact their local federation to find out what needs to be done.

"In order to help spread the message to other college students who are affected by JUF dollars, you need to find ways to promote this through volunteer experiences, social experiences and to spread the message about the importance and the impact that JUF has," Topaz said. ✱

STUDENTS SAY "SHABBAT SHALOM" AT HILLEL AND CHABAD



By ADAM PALMER

It's Friday night and you're looking for an easy way to meet people, enjoy food, and maybe even learn a little about yourself. Hillel and Chabad are two organizations that offer all of these things and more on campuses across the country.

According to its Website, Hillel-officially called Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life-is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, providing its services at over 500 colleges and universities.

At Boston University (BU), Elise Polaner is vice president of the student board at Hillel.

"Hillel is about getting students involved in different types of Jewish life, depending on what they're interested in," she said.

In line with this mission, the past year saw BU Hillel hosting artistic events like open mike night, social events like a fall formal and community service events like an alternative spring break program to New Orleans to repair Hurricane Katrina damage.

Weekly Shabbat dinners are a time for students who approach Judaism in different ways to meet and spend time together. Polaner grew up Orthodox, but that doesn't matter when everyone sits down for Friday night dinner, she said.

"We are a really warm and accepting community, regardless of who you are or what you believe," Polaner said.

She added that visiting Hillel helped her when she first got to college.

"At a big school like BU, it's really hard to find yourself," Polaner said, citing the overwhelming number of clubs and activities available to students. "Coming to Hillel gives you a solid foundation. It really grounded me in college."

Northwestern University (NU) is much smaller school than BU, and is located in a quieter environment, but Hillel student executive board President Danielle Gershon said that Hillel still plays an important role in student life.

"Our mission at Northwestern is to provide an outlet for every Jew to find a way to express their Judaism and commit to make their Judaism a part of their life," she said.

NU's Hillel brings speakers ranging from author Alan Dershowitz to comedian Sarah Silverman to campus. The Jewish theatre group put on four plays last year and Hillel sponsored a dive-in movie that students watched from a swimming pool.

Hillel is a pluralistic organization, and Gershon said that the Hillel at Northwestern puts particular emphasis on pluralism.

"We really wanted to make a unified Jewish experience," she said. "We've tried to make it abundantly clear through our programming and through our attitude that being secular is absolutely OK."

On Friday night, Gershon said, students dressed in suits mingle with students wearing blue jeans.

Chabad on Campus serves over 100 college campuses, according to its Website. Striving

to be a home away from home, Chabad sends families out to various campuses to offer free food and learning to Jewish students.

Daniel Lorch was the president of the Chabad student board at Brandeis University before he graduated in the spring. He also had a close relationship with the Chabad rabbi and his family, he said.

Brandeis has a large Jewish community, but Lorch said that there are some students who do not feel comfortable walking into services. Chabad strives to make a comfortable, Jewish environment for these students, he said.

During Lorch's freshman year, only about 40 students would go to Chabad; on Friday night. But in the past year, about 140 students squeezed into the Chabad House every Friday.

"It's a great opportunity to see people and get to meet people," Lorch said of Chabad's Friday night dinners. "Different types of people go to Chabad, therefore,

it's a way that different people connect people coming from different environments and backgrounds that have different social groups."

In addition to the Shabbat dinners, this past year the rabbi and his wife taught eight classes on multiple topics in Judaism, Lorch said. About 80 students were involved.

"They have some sort of a recipe," he said. "Being open and not judging people is the idea that attracts people. People realize that they can be whoever they want to be and still learn about their religion and enjoy a Shabbat dinner." *

Weekly Shabbat dinners are a time for students who approach Judaism in different ways to meet and spend time together.

Chabad on Campus welcomes student of all Jewish backgrounds



Look what's cooking at Hillel.



COMMUNITY, PHILANTHROPY, LEADERSHIP IN JEWISH AND GREEK LIFE



One thing Jewish and Greek organizations have in common is the sense of community they provide to Jewish students. Both give students the opportunity to participate in philanthropies, build leadership skills and make new friends. Students across college campuses find it easy and meaningful to be involved in both communities.

