

# AMUDIM



Newsletter of the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida

No. 14, Spring 2001

## From the Director

Teaching ranks high among jobs that require a strong capacity for deferred gratification. As professors, we often have to wait years to see the fruits of our labor. By the time students realize what they have gained from the academic experience, they're usually years and miles removed from their student days.

That thought occurred to me as the academic year drew to a close. It was occasioned by some developments that I want to recount.

More than 10 years ago, the Center for Jewish Studies hosted an Israeli professor for a year-long visiting appointment. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, a political scientist from Hebrew University, taught courses about the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. He was one of many such visitors the Center has hosted over the years thanks to generous donations from friends and supporters.

During his stay with the Center, Yaacov befriended several students. He particularly impressed a young woman who was interested in comparative religion and ended up completing a minor in Jewish Studies. She was so influenced by his courses that she decided to make the Middle East her academic specialty and went off to one of the top-ranked graduate programs in the country at the University of Washington.

Yaacov also became friendly with a faculty member in the Department of Political Science. When the faculty member indicated that he had a sabbatical coming, Yaacov urged him to spend it in Israel. Under Yaacov's prodding, the faculty member applied for a Fulbright lectureship in Israel and eventually found himself at the Hebrew University for the academic year. During that year in Jerusalem, the UF professor got to know another UF undergraduate who was attending Hebrew University under UF's Study Abroad program, another effort supported by the Center for Jewish Studies.

During the past year, Yaacov's influence on the Center became apparent. The student who was inspired by his course to pursue an academic career in Middle East studies applied for a new faculty line in Jewish Studies and Political Science. In just a few months, Dr. Patricia Woods will return to UF as an assistant professor and teach some

of the very courses that she took as an undergraduate in the Jewish Studies program.

The second student, a participant in the Study Abroad program at Hebrew University, also pursued an academic career. She went on to earn a Ph.D. at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, specializing in Rabbinic theology. Gwynn Kessler has accepted a position as assistant professor of Religion at UF and will also return to her alma mater to teach several core courses in our curriculum.

And what of the UF faculty member whom Yaacov inspired to spend a year in Israel? The Jerusalem year was a life-changing experience that prompted me to move my research and teaching into Jewish Studies. It led, eventually, to my decision to seek the directorship of the Center and to an active role in helping recruit both Gwynn and Patricia for our program.



Wald

I had originally planned to use this space to highlight the major developments in our program over the past year. But in retrospect, it seemed more important to tell the story about Yaacov's profound influence on three members of the UF community. The goal of all our programs is to enhance awareness of Judaism from an academic perspective. As the story indicates, the impact of what we do can be profound and lasting.

Kenneth D. Wald, Ph.D.  
Director

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## What's New?

### Center for Jewish Studies Visits Miami

The Center was pleased to present two exciting and informative educational outreach events in the Miami area on Tuesday, October 24, 2000. The first presentation was made in the afternoon to a warm and receptive crowd at the Miami Jewish Home for the Aged, thanks to the help and cooperation of the Honorable Irving Cypen. A second presentation took place that evening at the beautiful and historic Fontainebleau Hotel on Miami Beach. Both events featured renowned Holocaust historian and University of Florida Associate Professor Geoffrey Giles. The evening event was sponsored by generous Center benefactors Norman Braman, Gary Gerson, Mikki and Morris Futernick and Norman Lipoff.

Guests at these two educational sessions were introduced to Center Director Kenneth Wald who spoke about the outstanding work the Center for Jewish Studies has been involved in and the ever increasing number of students and faculty it serves. Dr. Giles then gave a stirring presentation about the intense persecution that occurred during the Holocaust. Although it was targeted principally against the Jews, the Holocaust claimed other victims. Many of these groups, such as homosexuals, have been severely understudied.



Giles

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Giles reported, a flood of new records have become available in Eastern Europe. To mine this material and ensure its preservation, it will require a new generation of scholars with training in Eastern European language and culture. The UF Center for Jewish Studies hopes to be the locus of this new scholarly movement.

The trip to Miami was a tremendous success and the Center again wishes to thank those that made these events possible.

Contributing writer, Jennifer Denault

### Endowments Honor Retired Faculty/Community Activists

The Center is pleased to announce two recent endowments in honor of retired UF faculty members and community activists. The **Warren Bargad Endowment** honors the Center's director from 1985-1999 who retired last year as Professor of English. The **Sam and Bessie Proctor Endowment** honors both the University's Official Historian and his wife, a respected member of the local community.

