Going to Poland and visiting the death camps made me stand up on my tip-toes and look straight into the eyes of what I study. Actually being there, inside the camps, I could not shield myself from fully realizing the horror of the Holocaust, which is easier to do when reading a book on the subject 3,000 miles away from where it took place. Being there you have to look straight-on and see what human beings can do to fellow human beings under the right circumstances. This is a difficult fact to come to terms with and is often easily pushed aside in favor of seeing the perpetrators as inherently evil and inhuman. Every day this trip follows me and reminds me to look beneath the surface of those who I perceive as different from myself and find the commonalities that make us all human beings.

Fostering Learning Beyond the Campus

By Simone Schweber

This past Spring, for example, I was involved in two teacher workshops that the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies helped sponsor. In April, thanks to the generous funding of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, UW–Madison hosted a one-day workshop for teachers from throughout the state. The workshop targeted both novice and experienced teachers, and it carefully combined informational and pedagogical sessions. Over 80 teachers, some of whom drove down from Minnesota and the Northern-most reaches of Wisconsin, attended. The day was exceptionally well organized, thanks to the co-sponsorship of the Center for European Studies and the hard work of their outreach coordinator, Lara Kain.

The speakers were marvelous. Professor Rudy Koschar shared his expertise about the early Nazi party. Krista Hegburg, who is doing groundbreaking research on the Roma, discussed what it means to take seriously their experiences during the Holocaust. Professor Emeritus Klaus Berghahn spoke movingly about what it meant to grow up as a German young man in the shadow of the Holocaust, how that has affected him as a scholar, but more importantly, as a person. A Jewish survivor (and grandparent of a current student) drove down from Milwaukee to share his experiences as well. There was a set of resource sessions, in which experts like Holis Rudiger of the Cooperative Children’s Book Center presented new children’s literature on the Holocaust and genocide. The pedagogical sessions in the early afternoon allowed teachers to experience model lessons that could be used with other content, and Professor Scott Strauss, whose work focuses on the genocides in Rwanda and Darfur, closed the day. The teachers left with an armful of resources and a host of new ideas. Sometimes, when you work tirelessly to orchestrate an event, you leave feeling exhausted and wrung out. In this case, though, I was thrilled to have helped Judy Bartel, a schoolteacher at the Hill-Murray School, organize the day. (Judy serves as the outreach coordinator to this part of the country for the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.) The teachers’ evaluations were so positive, and their appreciation was so genuine that I left feeling proud to have been involved. (Even the Pyle Center’s cookies were a big hit.)
Notes from the Director

Judged by the achievements of CJS just about every year, this was both an extraordinary and an ordinary year. It was extraordinary in the sense that it featured a breath-taking array of exciting activities and events that made significant contributions to scholarship, to students, to the university community, and to a broader public. It was ordinary in the sense that CJS regularly seems to operate at this very high level. Here I will point to some of the major achievements that dotted the year, as well as to some of the challenges that we currently face.

Two wonderful Greenfield Summer Institutes, each attended by over one hundred enthusiastic participants, were the bookends of the year. The most recent one (described elsewhere in this Newsletter) focused on Israeli life and culture, while its predecessor dealt with the religious and secular aspect of Judaism. Launched as an annual event some eight years ago, the Greenfield Summer Institute has become one of the flagship programs of CJS, emblematic of who we are and what we do: high quality teaching and learning that features a willingness to explore matters in depth and to take up difficult questions in a serious, honest spirit. The Summer Institute gives CJS a public face that makes everyone associated with the Center very proud. As noted elsewhere in the Newsletter, this year’s Greenfield Summer Institute was complemented by a new summer institute — one directed at working educators interested in the intersection of education and Jewish Studies.

In addition to our summer institutes, CJS’s outreach activities included the annual lecture series that brings to the campus exciting speakers with the capacity to speak in powerful ways to scholars, to students, to the general public, and sometimes to all of these groups at once. Of particular note this year was the talk delivered by Aaron Lansky of the Yiddish Book Center through the annual Tobias Lecture, held in conjunction with our Board of Visitors meeting. Speaking to a group of thoroughly engaged listeners, Mr. Lansky told the story of his early effort to reclaim Yiddish books that would otherwise have disappeared — a story suffused with humorous and heart-wrenching anecdotes not just about the books, but also about the people who had loved them and the culture of which these books were a part. Other lecturers includes two who dealt with themes relating to the Holocaust: Professor Douglas Greenberg (Executive Director of the Shoah Foundation), this year’s Kutler Lecturer, who delivered several talks concerning genocide in both Jewish and other contexts, and Professor Jan Gross (whose lecture CJS co-sponsored) who spoke to a full-house of riveted individuals about the problem of continuing anti-Semitism in post-WWII Poland.

The most significant new kind of program organized by CJS this year was the Conney Conference on Jewish Arts, entitled “Practicing Jews: Art, Identity and Culture,” CJS world-renowned Jewish artists and scholars of the Jewish arts from around the country and abroad to share with each other and with a general public their artistic achievements in different media and their ideas about the Jewish arts. Made possible through the generosity of Marv and Mildred Conney and the imaginative and hard work of Professor Douglas Rosenberg, the week was memorable: speakers were first-rate, the room was packed for virtually every session, and the buzz in the hallways was that this was an extraordinary event, signaling the arrival of Madison, Wisconsin as a national center in the Jewish arts. Further described elsewhere in this Newsletter, the Conney Arts week is an outgrowth of the Arts and Culture branch of the growing CJS tree. The synergy that is already being generated between this dimension of our program, our more traditional emphasis on academic scholarship, and our interest in contributing to education in Jewish Studies in varied arenas promises to give us a unique position in the landscape of Jewish Studies programs around the country.

