Last Spring, 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. More than 80 teachers, some of whom drove from Minnesota and the northernmost 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 its outreach coordinator, Lara Kain.

The speakers were marvelous. Professor Rudy Koshar 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 young German 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 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 is 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. 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.)

The new institute attracted a group of educators coming from public high schools and a junior high in Wisconsin, as well as from Jewish congregational schools from around the Midwest.
Judged by its achievements, this was both an extraordinary and an ordinary year for the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies—extraordinary in that it featured a breathtaking array of exciting activities and events that made significant contributions at a high level of quality to scholarship, to students, to the university community, and to a broader public; and ordinary in that CJS regularly operates at a very high level. These achievements, some of which are described in other sections of this newsletter, include:

- Two summer institutes this last July—the Greenfield Institute for the general public and one for educators—brought more than 130 enthusiastic participants to campus.
- Outreach activities, particularly our lecture series, brought to campus renowned individuals, including Aaron Lansky, MacArthur Award winner and director of the National Yiddish Book Center, for the Tobias Lecture; Douglas Greenberg, executive director of Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation, for the Kutler Lectures; and Jan Gross of Princeton, who delivered to a full house a riveting talk on the problem of anti-Semitism in post–World War II Poland.
- The Conney Project on Jewish Arts Week brought to campus, from around the country and abroad, world-renowned Jewish artists and art scholars to share and examine with one another and the general public their achievements in diverse media, as well as their ideas of and questions about the Jewish arts.
- Professional development initiatives aimed at educators working in public and private elementary and high schools in the Midwest who are interested in more effectively teaching youngsters about matters that relate to Jewish studies.
- An educational trip for undergraduates to Jewish Poland, made possible by our Coleman Fund and led by Simone Schweber, the Goodman Professor of Education and Jewish Studies, and Rabbi Andrea Steinberger of the Hillel Foundation.

These achievements have been accomplished at a time when the Center for Jewish Studies is undergoing a dynamic change. It’s a time when some of the pioneering members of the Jewish studies community—Gilead Morag, Klaus Berghahn, and Robert Skloot—have announced their retirements. We will miss them greatly. But it is also a time in which our current and superb faculty in fields that span the humanities, the social sciences, law, and education are being joined by an exciting array of younger faculty, who bring new perspectives, courses, and ideas to the university and the Jewish studies communities—people such as Simone Schweber in education and Jewish studies, Doug Rosenberg in the Jewish arts, Ken Goldstein and Nadav Shelev, both political scientists with interests and expertise in Israel studies, Sara Geyer in English, Tony Michels in history, and Chad Goldberg in sociology. What defines these people as a group is that they are superb as teachers and researchers, that they are dedicated to the field of Jewish studies and to the center, and that they are willing to become seriously engaged in outreach to the various constituencies that have an interest in our work. Their presence bodes well for our continuing growth.

The center is also growing in other ways. Our faculty, for example, has now undertaken an ambitious effort to enhance the already excellent quality of our undergraduate curriculum with the introduction of a new generation of courses, sequenced to maximize educational effectiveness. Beginning next fall, this curricular innovation will be launched through intensive seminars known as FIGs (First-year Interest Groups) that will bring freshmen into close contact with our strong teaching faculty, paving their way for additional learning experiences in Jewish studies.

Though it has been thrilling to be a part of this rapid growth, there is a danger that

Continued on next page
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, I meet 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 2006. I had never met Bob and his wife Beverly before, but I knew that over the last twelve years they had been active supporters of the center. Both Bob and his wife had studied at 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 received 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 them in person for their generosity. I knew little more about Bob and Beverly 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 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. Here we found....
On December 6, 2007, Ruth Gruber gave an extraordinary illustrated lecture as part of the fall 2007 Jewish Heritage Lecture Series in Madison, cosponsored by the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia and the Wisconsin Alumni Association. Her lecture was based on the book Witness: One of the Great Correspondents of the Twentieth Century Tells Her Story (Random House, 2007). At the age of ninety-six, her ability to give an extemporaneous talk was as inspiring as the stories she told. Her stories ranged from her impressions of Madison when she was a graduate student, earning her MA in 1932 (the UW was the place to go for New Yorkers in the 1930s); a meeting with Virginia Woolf in 1933 (whose anti-Semitic response to meeting Ruth Gruber is documented in Woolf’s correspondence); her work as a member of the Roosevelt administration and her essential role in telling the world about the fate of post–World War II Jewish refugees from Europe. Her unparalleled career as journalist, photographer, and witness to history is an inspiration to all who know her.