*Continued on page 4, ENDOWMENTS*

## Faculty Notables

**Avraham Balaban** had a Skirball Fellowship at the Center for Jewish Studies, Oxford University (January - June, 2000). He used this fellowship to examine issues of Jewish and Israeli identity in modern Hebrew literature. In March he gave a seminar on the fiction of Israeli author Amos Oz at Cambridge University. He was invited to teach at Cambridge for two terms (October 2000 and March 2001), but had to decline due to previous commitments at the University of Florida. Balaban's first book of fiction, *Shiv'aa* (Mourning), a fictionalized memoir of his childhood on the kibbutz where he was born, was published in June 2000 by the prestigious Israeli publisher, Hakibbutz Hameuchad. (See our *Feature Presentation* on page 5.) His harsh depiction of life on the kibbutz struck a chord in Israel; he was interviewed about the book by several news agencies in Israel and abroad, including the BBC World Service. Balaban's 38-page article, "Secularity and Religiosity in Contemporary Hebrew Literature," has been accepted for publication by *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures* (published by Oxford University). He wrote the entry "Hebrew Literature" for the Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year (2000, 2001). He also continued publishing book reviews in the Israeli newspaper, "Ha'aretz."

**Joshua Comenetz** received a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences grant to support research into mapping the North American Jewish population. During summer 2000 he spent several weeks in New York and Toronto, gathering historical demographic data on Jewish populations of the U.S. and Canada. The first results of this ongoing study were presented at the Population Association of America's annual

The course looked at the spatial distribution of Jews and their demographic characteristics, and how both change over time.

meeting in March 2001, and included a map of the distribution of American Jews in the 1930s and 1940s, the most detailed and accurate map of the American Jewish population ever produced. He also taught a new course, *Geography of the Jewish Population*, in Fall 2000. The course looked at the spatial distribution of Jews and their demographic characteristics, and how both change over time. In October 2000, he spoke to Congregation Shir Shalom in Gainesville on the geography of Middle East peace.

**Geoffrey Giles** spent the current academic year as the Shapiro Senior Scholar-in-Residence at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. His project is to complete a book on the persecution of homosexuals by the Nazis. The archival material available at the Museum and in the National Archives also allowed



### In Appreciation...

We are grateful to all of our donors, whose contributions greatly enhance the Center for Jewish Studies academic commitment to Judaic education. Your munificence supports our mission and heightens our resources.

**Thank you for your generosity!**

Professor Giles to look closely at the incidence of homosexuality in the SS. Professor Giles gave lectures at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Dartmouth College, among other places. He has also been called upon to lead discussions at screenings of the new documentary film, "Paragraph 175," which consists of interviews with gay and lesbian victims of the Nazis.

**Andrew Gordon** presented a paper on "Jewish Fathers and Sons in Philip Roth's *Patrimony* and Art Spiegleman's *Maus*" at the American Literature Association Conference on Jewish-American Literature in Delray Beach, November 2, 2000.

**Richard Hiers** taught the course Hebrew Scriptures in the Spring semesters of 2000 and 2001. He was on research leave during Fall 2000, completing work on a book and two articles. His book, entitled *Trinity Guide to the Bible with Apocrypha*, will be published by Trinity Press International in 2001. One article, "Biblical Social Welfare Legislation," will appear in *The Journal of Law and Religion* later this year. The other article, "Reverence for Life and Environmental Ethics in Biblical Law and Covenant," is scheduled for on-line publication in Spring 2001 in the *Forum on Religion and Ecology* (<http://environment.harvard.edu/religion>). This article is a substantially revised version of an article published in 1998 in *The Journal of Law & Religion*. An abstract of the 1998 article was published on-line in 1999 in *Environmental Law Policy Abstracts* (<http://www.SSRN.Com>), University of California at Berkeley.

**Gerald Murray**, in his teaching of the Anthropology of Religion, has designed a variant of the course that gives close attention to monotheistic traditions, and that focuses in on

The goal is to place Judaism and Christianity in the broader context of human religions in general, as a springboard from which to examine the unique features of each.

anthropological similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity in terms of their evolution, their basic structural components (spirit beliefs, associated ceremonial practices, and leadership structures), and their multiple anthropological functions. The course documents the retention and transformation in Judaism and Christianity of themes (such as

blood sacrifice, spirit healing, altered consciousness) found in the simpler band and tribal religions more conventionally studied by anthropologists. The goal is to place Judaism and Christianity in the broader context of human religions in general, as a springboard from which to examine the unique features of each. During this year, Murray has also continued his work as an anthropologist in the Caribbean. He has brought in to UF a \$1.2 million subcontract under which the University of Florida will carry out applied research in rural Haiti. This research, which will be done as a collaboration between IFAS (UF's agricultural school) and the Department of Anthropology, is a follow-on to Murray's long term anthropological involvement in Haiti. During this year, he has also continued his work on urban microenterprise in the Spanish speaking side of the island, the Dominican Republic. He is finalizing (in Spanish) his third book in a series of four.

**Melvin New** edited "In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the Eighteenth Century," a collection of 17 essays, with Richard A. Cohen and Robert Bernasconi, which will be published in Spring 2001 by Texas Tech University Press. Levinas is perhaps the most important 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish philosopher after Martin Buber. The essays in this collection tie his philosophy to various 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers and literary authors, including Spinoza, Moses Mendelssohn, Kant, Fielding, Defoe, and Sterne.

**Robert Singerman** authored *Jewish Serials of the World: A Supplement to the Research Bibliography of Secondary Sources*, which was published by Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, in early 2001.