Also noteworthy this year was the professional development efforts undertaken by Simone Schwebel in the effort to help public school educators address questions relating to the Holocaust more effectively. These included a day-long workshop for some eighty working high school teachers, as well as an educational tour and follow-up activities organized for students in the University’s educator-preparation program. At a time when the Holocaust has become the subject of considerable attention in schools around the country, it is imperative that educators become more thoughtful about why and how to approach this educational challenge, and Professor Schwebel’s research and professional development activities represent a significant contribution to this effort.

Unfortunately, not all the news is good this year. Budget cuts across the University make it increasingly difficult to hire lecturers for our courses and to replace faculty who resign or retire from the University. What this means is that we will be increasingly dependent on endowment support to facilitate the important work that CJS does. It is also my sad duty to report that with the death of Bob Natelson this year, we have lost a kind and generous member of the CJS community. More on Bob elsewhere in this Newsletter.

I do not want to conclude this report without taking note of people who are coming and leaving CJS. First, leaving her role as Chair of our Board of Visitors, I want to thank Marjorie Tobias for her many years of service to the Center. I also want to thank Mel Zaret, who has also recently left our Board of Visitors. At the same time, I want to formally welcome the new Chair of the Board of Visitors, Jane Gellman of Milwaukee, who has just concluded her first year in this role. With the help of Steve Kean of the UW Foundation, Jane and the other members of the Board of Visitors have been actively working to help the Center make its achievements better known and to generate needed support.

Among faculty, it is sad for me to report that Professor Klaus Berghahn, who has been a valued member of the Center from its very beginnings, will be retiring this year. On the plus-side, we have been joined by Professor Nadav Shelev, a political scientist who is the Meyerhoff Professor of Israel Studies. And we will continue this coming year to benefit from the presence of our first post-Doctoral Fellow, Katja Vehlow, a recent Ph.D. from New York University.

Though not unmixed, all in all it has been a wonderfully exciting year. With the help of our faculty, our community of supporters, and, as always, Anita Lightfoot and her assistant Kesha Thompson, this year should be equally successful.

Daniel Pekarsky, Director and Professor of Educational Policy Studies
One of the rewarding responsibilities of the Director of CJS is to meet with supporters of the Center from around the country. It is rewarding because, over and over, one meets up with extraordinary people who love the University of Wisconsin–Madison and whose contributions to CJS are animated by nothing more than the desire to see the Center flourish. Nowhere was this more evident than in my encounter with Bob Natelson in the late winter of 2007. I had never met Bob and his wife Beverly before, but I knew that over the last ten years they had been active supporters of the Center. Both Bob and his wife had studied at the UW–Madison some sixty years ago, after which they had moved to California, where Bob practiced medicine and health care administration for many years. In gratitude for the educational opportunities they had had at the UW–Madison, Bob and Beverly decided to establish a scholarship fund in Jewish Studies, a fund from which many students have benefited over the years. Now I would have the chance to thank him in person for his generosity. I knew little more about Bob until the day of our visit, to the Natelson home in the Los Angeles area.

Steve Kean, my colleague from the UW Foundation, and I arrived at their home in the late afternoon. We had had a number of meetings that day, had gotten caught in traffic, and were exhausted as we drove into the driveway. But all of this changed quickly when, greeted by Beverly, we entered into the beautiful Natelson home. Leading us through a space in which we were surrounded by soul-quieting art, much of it Japanese, Beverly explained that because of Bob’s illness (Bob was, at the time, dying of cancer), one room of the house had been set up as a special space for him. When we entered it, we found him propped up in a kind of hospital-bed, smiling warmly at us, thanking us for coming to visit, and asking us to remind him of our names. Chairs surrounded the bed, and Steve, Beverly, and I sat down.

Looking through the window behind us, Steve and I discovered a simple but wonderfully designed Japanese rock garden surrounding a pool, with the early evening sky in the background. The inner beauty of Bob and Beverly and the outer beauty that we encountered outside were enough to still our own souls, to transport us into a different emotional and spiritual space. Bob seemed grateful for the opportunity to speak with us, and his fond recollections of his years in Madison in medical school and his association with the university and CJS over the years interwove easily with his many questions. He seemed genuinely interested in learning about us and about the continuing work of the Center. Though he was weak and thin as a result of his illness, we encountered not a hint of self-pity, but only a luminous and generous human presence. It was the kind of encounter that, if only briefly, throws everything into perspective. Though Bob was dying, in our encounter with him it would be more apt to describe him as exuding life and fostering it in us.

Our planned visit of half an hour with Bob and Beverly turned into well over an hour; and, later, heading back to our hotel, Steve and I commented about what an extraordinary person we had just had the privilege of getting to know. Not long thereafter, we got the sad news that Bob had passed away.

I will never forget the afternoon Steve Kean and I spent with Bob and Beverly, and I will always treasure a memory of Bob that includes his obvious generosity of spirit, curiosity and aliveness. That people like Bob and Beverly are interested in and support the work of the Mosse-Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies does us great honor. We will miss Bob very much. May his memory be a blessing.
The Conney Project at Work: “Practicing Jews: Art, Identity and Culture”

By Douglas Rosenberg

As regular readers of our newsletter already know, The Conney Project on Jewish Arts is an initiative of the Mosse-Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies. The Conney Project is intended to be a far-reaching educational entity that supports and encourages new narratives of Jewish identity in all the arts, both traditional and contemporary, including literature, music, and the visual and performing arts. The mission of the Conney Project is to both raise awareness of the contributions of Jewish artists and scholars to the landscape and history of the arts in general, and also to encourage and support new scholarship and production in the field. In the course of the next five years, we intend to amass a vast collection of historically valuable media pertaining to the Jewish contribution in the arts, one that will be made available to scholars and students in the form of streaming media, digital archives, DVDs and television projects.