“I was especially caught by the eyes of the orphans at a DP camp for children in Leipheim, near Munich, in 1946. It was in a former SS barracks. The world “orphanage” was verboten. The orphans were put in “children’s homes.” Children of nine or eleven became parents and guardians of the six- and seven-year-olds. Some of the children looked brave and confident, while others seemed terrified. A few of the children held out their arms to me; I embraced them, holding them close to me. I didn’t know who needed to be hugged more, they or I.”

— Ruth Gruber

Ruth Gruber Returns

From Witness: One of the Great Correspondents of the Twentieth Century Tells Her Story (Random House, 2007)
On December 5, 2007, I had the humble opportunity to talk with Ruth Gruber over a cup of hot tea. At the wise age of 96, Ruth Gruber is still as sharp as a tack. Within the first few minutes, I asked Ruth, “Where did you grow up?” and without hesitation, the journalist instinct kicked in and she asked me, “Where did you grow up?” Ruth eventually answered the question, and I found out Ruth was born and grew up in New York City. At the age of eighteen her parents encouraged her to continue her education, so she applied for and won a postgraduate fellowship at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. With glowing eyes she recounted to me how, with her father’s support, she hitchhiked from New York City to Madison, Wisconsin, in order to stop at all the cities with Greek names. Ruth warmly recalled fond memories of her year in Wisconsin, specifically remembering the crush she had on one of her tall, handsome professors. After earning another fellowship to study at the University of Cologne, Ruth said she traveled to Germany with no intentions of pursuing a doctorate degree, yet left a year later, at the age of 20, with a PhD in modern literature after studying and falling in love with the writings of Virginia Woolf. Despite all Ruth’s personal experiences, including escorting 1,000 Holocaust survivors to America and witnessing the aftermath of the British attack on the Jewish refugee ship Exodus in 1947, she chose to tell me of her children’s accomplishments rather than of her own. As I was leaving, Ruth looked me in the eye and sternly said, “We all have tools. Mine are writing and photography. You have tools too. The important thing to remember is that we need to use the tools that have been given to us to help fight injustice and oppression.” Through her journalism and photography, Ruth Gruber has left a worldwide legacy of compassion and set a standard for social activism during the 20th century.
ANGELA KILSDONK (07)

I have studied the rich history of Jewish life in Poland and the tragedy of its destruction in class, but going to Poland and visiting the death camps made me look straight into the heart of what I study. Being there, inside the camps, I could not shield myself from a profound realization of the horror of the Holocaust—a very different experience from reading a book on the subject 3,000 miles away from where it took place. Being there, you look straight-on, you cannot look away, and you see what human beings are capable of doing to their fellow human beings. This is a difficult historical 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 is with me and reminds me to look beneath the surface of those who I perceive as different from myself to find the commonalities that make us all human beings. I truly believe that a student trip like this is a one-of-a-kind experience. My experiences were shaped by those who were on the trip and the points of view we shared. I am especially grateful to have had the support and wisdom of Professor Simone Schieber and Rabbi Andrea Steinberger. For some, the trip was a chance to reconnect with family roots; for others, an opportunity to learn more about the Holocaust and eastern European Jewry. For me, it was also a chance to encounter the history that I study and see the legacies it has left in Poland. Poland has grown around its Jewish past, with few Jews now living in Poland, but that past keeps creeping up to the surface, refusing to be forgotten. For all of us, the trip was an extraordinary opportunity to re-create the memory of the vibrant pre-war Jewish communities of Poland, and of the Holocaust and to pass it on to those who cannot go themselves.

Family photos
from Coleman trip
participant Logan
Zinman, featuring her
Polish great grand-
mother, Ida Perl, with
her grandchildren
The Coleman Experience: Connecting Students to Jewish Life in Poland

Above: Students at the Krakow Old Synagogue. Back row: Andi Feldman, Zach Kelley, Becca Sacks, Hannah Wolkstein, Lekesz (the group’s Polish tour guide), Anna Zak, Logan Zinman, and Marc Rosen. Front row: Rabbi Andrea Steinberger, Angela Kilsdonk, and Geoffrey Reid Schwartz

Left: Students at the Majdanek Concentration Camp: Hannah Wolkstein, Logan Zinman, Andi Feldman, Anna Zak, Angela Kilsdonk, and Becca Sacks
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 both to raise awareness of the contributions of Jewish artists and scholars to the landscape and history of the arts in general and 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.