**Kenneth Wald** had an academic year which seemed like one long committee meeting, but that wasn't a misimpression. Wald served on Search Committees for new positions in Hebrew Literature (African and Asian Languages and Literatures) and Rabbinic Judaism (Religion). He also chaired the search for a

The Lieberman nomination brought Wald notoriety...

new joint line in Jewish Studies and the Social Sciences, resulting in the hiring of Patricia Woods. As if that weren't enough, he was asked by the Provost to chair the search for a new Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Sandwiched around these meetings, he gave a talk about the Lieberman nomination at the Jacksonville Jewish Center and a lecture on religion and state in Israel to the Judaic Studies Program at Florida Atlantic University. The Lieberman nomination brought Wald notoriety as a guest on PBS' "Newshour with Jim Lehrer." Wald's scholarly activities centered on completing a book about religious and cultural influences in American voting behavior that will be published by Princeton University Press. He also co-authored a chapter on contemporary Jewish political behavior for a new volume on modern Jewish politics. ↵



# Price Library of Judaica

## Expanding for the future...

The Price Library of Judaica, a section of the Special and Area Studies Collections at the University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries, was formally dedicated in 1981. Named for Isser and Rae Price, a fund was established by their sons, Jack and Samuel Price, to support the library, which in turn assists the Center for Jewish Studies in accomplishing its teaching and research mission. It is what

The Isser and Rae Price  
Library of Judaica



at the  
University of Florida Libraries  
From the library of Rabbi Leonard C. Mishkin

librarian Robert Singerman likes to call “a regional center of library excellence in Jewish Studies without comparison in the southeastern United States.”

The result of the endowment fund has been, according to Singerman, “an enrichment to Jewish Studies resources.” Whereas the typical budget provided by the State may only allow the routine acquisition of books written in the English language and published in the United States each year, the endowment “expands the

library’s annual acquisitions to include out-of-print books, Hebrew books by Israeli authors and scholars, and current foreign language European imprints,” says Singerman.

The library, temporarily housed within the Education Library at Norman Hall, proudly boasts holdings exceeding 67,000 volumes. It has steadily outgrown its’ current space, with an annual growth rate of over 2,000 volumes, requiring that many older or inactive volumes be placed in a separate storage facility. According to Singerman,

*“Everything we build today is the foundation for the future.”*

“The new addition to Library West (with it’s proposed opening in the Summer of 2004) will house the humanities and social sciences collections and the Area Studies collections, including the Price Library of Judaica.” With this additional space, and the added space-saving feature of compact shelving units, the Price Library will occupy a convenient central campus location, be able to reintegrate the stored books back into the active collection, and look forward to continued expansion.

Besides the teaching and research resources provided to the Center for Jewish Studies, Singerman also says that many people are unaware that “the Price Library’s vast collection also circulates on interlibrary loan to borrowers in Florida or in other states or foreign countries, with some 300 borrowing requests and an equal number of photocopying requests processed each year.” When asked about future directions of growth for the library, Singerman

states “a current collecting emphasis is Holocaust research material being purchased in response to the active Holocaust studies program offered by the Center for Jewish Studies. Everything we build today is the foundation for the future,” adds Singerman.



## In Memory...

It is with sadness for the loss of the Price family that the Center for Jewish Studies learned of the death of Mrs. Judith Lippman Price on October 23, 2000. Mrs. Price devoted her life to improving the lives of others. She inspired major fund raising events for the American Heart Association, River Garden Jewish Home for the Aged, and the American Cancer Society. Survivors include her husband of 50 years, Jack; 1 daughter; 2 sons; 10 grandchildren; nieces and nephews and sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law. Our hearts and our compassion go out to the family and friends of Mrs. Price.

## ENDOWMENTS, *Continued from page 2.*

“The campus is covered with buildings named after faculty and community members who left a lasting imprint on UF,” noted Center Director Kenneth Wald. “By putting the names of Warren Bargad and the Proctors on these perpetual endowments, we will keep their names associated with UF and the Center for Jewish Studies.”

Mark Proctor, one of two sons of Sam and Bessie Proctor, has many proud memories of his parents dedication to Jewish studies on the UF campus, as well as Jewish pursuits in the Gainesville community. “As long as I can remember, my parents have been actively imparting Jewish beliefs and awareness to young people, and they have never lost that interest,” says Proctor. As community members for more than 60 years, and pioneers in the local Jewish community, Sam and Bessie Proctor have touched many lives through their participation and leadership in local and campus Jewish causes. The Proctor Endowment developed a year ago from a desire for the Proctor family, including Mark, his wife Mary Frances and their daughter Madison, as well as brother Alan, his wife Susan and their daughter Rebecca, to honor Sam and Bessie for their dedication to education, and to continue the family tradition of imparting Jewish knowledge to future generations.

Both the Bargad and Proctor endowments are intended to support students by providing scholarships, research grants, and paper awards. “Given the many ways Bargad and the Proctors helped students,” Wald commented, “it’s altogether fitting to make sure that the funds given in their names be targeted to student needs.”