A number of exciting programs have already been developed under the auspices of the Conney Project, but this last spring featured our most ambitious program to date, a week-long conference on Jewish arts, called, “Practicing Jews: Art, Identity and Culture”. The mission of the conference was to offer a platform for critical dialogue about the role of Jewish artists and scholars in shaping 20th and 21st century art practices. We had an overwhelming response to our call for papers and performances and ultimately were able to feature 50 presentations during the week-long event including scholarly papers, performances and film screenings. Keynote speakers included, Norman Kleeblatt - Susan & Elihu Rose Chief Curator, The Jewish Museum, New York, Lisa Bloom - Visiting Associate Professor of Visual Culture, University of California, San Diego and Author of Jewish Identities in American Feminist Art; Ghosts of Ethnicity, Susan Garbar - Distinguished Professor, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Author of Poetry and After Auschwitz and, Kalman Bland, Chair of Department of Religion, Duke University, Matthew Baigell, emeritus professor of art history, Rutgers University, Ruth Weisberg, chair of the UCLA Art Department among other luminaries. The interdisciplinary focus of the conference resulted in a remarkable breadth of presentations covering music, visual art, the literary arts, theater and dance from both the point of view of both theory and practice. It also created a forum for scholars and artists to speak to each other across disciplines regardless of their individual practices and to make both professional and informal connections and linkages.

A single recurring theme that emerged from the conference was perhaps most often the question of identity and difference within Jewish art practices. It was clear from the depth of research presented that Jews are making work that ranges from from Judaica and ritual objects to performance art with often the same focus as one might study Torah. In other words, the art-making impulse within the Jewish community in the 21st century is not only deeply felt, but also serves as a method of self reflection, religious and/or spiritual inquiry and community building. And while questions arose concerning levels of observance, historical and religious knowledge, the importance of Israel within the context of the diaspora and other points of debate, what was exceedingly clear was that Jewish artists are using their practice to define their own relationship to those very questions, and doing so in great numbers.

There was also the sense of looking back at 20th century art history and rethinking critical issues and mythologies that have pervaded the official narratives of the modern era. Particular talks by Lisa Bloom from a feminist perspective, Norman Kleeblatt speaking about the dialectic between Harold Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg, and illuminating presentations by artists such as Mierle Ukeles, Julie Weitz, Shalom Gorewitz pointed to the under-represented contributions of Jewish artists, not from a secular art historical perspective, (indeed many of the artists represented were quite well known) but from the perspective that, taken as a group, Jewish artists and scholars in the 20th century made a distinct contribution to the culture that was inseparable from their identity as Jews of the diaspora, whether assimilated or not.

We also presented performances by Spoken Word Artist Vanessa Hidary, AKA The Hebrew Mamita (as seen on “Russell Simon’s Presents Def Poetry” on HBO), Bessie and Guggenheim Award winning Choreographer David Dorfman, Liz Lerman, choreographer and MacArthur “Genius” Award recipient and others as well. All events were free and open to the public and the conference attracted over 100 attendees with presenters from across the country and the UK. The week ended with a Shabbaton focusing on art and creativity in collaboration with Hillel.

As I stated at the beginning of the week, it was not the goal of the conference to answer a particular question. Rather, the goal was to identify the questions that need to be asked, in a meaningful way. To be able to ask questions, to speak back to history and to ponder the texts that comprise our own cultures is not only a privilege, but a responsibility, it seems to me. If, at the end of the week, we had collectively framed a set of questions that help to articulate a trajectory for the discourse around Jewish Identity in the Arts, then, I would have been very happy. If we had arrived at a set of conclusions, then I would have been very surprised. This is the nature of how we ask questions; they beget more questions and more questions, often until the process crystallizes into a vital, living, breathing and sometimes elegant humanistic metaphor. This is where theory and practice converge. In the process of uncovering and making visible, as artists, we are left with an object for contemplation. As thinkers, we are left with a new body of knowledge. At the end of the Conney Conference on Jewish Arts, we were left with a desire for more of all we had the good fortune to share during the week and a sense that there was indeed a community of artists and scholars asking the same questions.

*Our new website is currently under construction. The Conney Conference program and other information can be found at: www.conneyconference.org. In the near future the site will become a portal to the Jewish Arts, including streaming video, artist profiles, links to important and relevant sites, opportunities in the field and more.*
SUMMER INSTITUTE

BY DANIEL PEKARSKY

Thanks to the generous endowment of the Greenfield family and the hard work of faculty and staff, CJS recently completed the 8th annual Greenfield Summer Institute, organized around the theme of “Encountering Israel: History, Culture and Politics.” As in the past, the program featured extraordinary lectures by CJS faculty and others, addressing different dimensions of Israel’s life and culture. There were lectures detailing the ideological debates that attended the birth of modern Zionism and the struggles between different movements; lectures that discussed the complexities of Israel’s political situation, with attention to such matters as changing demographics and Israel’s relationship to the United States; and lectures that explored the ways in which the complexities of Israeli social life are reflected in and are influenced by Israeli education and Israeli music. Not surprisingly, there was rich attention to the varied controversies that surround almost every aspect of Israel studies. The week also included opportunities to socialize over meals and early morning coffee, as well as cultural events like the Yid Vicious Klezmer concert at the Memorial Union and an evening concert on the Square surrounding the State Capitol. The group also had the opportunity to screen an exceptional movie that featured both leading Israeli public intellectuals representing different perspectives on Israeli society and representatives of various Israeli sub-groups – for example, Israeli Arabs, Sephardic Jews, the Ultra-Orthodox, and the parents of soldiers killed in Israel’s wars. A highlight of the week was a lecture by Professor Jeremi Suri of the History Department, who offered a perspective on the conflicts of the Middle East that was rooted in the complexities of Henry Kissinger’s relationship to both his Jewishness and Richard Nixon.

All of this said, what really makes the Summer Institute shine are the participants who come from across the United States to share in this annual cornucopia of learning, culture, and conviviality. The eagerness of this group to learn, its insistence on serious content, the penetrating questions that participants bring to the lectures, the first-hand experiences relating to the topic at hand that they share with the group – these things jointly create an atmosphere of engaged learning and active thinking that would be the envy of adult learning programs and university classrooms anywhere.