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 we were able to feature 50 presentations during the week-long event, including scholarly papers, performances, and films. The interdisciplinary focus of the conference resulted in a remarkable breadth of presentations—music, visual art, the literary arts, theater, and dance—exploring both the theory and practice of each discipline. 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 creating works that range from Judaica and ritual objects to performance art, often with 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 re-thinking 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 Jewish artists such as Mierle Ukeles, Julie Weitz, Shalom Gorewitz. These contributions are under-represented, 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...
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 socioeconomically 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 nonprofit 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 socioeconomically 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 town of Ofakim 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 focus my research interests, as well as to participate 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 toward more democratization of Israeli education and society.

Working with At-Risk Arab and Jewish Israeli Children

Assaf Meshulam
Weinstein Distinguished Graduate Fellow

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.

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.

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.
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 of the 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 yet moved back to the Mt. Scopus campus.

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, Argentina, and America.

The students were bright, energetic, and were especially excited to take a course with a political-behavior bent with lots of examples from an American political context. It was fun for me to be able to teach 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–Madison and the 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 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 UW–Madison. 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–Madison and the 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–Madison.

Being able to return to the 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 the Hebrew University. My nine-year-old daughter is already talking about coming back for her junior year.

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 Tanakh 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 CE?

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 Program 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 Studies to make 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.

Kent Aaron Reynolds
Mosse Graduate Exchange Fellow, 2005–06

In addition to teaching an undergraduate seminar on democracy, socialism, and capitalism for the Mosse Program at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I plan to pursue my research interest in the sociology of citizenship by revising and expanding an existing paper titled “The Civic Dimension of Jewish Nationalism.” 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 ethnoreligious minorities. 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.
It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to introduce myself to you. 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 Center for Jewish Studies.

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 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. UW–Madison and the faculty associated with the Center for Jewish Studies have traditional strengths in the humanities and social sciences, and 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 people who want to seriously study Israel will want to be.

The work is great and we have only just begun. I look forward to reporting to you in the future on our progress in moving this exciting project forward.

2007 COURSE INCENTIVE GRANT

We are pleased to announce a course incentive grant to: Professor Nadav Shelef for a new course titled “The Arab-Israeli conflict.”

2007 Scholarship Awards

Natelson Family Award in Jewish Studies
Emmylou Grosser

Weinstein-Minkoff Scholarship for Study in Israel
Simcha Cohen

Lipton Capstone Essay
Jodie Honigman

Lipton Essay Award
Jordan Stein

Lipton Study Abroad
Lee’at Bachar

Berman Research Award
Kevin Chau

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ways of approaching other educational challenges they face.

The new institute attracted a group of educators from public high schools and a junior high in Wisconsin, as well as from Jewish congregational schools from around the Midwest. The group’s diversity—men and women of different religious and cultural backgrounds, teaching young-sters of different ages in very different contexts—profoundly enriched our 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 the late Esther Leah Ritz, Michael and Judith Goodman, and the family of Frances and Laurence Weinstein. It has been their dream and ours that this program would contribute to the work of educators in Madison, the Midwest, and beyond. The Summer Institute in Education and Jewish Studies represents part of our continuing effort to make good on these worthy dreams.
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 latter option. With the generous support of the Weinstein family, the program was inaugurated in the early 90s, and in memory of the two driving forces—George Mosse and Laurence 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 me 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 under titles 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—“The Roots of Antisemitism.”

On the recommendation of Elaine 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 Hermand a volume titled Goethe 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.

## CENTER NEWS

### A “German Goy” in the Jewish Studies Program

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 latter option. With the generous support of the Weinstein family, the program was inaugurated in the early 90s, and in memory of the two driving forces—George Mosse and Laurence Weinstein—it is now called the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies.

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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.