## Feature Presentation

*We are pleased to present an excerpt from Avraham Balaban's new novel, Shiv'aa, which has been published in Hebrew by Hakibbutz Hameuchad in Israel. Grants from the Center's Melton Endowment in Jewish Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences supported the English language translation of the first chapter. Balaban chairs the Department of African and Asian Languages and Literatures and teaches courses on Hebrew literature.*

### **Shiv'aa (Mourning), A Memoir** **by Avraham Balaban**

#### **Chapter 1- Broken Skies**

☞ “I’m going for a walk,” I said. Mom got up from her chair and as she came near me I was again struck by how small she’d grown in the past few years. The skin on her cheeks was dry and sprinkled with the bristles of age. Her eighty-one years had withered her arms, leaving their skin sagging and wrinkled like a deflated balloon. She kissed my arm and, red-eyed, wiped the impression of her lips from my skin. I put on my denim jacket and stepped out in the familiar midday silence of the kibbutz: the silence of flies, of rotting pecan leaves. The wintry sun exposed cracks in the house walls and in the pavement leading to the dining-hall, a distance that had shrunk so much since I left the

The first memory is a broken sky and darkness.

kibbutz a quarter-century ago. To the eyes that followed me from house windows and the bench in front of the dining hall I was ‘the son of Shprintza and Yonah who’s come from America for the funeral.’ My fresh orphanhood lent my footsteps a strange, not-unpleasant weightiness.

Beyond the dining-hall my first children’s-house was still standing. Where our sandbox used to be there was now an old Ellis tractor, painted red. The green-trunked eucalyptuses behind the building had grown taller, dwarfing it. The first four rooms of that long structure had been my first children’s-house. In the next four rooms Mom looked after her kindergarten brood. I remembered the building well - the screened windows which stuck out in the back - but not the life that was lived within its walls. Only the cry, ‘Be a good boy, be a good boy!’ still echoed among them, like the crack of a whiplash lingering after the whip has been put away. On the old laundry lines beside the house white children’s shirts shivered in the wintry wind. The wind nipped my flesh and opened a dim well of memory which soon clarified. In a moment it revealed all its forms, the forms of light and shade, of Mom’s voice, of the alarm at her absence.

A wall, a white wall, blocked Mom’s smell and hushed her footsteps. Now and then her voice, familiar as the taste of saliva in the mouth, spoke behind the wall, or grew angry.

From time to time she hung the washing on the laundry lines beside the children’s-house, or played with her kindergarten children on the lawn before the house. The white wall came to an end where the building ended, but it was forbidden to go to Mom even on the lawn or in the sandbox behind the house. The prohibition was imposed by strong hands lifting me brusquely in the air, surprising me on my way to Mom, even

*“Many stories were written about childhood, motherhood and parenthood in the early day of the kibbutz movement, but Balaban voices in his book the collective voice with a lot of talent and with new power. [...] Only from the distance of half a century and several continents this story is privileged to be told here with all its forces.”*

**Professor Amia Lieblich (Hebrew University),  
“An Elegy for the Kibbutz,” Hado’ar, 11.10.2000**

when I thought no-one was looking. I am two or three years old, I believe. Now when I closed my eyes I had a sensation of feet walking on the floor of the children’s-house as if stepping on thick cushions. The black earth around the building is overgrown with burdock weeds. Their big leaves, rough as green sandpaper, reach my knees.

The first memory is a broken sky and darkness. I’d tried to take hold of the laundry line beside the children’s-house, but tripped and struck my eye against the iron post with a dreadful impact. For a moment I felt that the sky had shattered

like a huge glass bowl, spilling an immense light. The searing flashes were at once swallowed up by a red-and-black darkness. In my fright, I covered the hurt eye with my fist. The retina retained the image of the streams of light falling and draining into the black earth. The terror of the darkness and the spilt light sharpened the pain. Mom - find Mom quickly, I thought. Mom will cool the burning eye and bring back the light. The back of Mommy’s hand is dry and freckled, but the palm is



Cover of Shiv'aa

warm and moist like lips. Only sink into her, only tell her what happened. Nothing existed beyond that fright, not the voice of Batya the nursemaid calling the children to lunch, not the voices of the children playing in the sandbox, only the terror of the blinded eye, only the need to reach Mom quickly. I knew with a baby’s certainty that such a pain deserves Mom.

Hearing my screams Batya came running, grabbed my arm with her strong hand and led me inside. I wanted to tell her what happened but couldn’t get at the words. A cold hand pulled my hand away from the injured eye but I quickly put it back. ‘What happened to him?’ asked a woman’s voice, and



Batya said, 'Leave him, he'll be all right.' I heard Mom's voice behind the wall and sensed that she could also hear mine. The wall dividing the two children's-houses stood firm, it returned a sharp kick for every sharp kick, a feeble kick for a weak one. It felt cold on the floor, wet and dark, scary and miserable. I held on to the covered eye and the pain to show Mom when she came, but the pain faded away and there was no point in holding on to it. Later I could open my eye. Then I went to bed, because all the children were already taking their midday nap. I lay on the bed and covered myself. I knew, with the few words available to me, that the next time I saw Mom she wouldn't be herself.