By LAUREN MANGURTEN

Yael Dvorin, a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of I), is active in both the Jewish and Greek communities on campus. She is co-chair of a new Hillel Student Leadership program that aims to ease the transition to college for Jewish freshman and transfer students. Dvorin's past involvement in Jewish life includes fundraising for community services, and serving as the Jewish Education Chair at Hillel, she said

"I've done a lot to entertain my curiosities in Judaism," she said.

Dvorin said she is also president of Panhellenic Council, a student government for sororities on campus. In addition, she served as New Member Educator of Alpha Epsilon Phi at U of I - a national sorority founded by Jewish women - where she enjoyed working with the new sorority members. Her desire to play a bigger role in her sorority led her to become president in 2006. She wanted to work with other sororities in Panhellenic Council as well, so she became president of Panhellenic Council.

In balancing her time between Jewish life and Greek life, Dvorin said she tries to separate the two so when she goes back and forth between the Jewish and

Greek organizations, she feels fully invested in each. Yet her numerous experiences in Jewish and Greek life complement each other in a meaningful way.

"You take every experience to your new one," Dvorin said.

For Rayna Schaff, a junior at U of I, Jewish life is fundamentally distinct from Greek life. Schaff chose to join Kappa Alpha Theta sorority - not a Jewish sorority.

"I really pushed myself to get out of my bubble," Schaff said. "I really met so many people who are so different [than] me."

Schaff said she likes the diverse environment of her house.

"Everyone was really accepting and also just really fascinated," Schaff said.

She held the position of Music Chair for Kappa Alpha Theta. She said she was also actively involved in recruitment in her sophomore year, as well as in her sorority's philanthropy events.

The decision to join Kappa Alpha Theta was one of the hardest decisions she ever had to make because she gave up having a Jewish community within her sorority, Schaff said.

"I felt if [Jewish life] is something I want to be a part of, I'm going to have to seek it out," Schaff said.

Her involvement in Hillel started slowly, she said. Schaff grew up in a family that is culturally Jewish but not religious.

Hillel gave her the opportunity to attend services for Shabbat, which led her to become more involved in religious and other aspects of Jewish life. Schaff got to know people at Hillel, became an intern there and spent a lot of time there when was not at class.

In balancing her time between Jewish life and Greek life, Dvorin said she tries to separate the two.

"They became like my family," Schaff said.

She is the Co-Tzedek Chair at Hillel for the 2007 to 2008 school year.

Alexis Hymen, a sophomore at Northwestern University, is also not in a Jewish sorority. She said there are no Jewish sororities at Northwestern.

She was timid at first, not knowing if she would be the only Jew in Kappa Delta, her sorority house, Hymen said. However, after meeting the other women in her house, she saw that this was not the case.

"I'm definitely not singled out," Hymen said. "And that's really important."

She has become close friends with Jewish women in her house, she said.

Hymen said it was initially difficult for her to balance Jewish life and sorority life. Hymen is on the Shabbat committee at Hillel and puts together a bagel brunch with two other students once a month. She also holds positions in her sorority. She is assistant web master, recycling chair and in charge of one night of recruitment.

"Right away you feel like you want to do and have to do everything," Hymen said. "And then after a while you get the hang of it."

Balancing her time between Jewish life and Greek life helped her learn that both communities are important to her, Hymen said.

"Generally speaking, it's really easy to become overwhelmed at college, no matter where you go," Schaff said. "The best thing you can do is to be open to new experiences." *

STUDY JUDAISM IN THE CLASSROOM, LIVE IT IN THE REAL WORLD



If it's been years since your last day of Hebrew school and you'd like to brush up on your Jewish knowledge, college is the perfect place. Universities across the country—including virtually every major university in Illinois—have Jewish Studies departments, and many

By ADAM PALMER

even offer major degrees in the subject.

Recent University of Michigan graduate Dina Pittel decided to major in Jewish Studies after she took a class during the second semester of her freshman year.

Pittel, who was raised in an Orthodox environment, said

the class took a non-traditional, academic approach to rabbinic texts that did not always agree with what she had learned in Jewish day school. For example, a traditional perspective would say that rabbinic texts come from what Moses learned at Mt. Sinai, but an academic view would disagree.

"I see them interplaying together," Pittel said of the academic and religious spheres of Judaism. "If I learn something in the academic that might come into conflict with what I believe, I try to work them out."