### CENTER NEWS

#### New Courses in Jewish Studies

On the recommendation of the CJS Executive Committee, the Curriculum Committee has introduced three new courses. These aim to upgrade the major by offering students a series of small classes that focus on developing their skills in the disciplines of Jewish Studies as well as the liberal arts. The three courses are:

- **A Freshmen Interest Group (FIG).** FIGs are designed to offer students a thematic group of courses in their first semester so that they can follow an academic interest with a peer group. These courses have been highly successful in motivating first-semester freshmen. Jewish Studies will offer a FIG for the first time in fall 2008 titled “Translating Jewishness Across Time and Place,” it links three courses: Susan Bernstein’s “Translating Jewish Literature (English 181H); Simone Schweber’s “Jewish Identity Across Atrocity” (Jewish Studies 201); and Tony Michel’s “The American Jewish Experience: From Shtetl to Suburb” (Jewish Studies 219).
- **A Sophomore/Junior Seminar (Jewish Studies 421) which will introduce students to the methods and concerns of Jewish Studies by focusing on a topic that can be addressed in all periods of the Jewish experience using multiple disciplines.** David Sorkin will organize the course whose theme will be “Jews and the State.” Four or five faculty members will each present a two-week module that addresses the theme in their period of specialization using their respective discipline. Students will write a short research paper in the second half of the course.
- **A Capstone course consisting of a one-credit seminar (675) and a three-credit independent study (677).** Jewish studies majors are required to write a capstone research paper. This course facilitates that goal by providing a forum (675) in which students will investigate the nature of Jewish studies, learn the skills of research and writing, and present their work at various stages. The independent study (677) will enable students to have the supervision of a faculty member expert in their chosen topic.

**David Sorkin**

**Professor of History and Weinstein Professor of Jewish Studies**
ALUMNI REPORT

Where Are They Now?


JENNIFER (NOPARSTAK) GREENHILL ('99) I am 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. I married fellow University of Wisconsin alumnus Jay Greenhill in April 2006 in Chicago. jennifernoparstak@yahoo.com

JOSHUA SAMUELS ('99) After 5 years working in the financial world in Los Angeles and San Francisco, I made a huge career switch by entering Rabbinic school at Hebrew Union College in the summer of 2005. A few weeks before beginning my first year at the Jerusalem campus, I married Nicole Levy, and we experienced an amazing year living in Israel. We are now back in the states and I am currently finishing up my second year at the Los Angeles campus. This summer I will be back in San Francisco working as a student chaplain in an incredible program called “Clinical Pastoral Education” for a hospital. My Jewish studies classes at Madison definitely sparked a huge interest in the subject, although at the time I never imagined being on the path that my life has taken. joshsamuels@hotmail.com

ALEXIS (BLOOMBERG) HENSLOVITZ ('00) After graduating in May 2000, I moved in August to Cambridge, MA, with my fiancé, Adam Henslovitz, where he attended Harvard Law School, and I worked as an editorial assistant for Harvard Business School Publishing. In August 2003, we moved to New York City where I took a job as account manager for Studio Daniel Libeskind, the architecture firm currently working on the master plan for the World Trade Center project. I gave birth to a beautiful son, Aaron, in April 2005, and after a short maternity leave, returned to work for Studio Libeskind. In late 2006, we bought a house in Livingston, N.J., the same town in which we grew up. ahenslovitz@hbsp.harvard.edu

JACLYN MARKS ('02) I recently graduated with a master’s in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and now live in San Francisco, where I am a policy analyst at the California Public Utilities Commission, working on renewable energy and climate change issues. I recently married Doron Ohel. In our free time, we love to travel and recently visited Buenos Aires and trekked in the Patagonian Andes of Chile.

YONATAN REINBERG ('02) I currently live in New York City, and cultivating my love of interdisciplinary cultural studies with a large helping of a sense of humor (the main thrust of Judaism) to pursue a doctorate in anthropology at New School University where I am studying the interstices of globalization, consumption and urbanization. I also work at Human Rights Watch, one of the world’s most important watchdog groups for (somewhat dubious) universal human rights. In my spare time I enjoy fixing bicycles, reveling in the crazy sustenance that New York provides, and somehow remain friends with my strange Madison crew in the face of the friendly people with whom you daily meet in New York. ayonatan@yahoo.com

DIANA (SHAPIRO) FERSKO ('04) After working within the nonprofit Jewish community in New York for the past two years, I decided rabbinical school was the next step in my path of personal, professional, intellectual, and spiritual development. Since July 2007 I have been living in Jerusalem, where I have begun my first year of rabbinical school. I plan to return to New York to continue my studies at the Reform Seminary of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. My husband, Seth Fersko, is also a Wisconsin graduate. dianafersko@gmail.com