Wednesday, the second day of the shiv'aa. Relatives and friends and kibbutz members keep coming to Mother's house. Mom sits in the chair Father used to occupy in the last years. Once he fell ill his world shrank into a triangle - its apex the table at which he sat and dozed, its other points the nearby fridge and the facing bathroom. Now Mom sits at the table and

*"I read Shiv'aa with great interest and I was emotionally very moved and touched. I consider it an important, sensitive, very well written work. Essentially this is an elegy with broadening spheres: the narrator, the family, the community. This condensed elegy is written with restraint, keen sight, and impressive narrative and descriptive capacity."*

**Professor Dan Miron (Columbia University)**

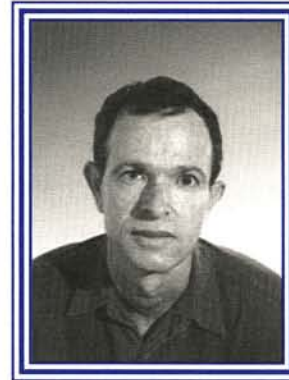
relates, again and again, to the people who have come to comfort her, what his final days were like. Even in normal times she cries easily, as though her flesh were sodden with tears, and these days her eyes are swollen from weeping. My younger sister Dinah hardly sits down. She clears empty plates from the table, serves coffee and prepares the next meal. Since my arrival I've noticed that bereavement has restored the traditional roles, the women are responsible for getting the food, serving it and washing up, while the men sit around the table and talk.

The mourning for my father and the sharp transition from a university town somewhere in Florida to my childhood kibbutz have honed all my senses: the voices are sharper than ever, the colours more intense, and only the sense of taste seems to have lost some of its subtlety. This hasty transition has given my memory a violent shake, crumbling the stony accretions over the far-off days, restoring their colours and sounds. Memory, the slow stalagmite of the years, dissolves into its components: water, lime, salt. My entire existence here now, morning-noon-evening, is a photograph accidentally exposed to two different views: under my warm leather shoes I feel the cold, clammy rubber boots we had to wear in winter.

☞ Gleaming whitely in my memory, a row of long stone houses - the kibbutz members' homes - stood opposite our children's home. Four rooms in each building, one per family. The rooms are as simple as a child's drawing: four walls, a door and a facing window. No pictures or ornaments hang on the bare walls, the roofs are as flat as the sandboxes beside the children's-houses. The whitewashed walls glare in the sunlight

like bones in the desert. Around them are thin rows of grass which fail to cover the black soil and the deep fissures which gape in it in summer. Here and there stand ficus trees like scarecrows, a few Persian lilacs. Only the eucalyptuses have overreached the roofs. A few dozen yards east of the row of houses stand the grey concrete cubes of the communal

showers and toilets (I can see the slimy whitish wooden shoes in the dusky, cool and mysterious setting of the high-ceilinged shower-room). A little to the north of the children's-houses stands the dining-hall, which in the evening becomes the social heart of the place. A graceless rectangular structure, but its thick walls, still bearing the decorations from the last festival, have a reassuring quality in the heavy darkness that comes down at night.



Balaban

Facing it is the water-tower, its naked concrete bearing the marks of its original scaffolding like fingerprints. Down the hillside, beyond the dining-hall, stands a row of wooden huts. The third room in the second hut is my parents' home.

Here everything is new and enthusiastic, in flight from tradition. Only the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of cows suggests a bit of grass, a possibility of roots. Everything is new and enthusiastic, yet the courtyard is as thick with rumours, rules and regulations as that of a monastery. Everyone measures himself in the mirror of his comrades.

Here everything is new and stony, bare as the knees of a child stumbling on the hard ground. The babies are left to sleep alone in the children's-house, and only the night watchman, making the rounds of the hen-houses, the cowshed

Mom sits in the chair Father used to occupy in the last years. Once he fell ill his world shrank into a triangle - its apex the table at which he sat and dozed, its other points the nearby fridge and the facing bathroom.

and the sheepfold, peers into their room at midnight to check that nothing untoward has happened to them. On my obsessive strolls to the children's-house during these days of mourning the earliest memory I've been able to dredge up is a brief scene: a chamber-pot in the middle of the room and Ronni lifts a piece of turd, yellow as clay, up to his mouth. Around him three or four children stand grinning, while he laughs with pleasure - a child who knows he's being outrageously naughty. The white pajamas gleam in the dusk which is no longer night but not yet day. I see this scene from above: I must be sitting in a high-sided cot. Although there are no adults with us at the moment, I do not recall any fear. What I'm feeling chiefly is envy: they're together and I'm on my own, they've dared to slip off their beds and taste from the pot and I did not. Why, out of



all the possible images from the second year of my life, did this one persist? What causes a thing to be remembered as extraordinary before life has solidified, before the ordinary has been established? Perhaps it was the astonishment and the menace. I sense that a rule is being broken, and there is a menace in its violation: so then the nurses' prohibitions can be ignored and the outcome is not punishment but delighted giggles. Or perhaps the nightly eating and drinking from the chamber-pot clashed in my mind with the severe warnings that in the following years accompanied the hygienic habits instilled by the nurses, and the image remained inexplicable and disturbing.