Reaching out to a larger community in this way is part of the mandate of Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies. That we are able to attract an ever-growing clientele creates new challenges which we hope to meet at ever-higher levels of quality. We are already hard at work planning next year’s Summer Institute.

New from CJS: A Summer Institute for Educators

This summer, the faculty of the CJS program in Education and Jewish Studies launched its first Summer Institute in Education and Jewish Studies. Building on and accompanying the rich offerings of the Greenfield Summer Institute, this education-centered institute offered participants a chance to better understand Israel’s cultural and political circumstances, challenges and prospects, as well as an opportunity to struggle with curricular, pedagogical, and ethical questions relating to the teaching of Israel in their varied settings. The hope of the program’s faculty was (and remains) that the questions, lenses, and skills emphasized in this program will inform the way these educators teach about Israel and will offer them new ways of approaching other educational challenges they face.

The new institute attracted a group of educators coming from public high schools and a junior high in Wisconsin, as well as Jewish congregational schools from around the Midwest. The group’s diversity – men and women of different religious and cultural backgrounds, teaching youngsters of different ages in very different contexts – profoundly enriched its conversations, leaving everyone intellectually excited and grateful for this learning opportunity.

The Education and Jewish Studies Program, of which this special summer institute is an outgrowth, was made possible by the generosity of people like the late Esther Leah Ritz, Michael and Judith Goodman, and the family of Laurence and Fran Weinstein. It has been their dream and ours that this program would contribute to the work of educators in Madison, the Midwest region, and beyond. The Summer Institute in Education and Jewish Studies represents part of our continuing effort to make good on these worthy dreams.
While in Israel, I plan to pursue my research interest in the sociology of citizenship by revising and expanding an existing paper on “The Civic Dimension of Jewish Nationalism.” This paper is based on a public lecture entitled “Zionism and Other Nationalisms,” which I presented at the “What is Zionism?” public lecture series held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Spring 2004. A revised version of the lecture, entitled “Citizenship and Nationhood in France, Israel, and Germany,” was given to the Jewish Social Services Senior Adult Program in Madison, Wisconsin, in February 2006. Adopting a comparative-historical approach and taking the widely recognized distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism as its point of departure, the paper makes an original argument about how citizenship and nationhood have been understood within the Zionist movement, based upon an examination of the writings of the Zionist movement’s principal theoreticians, Israeli citizenship laws and immigration policies, and the integration of ethno-religious minorities.

Participation in the Mosse program will provide time to concentrate on this project, access to Hebrew University’s scholarly resources, and contacts with Israeli colleagues who can provide invaluable criticism, advice, and suggestions. For these reasons, Hebrew University will be an ideal place to develop my lecture notes into a full-fledged, polished article manuscript, which I would then plan to submit for publication in an appropriate journal. More generally, I believe the experience of working on this project at Hebrew University will continue to develop, advance, and enrich my thinking about the sociology of citizenship from a comparative-historical perspective.
Goldstein

Hebrew University has been a thread that has woven itself throughout the entire fabric of my life. In fact, one of my first memories in life is Hebrew University. When I was four years old, I traveled with my grandparents to attend a graduation ceremony at the Hebrew University amphitheatre where my grandfather, Nathaniel L. Goldstein, received an honorary doctorate. The University had not even moved back to the Scopus campus yet.

Jump ahead four years to summer camp at the Givat Ram campus in 1973. Four years later, I spent sixth grade in Jerusalem and lived with my family in the Edelson dorms while my dad was on sabbatical at Hebrew University’s Truman Institute. In high school, I took a summer-long Hebrew class at the University and then attended the Rothberg School fall semester in my junior year of college.

Twenty-two years later, along with a few new threads: my wife, Amanda, daughter Sammy, age 8, son Nathaniel age 6 and dog Sunny, age 10, I had the privilege of returning to Hebrew University as a George L. Mosse Exchange Professor. Combining this opportunity with my sabbatical in the spring enabled me to spend the entire year in Israel with my family.

Serendipitously, the Department of Political Science and the Department of Communication at Hebrew University had just initiated a new graduate program in Political Communication. This dovetailed perfectly with my scholarly research and professional experience and I was able to teach one of the inaugural courses in the program—a seminar on political advertising and persuasive communication. The students in the course combined to make a fascinating mix of graduate students from both departments as well as the nascent Political Communication program. They hailed from the U.S. and Israel and included recent immigrants from France, Russia, Italy and Argentina and America.

The students were bright, energetic, and were especially excited to take a course with a political behavior bent and lots of examples from American political context. It was fun for me to be able to teach about the fundamentals of political communication in the United States and also learn from the experiences of students from such a wide variety of countries and academic backgrounds.

There are few stronger relationships between universities than the one between UW and Hebrew University. In the short time since Professor Mosse’s passing, scores of students and faculty have gone back and forth between the two institutions. The lasting impact Professor Mosse had is obvious in almost every meeting or academic event I attend here in Israel. Without fail, in virtually every gathering with academics or political leaders, one of the participants would be a former student of Professor Mosse’s and would immediately launch into warm recollections when learning that I was from University of Wisconsin. This was also the case last year when I led a group of colleagues on a trip to Israel. Last year, UW alumnus Peter Weil, and his wife Julie, generously funded the trip for UW professors to give research presentations at Hebrew University, meet other academics, and tour Israel. Everywhere we went, UW was known because of the relationships that Professor Mosse forged with generations of students, scholars, and leaders in Israel.

I’m happy to say that the relationship between UW and Hebrew University is expanding. While historians continue to go back and forth under the Mosse Exchange Programs, this fall, two Hebrew University political science students will start PhD programs at UW.