"As a Jew going into college, I really wanted to find out different ways to explore my Jewish commitments, and I felt that one way was pursuing a degree in Jewish Studies."

Her degree is serving her well. Pittel is working as a teacher and in the admissions office at the Jean and Samuel Frankel Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit.

Aaron Weininger, who just graduated from Washington University in St. Louis (Wash U.), wanted to study Judaism in the classroom as soon as he got to school.

"As a Jew going into college, I really wanted to find out different ways to explore my Jewish commitments, and I felt that one way was pursuing a degree in Jewish Studies," Weininger said.

In addition to his Jewish Studies major, Weininger majored in anthropology. As an anthropologist, he studied the different techniques that are used to learn about how a nation has developed. This knowledge, along with his Jewish Studies degree, helped him understand the development of Judaism over the history of the Jewish people.

"It's very valuable to take Jewish studies courses in tandem with courses in other fields," Weininger suggested.

Dr. Pamela Barmash, director of Jewish, Islamic and Near-Eastern Studies at Wash U., sees Jewish Studies classes as being naturally inter-disciplinary.

Students in a Jewish studies class learn about Jerusalem by going there.



"Our courses offer a way of giving a new perspective and opening students' eyes to the unexpected and the profound, whether in Jewish history, literature, culture, or politics," she said.

Dr. Barmash also teaches in the department. This past semester, Weininger took one of her seminars, "Jerusalem." Students explored the history and conflicts surrounding the city, and then spent two weeks there to experience what they had learned. It was Weininger's favorite Jewish Studies class, he said.

Weininger will begin rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary this fall. He said studying Judaism in the classroom added to the way he thinks about religion.

"It has deepened my knowledge of Judaism in that I really understand a more holistic picture of what Judaism is all about," Weininger said. "It's deepened my commitment to learning and to always finding opportunities to enhance my learning." *

JEWISH STUDENTS FIND HOME AWAY FROM HOME IN TIGHT-KNIT JEWISH COMMUNITIES



By LAUREN MANGURTEN

For Jewish college students attending campuses with small Jewish communities, it may be difficult to find a "home away from home" in the

Jewish community on campus. However, many Jewish students attending campuses with small Jewish populations find a tight-knit Jewish community in which they can excel.

Carrie Rosen graduated from Loyola University in Chicago last spring, where she was vice president of Hillel.

"It was probably the most amazing, important thing I've done so far," Rosen said.

Rosen said that even in her freshman year, she could tell how friendly the students and staff were.

"It's a really welcoming atmosphere at school that really made you want to be involved," Rosen said.

Rosen grew up in Warren, Ohio, where her family was the only Jewish family, she said. Wanting to learn more about her Jewish roots, Rosen knew she wanted to attend a college that had a Jewish community.

She did not intend to look at Loyola because it is a Jesuit school. However, when she was on vacation with her family in Chicago, she decided to take a tour of Loyola. A member of the ministry took her to see Hillel, and Rosen said she saw that the Jewish community had a place on campus.

The Hillel at Loyola has a space

inside the larger ministry building, she said. Hillel has a ministry, a kitchen and an office within the building.

"It allowed us to be more connected with the rest of the university and what was going on," Rosen said.

The campus does not host High Holiday services, but there is a Passover seder on campus, Rosen said.

If she attended school with a larger Jewish population, Rosen said she does not think she would have been as involved.

"Don't look at it as a shortcoming or a negative but more as an opportunity so you can get to know everyone in your

Hillel and so you can be involved,"

Rosen said.

Rebecca Van Horn, a junior at Bowdoin College

in Maine, also enjoys attending school with a small Jewish population. She was community service chair at the Hillel in the spring.

Like Rosen, she said that there were not many Jews around when she was growing up in rural Vermont.

"I think there's something when there's less of you [that] makes the community even stronger," Van Horn said.

High Holiday services are a big draw for the students at Bowdoin and for the local community, she said.

Hillel has also held a seder for Passover, Van Horn said. There were about 150 students at the seder this

year. On the second night of Passover, Barry Mills, the president of Bowdoin, who is Jewish, held a seder for about 10 students, she said.

Other activities at Hillel include Purim events and a Chinese buffet.