BEN HERMAN ('05) I was enriched by the breadth of courses offered by the Jewish studies program, ranging from history to literature to philosophy to art, and I plan to continue my education in this broad range of subjects within Jewish studies. I also enjoyed being able to focus my studies during my last few semesters in the field of modern Jewish history, where I was able to develop a friendship with Professor Tony Michels and write an undergraduate thesis with him. I 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 Schaffer. The ability to personally connect with professors made my time at Madison very special. I also very much enjoyed some of the “extracurricular” opportunities offered by the center; I attended a Summer Institute where I learned about the role Yiddish culture played in our history and the role it plays in our community today. Attending these sessions with more than 90 enthusiastic participants was very rewarding. I was also able to attend so many lectures by distinguished scholars of the Jewish world who stopped by Madison every semester; there are very few places where such a rich variety of lectures is so easily accessible. I was also able to join Professor Dena Mendel’s Yiddish in America class trip to New York’s Lower East Side, and learn firsthand about the Jewish immigrant story. Such an experience would not be possible at the vast majority of American universities, and I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity. Currently, I am in my third year of rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City. My courses at UW–Madison in Jewish studies inspired me to pursue this line of work. I am very appreciative of the strong foundation given to me by the Center for Jewish Studies and for the caring faculty and staff who work to ensure its continued successful operation. badgerben1@gmail.com

DORIS GRUBER ('05) After graduating in December 2005, I moved to Boston to obtain my master’s degree at Northeastern University in applied educational psychology.
with an emphasis in college student development and counseling. I am currently in my second semester, and intend to apply this degree toward working as an academic advisor at the university level. In addition to attending school full time, I work as a graduate assistant for Northwestern University’s Continuing Education sector, and as a facilities coordinator for Residential Life. I am currently deciding on a 300-hour practicum for next year in another setting for academic advising in Boston, where I plan to complete my degree in May 2008. gruber.d@neu.edu

AMANDA LANE (’05) I currently live in Chicago and am still in the field of Jewish studies. I work at Gan Shalom preschool at Temple Sholom as a preschool and music-enrichment teacher. On Sundays I work at Anshe Emet as the music teacher for kindergarten through 5th grade. I greatly enjoy working with children and exploring my interest in the musical aspects of Jewish education. aflane@gmail.com

BEN MOSS (’05) I currently study 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, I received my MA in Middle Eastern studies in Israel, where nobody ever acknowledged my affinity for A.B. Yehoshua—although I did once visit the Amos Oz section of the BGU library. I was recently asked about the creation of the Modern Hebrew language, and remembering my study of Zionism (from Inception to State, no less) was able to give a somewhat intelligible answer. I have lots of free advice, and it’s worth every penny. You can e-mail me at benjamin.m.moss@gmail.com.

MIRIAM BROUSSEAU (’06) 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 program 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 an MA 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. miriamb@hagshama.org.il

MACKENZIE MCILMAIL (’06) Upon graduation, I 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, I taught 6th grade language arts and social studies in New Haven, CT. The education I received through the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies has proven to be invaluable. Last winter, I was able to design and implement a Holocaust literature unit for 6th grade students, most of whom had never had any contact with the Jewish community. I recently accepted a teaching position at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, where I teach world cultures and world history. mlmcilmail@gmail.com

RAFI SAMSUELS-SCHWARTZ (’06) I am back in my hometown of Minneapolis in my second year as the Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Senior Fellow Hillel at the University of Minnesota. Primarily in charge of Hillel’s engagement and outreach to Jewish students on campus, I can’t help but utilize my Jewish studies education on a daily basis to help plan events that enrich Jewish life in the Twin Cities. Whether it was studying Rabbinc textbooks 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 has been and remains my fondest memory of my UW–Madison experience. rafi@ujews.com

NATELSON Continued from page 3

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.

Through the window behind us, Steve and I observed a simple-but-elegant Japanese rock-garden surrounding a pool, reflecting the backdrop of an early-evening sky. The inner beauty of Bob and Beverly and the outer beauty of their surroundings 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, for the most fleeting time, threw 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 such as 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.

Daniel Pekarsky
Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Jewish Studies
**8th Annual Greenfield Summer Institute**

**Encountering Israel: Summer 2007**

**History, Culture, and Politics**

The 8th annual Greenfield Summer Institute, organized around the theme of “Encountering Israel: History, Culture and Politics.” 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, and to attend cultural events such as one of the annual Concerts on the Square programs and a Yid Vicious Klezmer performance at the Memorial Union. The group also had the opportunity to screen an exceptional movie that featured leading Israeli public intellectuals representing different perspectives on Israeli society and representatives of various Israeli subgroups—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 emphasized 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.

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