Being able to return to Hebrew University as a Mosse Exchange Professor and as a representative of my home institution has continued three great traditions: the George Mosse relationship, the UW-Hebrew University relationship, and the Goldstein family relationship with Hebrew University. My nine year old daughter is already talking about coming back for her junior year.
Over the last two decades, Israel has witnessed an upsurge in school violence, high drop-out rates, and a mutual breakdown in trust and respect between the school and community. This has led to a distressing deterioration in the school experience for children, particularly the socio-economically and culturally “at-risk”, to widening disparities in Israeli society, and to lack of educational alternatives. Nine years of work as an educator in this reality led me to PhD studies at the UW-Madison School of Education. The non-profit organization for which I worked as a mentor, supervisor, and program coordinator, Karev Educational Program, is the primary intervention program in Israeli education. It operates across the country, principally in underprivileged and peripheral towns, to advance educational equality, working with “at-risk” children and youth in underprivileged schools. My professional work with these populations, from a similar background to my own, was extended to the broader, community context of educational activity in the framework of Karev’s Social Network of Schools. The Network, is committed first and foremost to alleviating the pain and hardship of children who are “left behind” but also to eliminating social disparity through schooling. Working with the staff of underprivileged schools, it strives to address the stress that disadvantaged children from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim backgrounds experience, both inside and outside of schools. In the Network, I worked as coordinator of a mentoring team and as an outreach program coordinator. The latter project operated in collaboration with the neighborhood school in a socio-economically deprived and segregated community, made up of three of the weakest and disparate groups in Israel: Ethiopian new immigrants, new immigrants from the Caucasus, and veteran immigrant families who have “failed” to integrate into the mainstream. The project’s underlying goal was to create an alliance between the school, parents, and community with regard to the formal and informal school settings and contents. Coordinating and training the Network mentoring team in the poor peripheral town of Ofakim, which entailed also liaising between community organizations, local officials, and parents to ensure community support and optimal implementation of the mentoring program, gave me particular insight into the political and social dimensions of education. This work ultimately brought me to my studies at the UW-Madison Department of Curriculum and Instruction, to pursue research of curriculum and pedagogical practices in the Israeli public school system and how they perpetuate the exclusion of new immigrants, peripheral town populations (particularly Mizrahim), and Arab citizens of Israel. I was most fortunate during my second year of studies to be awarded the Weinstein Distinguished Graduate Fellowship, which has enabled me to devote all my time and energies to my studies and writing and to focusing my research interests, as well as participating in a variety of academic forums. Upon completion of my studies, I will return home to continue my academic research in education, with the goal of merging it with work in the field with underprivileged populations towards democratization of Israeli education and society.

Course Incentive Grant
2007
The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Professor Nadav Shelef
What is Torah? This question may seem much too elementary for a college level class in Jewish Studies, since most students in Religious Studies or Jewish Studies know that Torah is the first division of the Tanak or the Hebrew Bible. However, the question is not as simple as it first seems; a traditional text (from Midrash Tehillim) says, “The Psalms are Torah, and the prophets are Torah.”

During the spring 2007 semester, variations of the question “What is Torah?” provided the basis for my Jewish Studies class. What was Torah during the Persian period? What was Torah during the Hellenistic period? What was Torah during the Roman period? What was Torah after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E.?

By framing the question in historical terms, students were able to trace changing ideas of Torah, and they began to see relationships between the interpretation of religious texts, claims of authority, and responses to the destruction of the temple. Discussing these relationships helped students understand factors that contributed to the development of Rabbinic Judaism. It provided an opportunity for students to discuss questions of ethics and religion in a way that helped them think about their own perspectives and values.

The idea for this class grew out of my research while I was studying in Jerusalem and receiving support from the George L. Mosse Exchange Program. I discussed the idea for this class with the director of the Mosse foundation as a way to pass on the benefits of my research to undergraduate students. He worked together with the chairs of both the Center for Jewish Studies and the department of Hebrew and Semitic languages. Each contributed one-third of the funding that made this class possible. This sort of cooperation is exemplary. I am honored by this opportunity to share some of my research and thereby multiply the benefits of the financial support that I have received.
Remarks of a “German goy” in the Jewish Studies Program

KLAUS BERGHAHN

Teaching in the Jewish Studies Program for the last 15 years has been one of my best academic experiences at the UW–Madison. It all began some 20 years ago, when George Mosse invited me to join a small group of faculty members from different departments to explore the possibility of such a program. We had lively discussions about whether we should establish yet another Holocaust center or a much broader program encompassing all aspects of Jewish culture – and we settled on the last option. With the generous support of the Weinstein family, the program was inaugurated in the early nineties, and in memory of the two driving forces (George Mosse and Lawrence Weinstein) it is now called the Mosse Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies.

Since I was interested in German-Jewish relations since the Enlightenment, my involvement in the Center gave my teaching and research interests a new direction and broadened my horizon on German culture. A fellowship at the Franz Rosenzweig Center for German-Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University in 1993 helped me to establish my research and teaching agenda. I developed a topics-course on German-Jewish relations since the 18th century and taught it regularly on topics such as The German Jewish Dialogue; Toleration, Emancipation and Acculturation; and The Jewish Salons of Berlin, 1780–1806. Together with David Sorkin I also taught a graduate seminar on European Antisemitism, which led into the Second Mosse Workshop on “The Roots of Antisemitism.”

On the recommendation of Elain Marks, I was awarded a Weinstein-Bascom Professorship in 1999, which greatly contributed to my scholarly productivity, enabling me to finish a monograph on Grenzen der Toleranz (Limits of Toleration.) In addition, I edited with Jost Herman, a longtime friend of George, a volume on Gotze in German-Jewish Culture and a Festschrift for George Mosse, The German-Jewish Dialogue – Reconsidered.

In short, my participation in the Center contributed greatly to my professional life, the collegiality and sociability of the Center’s faculty enriched my social life, and all this led to a happy ending of my academic career.

I hope to continue contributing to the Mosse Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies after my retirement by teaching once a year a course on my special interests.