Here everything is exposed: a skeleton of a family, a skeleton of a house, a beginning of a garden. And a child whose eyes and elbows stick out like outlines for an unfinished house. We're an abbreviated family, no uncle or grandma, only Mom and Father, and they too return to their room after putting their children to bed in the children's-house. When they leave, the only voice in the darkened passage is that of the nurse. The jackals know when the nurse leaves the children's-house, as if her departure were an agreed signal. The first wail comes over the kibbutz's rusty fence, which passes near our children's-house, rises at once to its pitch, drops for a moment, gathers strength and tries to reach its peak again. It is joined, before it falls silent, by fresh wails from the dark field. Now they rise and fall continually, rasping the darkness. The shadows in the room move around, the scraping of their nails on the floor makes the air tremble. I breathe softly, I don't turn to the wall, to avoid

Why, out of all the possible images from the second year of my life, did this one persist?

exposing my back to the room beasts. They stir restlessly against the doorway. They stop beside the beds, stand and crouch, stand and crouch. I don't move my arms and legs.

Behind the children's-house something is rustling in the thorns. During the day sometimes a centipede or an earwig crawls in from there, and quickly hides from the nurses' yells. 'Something came in, it's hiding under the bed,' Nehemiah mumbles in his sleepy voice when he comes back from the toilet with Avigdora. Another child wakes. 'A centipede,' the whisper runs from bed to bed. Now our room is awake and soon the whole children's-house. Wrapped in sheets, we cluster like penguins in the room next to the toilets, exchanging worried looks. The single drops of fear collect into a puddle. 'They can climb on beds?' someone asks. 'They can even fly,' declares another. 'It's safer on the beds,' says Avigdora with the gravity of a child without adults nearby. Avigdora is already four years old.

Outside it is pitch dark. The black earth has grown hills of darkness. Beyond lie our parents' homes. We sit on the beds in threes and fours. A smell of sweat hangs in the air: something must be done, but what? Ronni's parents live nearest to us, the group recalls. Ronni's parents are teachers.

Once - when was it? - he succeeded in calling them. Ronni sits on his bed and starts to thump the wall with his back at regular intervals. 'Mommy,' 'Daddy,' he calls out with every movement, dividing each word in two equal syllables. He doesn't yell very loud, preparing for a long campaign. His face is serious and his body sways back and forth rhythmically, as if in prayer. My tired head, longing for the warm blanket of sleep, remembers that this happened once before - they heard and they came. Someone peeps out of the window. Thick darkness. There's no telling if Ronni's shouts are heading for the house or spreading through the darkness. When will the

The children develop survival strategies, like street kids, toughening their skin to the best of their abilities.

night watchman come, and how much of the night has passed? Ronni stops for a moment, bundles himself more snugly in the sheet and resumes thumping the wall. The children beside him join in the cry, 'Mom-mee,' 'Da-ddy,' though these are not their mommies and daddies.

Mom and Father are busy building up this place, and if they can't finish their work in time to fetch their children from the nursery or kindergarten, they ask a friend or neighbour to do this - for are we not all brothers. The few visits by people from their home town, generally on Passover or the New Year, offer the nearest thing to a hug from an uncle or aunt. Mom and Father are very busy, laboring to put flesh and sinews on the skeleton of this settlement, and normally they only see their children for a little while before they put them to bed. These few moments are all it takes to remind the children of the existence of a warm body to snuggle against, and all it takes to revive the fear of abandonment. The children are sheltered by the finest theories, surrounded by nurses and educators, but the nurses soon discover that a mother's love no more resembles her feeling for her friend's children than blood resembles sweat. The children develop survival strategies, like street kids, toughening their skin to the best of their abilities. When they grow up they will evince the selfishness of people who never got enough protection and security. The motto of the kibbutz movement - "What's mine is yours, what's yours is mine" - likewise contributed to this: in time, all that remains of it is the habit, and later the wish, that what is yours is mine. Like children who grow up too soon, they would age in time but never reach maturity. My father was in charge of the kibbutz plantations for almost forty years, and in the summer I'd go with him to the apple orchard to help him move the irrigation hoses or gather the first fallen apples. 'You see,' he observed to me more than once, holding out an apple with one red cheek, 'the first to ripen are always the apples that were damaged by hail or pests or pecked by birds.'





# Study Abroad Israel

## Students express their distinctly unique and lasting impressions.

### Julie Leventhal

Julie participated in the Center for Jewish Studies Study Abroad Program in Fall 2000 through the University of Haifa's Kibbutz-University Program. When asked to share her experiences with you, Julie was very enthusiastic. In her own words, she had this to say about study abroad in Israel:

*This is the final boarding call for El Al flight 18 non-stop from Newark to Tel Aviv.* For someone whose greatest fear had long been flying, the words were terrifying, but looking back upon the experience, the twelve hour voyage through the skies would be trivial in comparison to the emotional journey I was about to embark on. Twenty-five other students and I were destined for Israel for a five month study abroad program sponsored by the University of Haifa, and the first stop was Kibbutz Ramot Menashe, an opportunity to witness communal living for an unforgettable six weeks.