The Hillel at Bowdoin grew over the past year with help from Hillel's Soref Initiative for Emerging Campuses. According to the Hillel Website, the initiative provides guidance, resources and funding to campuses with small Jewish populations.

A number of Bowdoin students attended a birthright-Israel trip last year, she said. Van Horn went on a Soref bus, for schools with

small Jewish populations, she said.

She said the small Jewish population gives

Jewish students a lot of say in the programming at Hillel.

"If it's a smaller Jewish population, then you can make it what you want to make it," Van Horn said. "I don't think what happened this year at Hillel with Bowdoin will be the same as what happens next year."

Ryan LeBlanc, a sophomore at the College of Wooster in Ohio, also enjoys the opportunity a small Jewish community gives him.

"It allows for close interaction," LeBlanc said. "As far as what the [Jewish] community does on campus, you can have a lot of input as far as what course of action it takes."

LeBlanc is the social action representative at Wooster's Hillel this year. The type of work the social action representative does is to raise money for Hurricane Katrina victims and to help people in the Middle East. LeBlanc hopes to share some of his efforts with other groups on campus he is involved in, including Peace by Peace, a social and environmental action group, The Ice Cream Socialists, a group that researches current issues and takes action on them, and Greenhouse.

LeBlanc said Hillel at Wooster does not host services, adding that it does plan different events for the holidays. Students can walk to a nearby synagogue.

Like at Loyola and Bowdoin, Hillel at Wooster does not have a building. LeBlanc said the different religious groups share the office for Interfaith Campus Ministries, which Hillel can use for events. When Hillel calls a meeting, it will often be in a café, he said.

LeBlanc encourages students who attend colleges with small Jewish communities to find ways to be active.

"Be involved, be creative, and stay up to date," LeBlanc said. "Know what you can do with the Jewish population. Don't be afraid to try new things. It's pretty remarkable how much a small group of people can get done. I just want people to realize that and take that to heart." *

"If it's a smaller Jewish population, then you can make it what you want to make it"

INTERNSHIPS BOOST PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND OFFER JEWISH LEARNING



By LAUREN MANGURTEN

Jewish students can learn valuable skills, give back to the Jewish community and round out their résumés with an internship as a Jewish professional.

The Jewish community offers internships in a wide range of fields, including social services, communications and politics.

My colleagues and I who interned at JUF News attained our positions through the Harriet and Maurice Lewis Family Summer Intern Program, which is an eight-week, paid work and study experience. The internship program of The Hillels of Illinois, a partner of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (JUF/JF), is funded through a gift from the Harriet and Maurice Lewis family as a way to pass on passion for Jewish life to the next generation.

The Lewis program places interns at agencies around Chicago in fields including public policy, social work, health care, education and communications. Judith Teller, director of the Lewis program at the Hillels of Illinois, said the agencies are either department affiliates or beneficiary agencies of the JUF/JF.

There are about 30 interns each year. Two interns come from Kiryat Gat, Israel through the JUF's Partnership 2000 Program, and two interns come from Kyiv, Ukraine through JUF's Kyiv Kehilla program, Teller said.

The positions available change over time to meet the needs of the Jewish community, Teller said. For example, as the agenda of JUF changed to include outreach to high school students, a position in Israel Experience and Youth Initiatives was created to meet that need.

Regardless of an intern's agency placement, Teller said the program teaches the interns that the JUF offers a sense of community.

"I think they find that it opens a lot of doors," she said. "A significant number of interns have found jobs within the network. I've written many references for students. It's a highly respected place."

Deena Greenspahn, now a division director of Trades at JUF, was a Lewis intern in the summer of 2001.

As a Lewis intern, she worked in Leadership Development, where she was in charge of a small intern campaign. Greenspahn also compiled information about the JUF board and committees.

She said she liked that the program was not just a work experience, but that there was an educational component to the program through the seminars.

"I thought it was fantastic," Greenspahn said. "I enjoyed my experience running the intern campaign."

When she was searching for a job, Greenspahn said she thought of JUF because she had such a positive experience working there as an intern. Before working in Trades, she worked in the Women's Division.

"I would encourage [college students] to participate," Greenspahn said. "It's a unique program."

For information about the Lewis Family Summer Intern Program please visit www.juf.org/college/Isip.aspx, email Isip@juf.org or call The Hillels of Illinois at 312-444-2868. *