Klaus Bergahn
Weinstein-Bascom Professor of German-Jewish Culture

Israel Studies at UW Madison: the vision and potential

SHELEF ISRAEL

It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to introduce myself to you. After spending many years at Berkeley (where I received my PhD) and in New York, my wife and I are thrilled to be discovering the joys of the Midwest. Madison has quickly established a place in our hearts, not least because our son was born shortly after our arrival.

Not only is this an exciting time for me personally, full of new discoveries and transitions, it is also an exciting time for all of us who are interested in studying Israel at American universities. Centers and programs devoted to Israel Studies are being established around the country, and UW Madison is poised to be at the forefront of this trend. We have a concentration of terrific faculty whose expertise in Hebrew, Israeli history, politics, sociology, literature, culture and the arts is rarely matched. As we build on these strengths, we hope to build a vibrant Israel Studies program within the Jewish Studies Center.

As this program develops, it will provide a range of offerings to our students and to the community at large. At the undergraduate level, such a program would enable us to offer classes to our undergraduates on the entire spectrum of Israeli life in such a way as to truly integrate the study of Israel into the academic life of the university. Given the starring role Israel plays in the national headlines, students thirst to learn more about the state, its people, culture, and society. The courses that we currently offer and that we hope to present in the future enable us to reach out to both Jewish and non-Jewish students and introduce them to Israel Studies.

At the graduate level, we have a unique opportunity at Wisconsin to train the next generation of Israel experts. The University of Wisconsin, Madison and the faculty associated with Jewish Studies have traditional strengths in political science, history, sociology, Hebrew and literature. This nexus allows us to provide a broad graduate education about Israel while simultaneously training students who are firmly rooted in a discipline. Wisconsin’s academic (and public) culture allows us to nurture students who seek dialogue and real scholarship, not diatribe or advocacy. As all these elements come together, Madison has the potential to become the place in the Midwest, if not in the entire country, where serious people who want to study Israel seriously would want to be.

There are, of course, other aspects of such a program: strengthening the study abroad program for our undergraduates, deepening the graduate student and faculty exchange with Israeli universities, attracting the best scholars who want to work on Israel to Madison, exploiting synergies with other units on campus, workshops, lecture series, conferences, and more.

The work is great and we have only just begun. I look forward to reporting to you in the future on the progress that we are making.
Our time in Poland was an amazing experience. I truly believe that a trip like this is a one-of-a-kind experience. It was shaped by those who were on the trip and the points of view they brought in and shared. I am especially grateful to have had the support and wisdom of Professor Simone Schweber and Rabbi Andrea Steinberger on the trip.

For some the trip was a chance to reconnect with family roots; for others it was an opportunity to learn more about the Holocaust and Eastern European Jewry. For me, it was a chance to encounter the history that I study and see the legacies it has left in Poland. Poland has grown up around its Jewish past, but that past keeps creeping up to the surface, refusing to be forgotten. For all of us, the trip was the opportunity to create memory of the pre-war Jewish communities of Poland and of the Holocaust and to pass it on to those who cannot go themselves to see.

On behalf of all of us who went on this trip, I thank the Colemans for their incredible generosity. Their gift allowed us to do all of this and more: to see a piece of Poland and a piece of Holocaust history, to struggle with the questions the complexity of the experience inevitably raised, and to pass it on to others.”

[Editor’s Note: Angela Kildonk was one of the undergraduates who participated in the Coleman-Fund-sponsored trip to Poland this spring. Angela is History Major at the UW whose work concentrates on Russian Jewish history and Holocaust history. Asked to write about the trip, Angela begins with accounts of visits to historical Jewish sites and to sites of a small, but rejuvenating, Jewish community in Poland today. Along the way she describes encounters with the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, with contemporary anti-Semitism, and the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland. Her concluding remarks, which follow immediately below, begin with her reflections on visits to three death camps. Those who are interested in reading all of Angela's account of the trip, as well as Rabbi Andrea Lerner's Dvar Torah about the experience are referred to our Web Site: FILL IN]
Student Bios

KENNETH P. VOGEI
(Certificate ‘97), after covering state government and politics for newspapers in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Washington state, Kenneth won an American Political Science Association fellowship that allowed him to work on the staffs of two committees in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2006. Afterwards, he took a job covering the confluence of money, influence and politics for The Politico (http://politic o.com), a Washington, D.C.-based startup multi-media news outlet covering Congress and U.S. politics. <kenvogel12@gmail.com>

JENNIFER (NOPARSTAK) GREENHILL
(Certificate ‘99) is currently a Senior Campaign Associate working in the Women’s Department of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and living in the metro Detroit area. She married fellow University of Wisconsin alumnus Jay Greenhill in April 2006 in Chicago.

JOSHUA SAMUELS
(Certificate ‘99), after 5 years working in the financial world in Los Angeles and San Francisco, made a huge career switch by entering Rabbinic school at Hebrew Union College in the summer of 2005. A few weeks before beginning his first year at the Jerusalem campus, Joshua got married to Nicole Levy. They had an amazing year living in Israel. Joshua and Nicole are now back in the states and he is currently finishing up his second year at the Los Angeles campus. This summer he will be back in San Francisco working as a student chaplain in an incredible program called “Clinical Pastoral Education” for a hospital. Joshua’s Jewish studies classes at Madison definitely sparked a huge interest inside of him, although at the time he never imagined being on the path that he is now. <joshsamuels@hotmail.com>

ALEXIS (BLOOMBERG) HENSOLOVITZ
(Certificate 00) after graduating in May 2000, she moved in August to Cambridge, MA with my fiancé, Adam Henslovitz, where he was to attend Harvard Law School. Alexis worked as an editorial assistant for Harvard Business School Publishing. In August 2003, she and Adam moved to New York City’s Upper West Side. She began working as an Executive Assistant to the CEO and soon became the accounting manager for Studio Daniel Libeskind, the architecture firm currently working on the master plan for the World Trade Center project. Alexis gave birth to a beautiful son, Aaron, in April 2005, and after a short maternity leave, returned to work for Libeskind. In late 2006, the Henslovitz family bought a house in Livingston, New Jersey, the same town in which Alexis and Adam grew up.