Leventhal

It was there that I began my study of Hebrew, cooked for hundreds while working in the kitchen alongside kibbutz members, and saw a refreshing side of life, one free from many of the stresses and pressures we face in our society. Upon completion of our stay, the overseas students looked

forward to a two week vacation for travels and preparation for the next part of our program. I was set to take my eight day cruise with peers to Greece and Egypt, a trip that never was because tensions in the Middle East began to flare and sparked a national uprising that would continue throughout the duration of my trip. After the two weeks, a time filled with deliberation over whether or not it was safe to remain in Israel, we began our studies at the University of Haifa, where I lived in fantastic dorms, with five even more fantastic Israelis who kindly took their American roommate under their wings.

To condense an unending description of this program, I traveled the country with the guided programs provided as well as independently, served as an English tutor for Ethiopian immigrants, and found a sense of happiness like no other in Israeli society. I can still smell the aromas from the bakeries we visited daily. I can still taste the fruit we bought in open markets and the Middle Eastern cuisine we savored. I can still hear the bustling of busy Israeli streets lined with a

combination of modernity and a special sense of the country's antiquity. Never before in my life had I cried so many tears of joy as I did in Israel, first when meeting and embracing my grandfather's brothers for the first time and then when standing before the Wailing Wall and placing a prayer within its crevices.

My journey to Israel fulfilled many dreams: It allowed me to serve as a bridge between members of my family in America and in Israel, many who have yet to make acquaintance due to the separating distance; it gave me a sense of independence and self-assurance I had lacked before my departure; and it gave me a new perspective on life, one that only a surrounding of political tensions and civil unrest could create. As my program came to an end, I

*Never before in my life had I cried so many tears of joy as I did in Israel...*

couldn't imagine saying good-bye to the loved ones and special friends I had formed such unique relationships with and I could never have envisioned the culture shock that awaited me upon my return (a shock which I am still recovering from). Almost two months later, I still cling to that which reminds me of Israel; continuing my study of Hebrew, reveling in my Israeli music, keeping strong contact with human beings I shared such common grounds with, and searching for any sign of Middle Eastern delicacies. Indeed, I am counting the moments until I can return to Israel and reclaim the part of me which still remains there, which shouldn't be a problem since now I love to fly.

### Michael Karpman

Michael has been studying at Tel Aviv University for both Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 semesters. He will return to the U.S. in June. In corresponding with Michael through email, he was asked to share his thoughts on his study abroad experience and specifically what it has been like to be in Israel during the Intifada. Here is Michael's story:

This has been one of the most educational years of my life. Spending a year away from the U.S. with students from all over the world is enough to gain entirely new perspectives on the world. When I am not in class or studying, I usually hang out with my friends at the beach or occasionally go downtown to the clubs in Tel Aviv. I also visit friends of my parents who live here. The only real way a foreign student can understand the country and its people is to learn Hebrew and speak with Israelis. I've been to Masada, the Dead Sea, Tiberias,



*Continued on page 10, STUDY ABROAD*



# Alumni Spotlight

## Where are they now?

### Stacey Lasky -

#### ...on getting from point Alef to point Bet

After Stacey's graduation from high school, she spent a year in Israel on Young Judea's Year Course Program. That was Stacey's first trip to Israel. When her friends in the program spoke about "making Aliyah," Stacey "couldn't fully comprehend their discussions. I was just a visitor studying abroad." Stacey returned to the US to study at the University of Florida where she originally intended to dual major in both Jewish Studies and Psychology. She "always had a passion for helping others." However, Stacey found herself taking more courses in Jewish Studies, "trying to keep the 'kesher' (connection) I had made to Israel after high school." She then decided to pursue her B.A. exclusively in Jewish Studies.

Following graduation she worked for Young Judea in the Middle Atlantic Region of the U.S. At this point, Stacey "began to seriously think about Aliyah." She returned to Israel in July 1999 to a combination absorption/community center in Jerusalem where she lived and worked respectively. She attended an ulpan when she first arrived and then studied Hebrew at Hebrew University's

*"I will finally be able to pursue a profession helping people, however, now all of my course work is in Hebrew and I am living my life as an Israeli."*

Summer Ulpan. In October 2000, Stacey moved to Tel Aviv to attend Bar-Ilan University where she is pursuing a degree in Social Work. Stacey tells us, "I will finally be able to pursue a profession helping people, however, now all of my course work is in Hebrew and I am living my life as an Israeli."

When Stacey considers what her Jewish Studies degree from the University of Florida has meant for her life, she reflects, "I look at it as the reason why I am living as an olah chadasha [new immigrant] in Israel." Without it, she believes she would have lost her strong connection to Israel. "I would like to thank all of my Jewish Studies professors at the University of Florida for cultivating my 'seed of Aliyah' with their intellect, enthusiasm, and passion for teaching."