JACLYN MARKS
(Certificate ‘02) recently graduated with a Masters in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Jaclyn lives in San Francisco and is a policy analyst at the California Public Utilities Commission working on renewable energy and climate change issues. She is engaged to Doron Ohel and will be married this summer in Chicago. In their free time, Jaclyn and Doron love to travel and recently visited Buenos Aires and trekked in the Patagonian Andes of Chile.

YONATAN REINBERG
(Major ‘02) lives in New York, expanding on his love of interdisciplinary cultural studies with a large helping of a sense of humor (the main thrust of Judaism) in pursuing a doctorate in Anthropology at New School University. Studying the interstices of globalization, consumption and urbanization, Yoni is able to continue his passion for the littlest things combining with the larger, from body language to diasporas and histories. In New York Yoni works at Human Rights Watch, one of the world’s most important watchdog groups for (somewhat dubious) universal human rights, and privately enjoys fixing bicycles, reveling in the crazy sustenance that New York provides, and somehow remaining friends with his strange Madison crew in the face of the friendly people with whom you daily meet in New York.

DIANA (SHAPIRO) FERSKO
(Certificate ‘04) has been living in Jerusalem since July where she has begun her first year of rabbinical school. After working within the nonprofit Jewish community in New York for the past two years, Diana decided rabbinical school was the next step in her path of personal, professional, intellectual, and spiritual development. She will return to New York to continue her studies next year at the Reform seminary of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. She is happily married to her husband, Seth Fersko, also a Wisconsin graduate. <dianafer sko@gmail.com>

BEN HERMAN
(Major ‘05) enjoyed the breadth of courses offered by the Jewish Studies program, ranging from History to Literature to Philosophy to Art. Ben thought it was great to be able to continue his Jewish Studies in such a breadth of areas. Ben also enjoyed being able to focus his studies during my last few semesters in the field of Modern Jewish History. He was able to develop a personal relationship with Professor Tony Michels and write his thesis with him as his supervisor. Ben was also able to take a wonderful course on Hasidism in my last semester taught by Professor Joshua Shanes as well as great courses in Jewish Thought with Professor Jonathan Shofer. The ability to personally connect to these professors made his time at Madison very special. Ben also enjoyed some of the “extracurricular” opportunities offered by the Center. He attended a Summer Institute with the topic of Yiddish in which he was able to learn about the role Yiddish culture played in our history and the role it plays in our
community today. Attending these sessions with over 90 enthusiastic participants was very rewarding for him. It was also great to attend so many lectures from distinguished professors in the Jewish world who stopped by Madison every semester, as there are very few places where one is able to do this. In addition, thanks to a very generous grant, Ben was able to go for free to the Lower East Side with Professor Dena Mandel’s Yiddish in America class and learn firsthand about the Jewish immigrant story. Such an experience would not be possible at the vast majority of American universities and he is extremely grateful to have had this opportunity. Currently Ben is in his third year of rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City. Many of the Jewish Studies courses at Madison were an impetus for him to decide to pursue this line of work. He is very appreciative of the strong foundation given to him by the Center for Jewish Studies and for the caring faculty and staff who work to ensure its successful operation.

DORISE GRUBER
(Certificate ’05) after graduating in December 2005 with Sociology and Hebrew majors as well as Jewish Studies and Women’s Studies certificates, she moved to Boston, MA to obtain her Masters degree in Applied Educational Psychology with an Emphasis in College Student Development and Counseling at Northeastern University. She am currently in my second semester. She intend to apply this degree toward working as an Academic Advisor at the University level. In addition to attending school full time, she has a Graduate Assistantship as an Academic Advisor for Northeastern University’s Continuing Education sector, and a part time job working as a Facilities Coordinator for Residential Life here at Northeastern as well. She plans on taking two courses through the Counseling Psychology department at Madison this coming Summer, and is currently deciding on a 300 hour practicum for next year in another setting of Academic Advising here in Boston, and plan to complete her degree in May 2008. <gruber.d@neu.edu>

AMANDA LANE
(Major ’05) is currently living in Chicago and still is in the field of Jewish studies. She works at Gan Shalom preschool at Temple Sholom where she is a preschool teacher and music enrichment teacher. Amanda leads a class where she sings and plays guitar for parents and their toddlers, and she also teaches three-year olds. On Sundays she works at Anshe Emet where she is the music teacher for Junior Kindergarten–5th grade. Amanda is enjoying working with children and realizing her interest in the music aspect of Jewish education. <aflane@gmail.com>

BEN MOSS
(Certificate ’05) currently studies law at American University and can’t believe how little snow it takes for the city of Washington, D.C. to shut down. After graduating from UW–Madison, he got his M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies in Israel, where nobody ever acknowledged his affinity for A.B. Yehoshua (although he did visit the Amos Oz section of the BGU library). Ben was recently asked by a reporter about the creation of the Modern Hebrew language, and still remembering his study of Zionism (from Inception to State, no less!), he was able to give a somewhat intelligible answer. Ben has lots of free advice, and it’s worth every penny; you can email him at: <benjamin.m.moss@gmail.com>

MIRIAM BROUSSEA
(Major ’06) currently works for a Zionist organization that is focused primarily on campus programming. Also, Miriam is pursuing a Master of Arts in
Jewish Professional Studies at Spertus in Chicago, which combines Jewish studies and nonprofit management.

MACKENZIE MCMILMAIL
(Certificate ’06), upon graduation, Mackenzie accepted a position with Teach for America, a national teaching corps dedicated to ending educational inequality in urban and rural schools. As a corps member, Mackenzie taught 6th grade Language Arts and Social Studies in New Haven, Connecticut. The education she received through the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies has proven to be invaluable. Last winter, Mackenzie was able to design and implement a Holocaust literature unit for her 6th grade students, most of whom had never had any contact with the Jewish community. She has recently accepted a teaching position at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School where she will be teaching World Cultures and World History. She will be relocating to Washington, D.C. in August 2007.

RAFI SAMUELS-SCHWARTZ
(Major ’06) is currently back in his hometown of Minneapolis, beginning his second year as the Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Senior fellow for the Hillel at the University of Minnesota. Primarily in charge of Hillel’s engagement and outreach to Jewish students on campus, Rafi can’t help but utilize his Jewish Studies education on a daily basis to help plan events that enrich Jewish life in the Twin Cities. Whether it was studying Rabbinic Texts with Dr. Schofer, touring The Lower East Side with Professor Mandel, or soaking in the salt air in Izmir, Turkey with Professor Skloot, the Center for Jewish Studies had been and remains to be one of Rafi’s fondest memories of his University of Wisconsin experience.

Recent Grads

BY MIRIAM BROUSEAU

Whenever anyone asks me what the best part about college was, I never hesitate to say that it was the conversations. It was engaging in dialogue with friends, with professors, and even with myself, that made my time so meaningful and rewarding.

It is for this same reason that learning in the Jewish Studies department at Madison was such an invaluable experience for me. The story of Judaism is the Great Debate. It is a lyrical playing field between seeming dichotomies—body and soul, holy and secular, tradition and innovation—and suddenly I was a valid participant. From my first classes to the most advanced, I delved into biblical, rabbinic, Hasidic, and modern texts—texts that rarely agreed with each other, let alone with me. As these texts struggled amongst themselves to find answers to questions about everything from the nature of God to proper table manners, my classmates and I did the same. The conversation then happened in at least three dimensions: within the text, between text and reader, and between readers. It was only by our breath that the questions came alive.

I don’t know if we ever answered those grand queries. I do know that wasn’t the point. Today I work for a Zionist organization, focused primarily on campus programming. I am again a student, now at Spertus in Chicago where I am pursuing a Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies, a degree which combines Jewish studies and nonprofit management. In both these capacities I am doing my best to continue the trend I began at Madison, to remind myself that the discussion hasn’t ended, and to encourage others to challenge themselves in the debate. I hope to be able to say, when looking back at any point in my life, that the best part was the conversations.
YOUR GIFT CAN HELP

Never before has the UW–Madison Center for Jewish Studies been better positioned to provide a donor with a magnificent return on their philanthropic investment. The Center is strong. Its faculty is focused and intense. Its student body is more highly qualified than ever before. And, its alumni and friends are proud, supportive and involved. The potential for the future is enormous.

DONOR RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

Endowed Professorships ($1,200,000 - $2,000,000 each):
Professorships in the following areas would substantially strengthen the Center’s internationally renowned teaching and research reputation by recruiting leading scholars in fields currently under-represented among the faculty:

* The Jewish Arts:
In conjunction with the Conney Project in Judaism and the Arts, this position would provide for the future of our pioneering work in the Jewish Arts.

* Israeli Culture and Literature:
A professorship in this area will help round out and stabilize our core program in Israel Studies.

* Education and Jewish Studies:
A professor providing courses in the area of Education and Jewish Studies for students majoring in Education and Jewish Studies. This individual would be available to respond to needs emanating from local, regional and national communities while also contributing to research.

* Eastern European Jewish Studies:
Devoted to a discipline, such as history, Yiddish language and literature, or one of the social sciences, with a focus on Jewish history and culture in Eastern Europe, with a preference for the modern era (post 1700).

* Sephardic Studies:
May be devoted to any discipline, such as history, literature, languages of one of the social sciences, with a focus on Iberian Jewry, history and culture. Currently, the Center’s offerings in this area are limited to one course.

* Modern Jewish Philosophy:
Devoted to Jewish Philosophy after 1700, and especially the 20th century and contemporary Jewish philosophical thought. This position would complement the Center’s current offerings on Jewish philosophy from antiquity to the seventeenth-century (Philo to Spinoza), as well as its offerings on modern Jewish intellectual history.

* Jewish History from Antiquity to the Middle Ages:
A historian who specializes in any area of Jewish history from the late Second Temple period (beginning 5th century BCE) through Iberian Expulsions (end of 15th century CE). This position would build on the Center’s strengths in rabbinic literature and medieval Jewish intellectual and literary studies and complement the Center’s strength in modern Jewish history.

A Lecturers Fund ($300,000):
An endowment to support high-quality lecturers who teach semester-long courses that meet essential CJS curricular needs.

Opportunity is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice.
We have chosen to commit ourselves to transforming the University of Wisconsin–Madison from a great university into a truly extraordinary one.

Inquiries regarding giving opportunities to the Center for Jewish Studies should be directed to:
Steve Kean, Director of Development, George L. Mosse/Laurence A. Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies.
(608) 265–3526, <steve.kean@uwfoundation.wisc.edu>
FALL 2007

October 11th - October 13th
INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN THE
HUMANITIES CONFERENCE
“Responding to Atrocities”
Continuity in the Jewish-Catholic Encounter

October 18th - 4:00 pm - Grainger Hall
SANFORD J. ETTINGER LECTURE
“Writing of Hope in Times of Despair:
Jerusalem in Woman’s Eyes”
Michal Govrin

October 25th - 7:30 pm - State Historical Society Auditorium
TOBIAS LECTURE
A screening of “The Secret War of the Ritchie Boys”
followed by a discussion about this Oscar Nominated
Documentary
Guy Stern

SPRING 2008

Events the week of March 24th
THE KUTLER LECTURES /HASIA DINER

April 15th
EMMY AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKER PIERRE SAVVAUGE

For additional information, please call Anita at (608) 265-4763 or check the Center’s
website at: http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/jewishst