### Matthew Fieldman -

#### ...on postponing the "real world" for a year.

When Matt graduated from the University of Florida in May 2000, he decided to postpone going out into the "real world" for a year by traveling to Israel and becoming a

member of Project OTZMA. Matt describes his experiences to date as being "extremely rewarding and fulfilling." When Matt first arrived he lived in an immigration absorption center for three months with many students from the former Soviet Union who were making Aliyah "in the hopes that Israel would give them a better life." After three months, Matt became a community service volunteer in Kiryat Malachi, "a town struggling to cope with waves of massive immigration and an enormous unemployment rate." In the mornings, Matt teaches English to Israeli students in the public high school and in the afternoons he spends his time "in a center for children from at-risk families or at BeitTzipora, an after-school education program for Ethiopian children." Matt is enjoying his volunteer experience because "every day I feel like I have helped someone in some way."



Fieldman

Even before Matt has finished his year with OTZMA, he is already reflecting on the benefits of his experiences in Israel.

As far as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Matt says the current situation has "cancelled some of my plans to travel throughout the Middle East." However, in general, he says, members of OTZMA are not affected. They do remain aware and alert at all times, however.

Matt will spend the remainder of his year choosing between such activities as volunteering on an Army base, learning in a yeshiva, interning for a Jewish organization, working in a village with troubled teenagers, or working on a wide variety of kibbutzim.

Even before Matt has finished his year with OTZMA, he is already reflecting on the benefits of his experiences in Israel. "OTZMA has provided me with a deeper understanding of Israel, the challenges it faces in absorbing Jewish immigrants from all over the world, and its bright future through the support of the Diaspora communities."

### Alan Goldkin -

#### ...on continuing his Jewish Studies in graduate school.

Alan completed his B.A. in Jewish Studies in May 2000 and has since entered the doctoral program at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio.

*"...who knows, perhaps I'll return to the University of Florida as a professor."*

Alan explains, "HUC is best known for being the rabbinic seminary of the Reform movement, but it also has an excellent graduate school renowned for its biblical and ancient Near East programs." Alan is currently specializing in "early rabbinic



literature - the Mishnah and Midrash of the first few centuries of this era.”

In addition to his studies, Alan stays busy with his “growing family.” On December 19, 2000, Alan and his wife Amy welcomed their daughter, Yaffa Miryam Goldkin. “Amy and Yaffa bring a smile to my face after I’ve spent too much time poring over my textbooks,” says the proud father!



Goldkin

After completing his Ph.D., Alan plans to share his “enthusiasm for traditional Jewish sources with a wider audience.” How might he accomplish this? “...who knows, perhaps I’ll return to the University of Florida as a professor.” Alan says he is not alone at HUC. “...I was pleased to find several Gators amongst the rabbinic students...”

### **Eli Schwartz- ...on making Jewish communal career decisions.**

Eli received his B.A. in Jewish Studies in the Spring of 2000. He says he spent his final year of college attempting to transition himself from “thinking as a college student” to thinking of what careers his degree in Jewish Studies would afford him. When he chose Jewish Studies as his major, Eli says he had not thought of these things. Why did he choose a Jewish Studies major? “It sounded interesting and I was interested in learning more about it.” When he reached his senior year and talked over his career possibilities with Dr. Wald, his desire to interact with people in a Jewish environment led him to an internship with the Jewish Federation of Orlando.

Eli’s discussion with Dr. Wald also led him to the decision to further his education with a graduate degree to allow him to “gain experience and better job opportunities in the Jewish communal field.” Eli was admitted to the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University in New York. “The program allows me to take classes in New

*“The most important thing I ever did was ask people for help. That made making my decisions a whole lot easier.”*

York during the summers and to work in Florida all year towards my degree.” His first field placement was in the Palm Beach Jewish Federation where he has worked for the past eight months. How is it? “I love it! I am amazed when I think that a year ago at this time I had no idea in the world what I wanted to do.” Eli has two more summers of study and one more year in the field before he receives his M.S.W. from Yeshiva University. Eli offers this advice for other undergraduate students struggling with career decisions: “The most important thing I ever did was ask people for help. That made making my decisions a whole lot easier.”

### **STUDY ABROAD, Continued from page 8**

Jerusalem, the Golan and also Bethlehem before the Intifada started. It is not enough to see the sights. I’ve learned the most from my classes and from speaking to my Israeli roommates and friends.

The courses I have taken have given me a better understanding of the events taking place around me here in Israel. Learning in depth about Jewish history and the history of the Middle East has provided me with a more solid background with which to understand the conflict between Israelis and Arabs. It is impossible to understand the conflict without this background and without a firm knowledge of the history of the conflict from both perspectives.

Like most Americans who come to Israel, I’ve been turned off by how rude and in your face Israelis can be. However, I will never be able to fully understand how much stress Israelis are under. It is difficult economically to live here, the country’s security is always threatened, and almost everyone must serve in the Army. So, it’s possible to observe Israeli society, but to really understand the

*Tel Aviv feels far away from the conflict - you see people going to work and going to classes - but there are reminders.*

culture is to make Aliyah and serve in the Army. What I like about Israel is that people are very direct. They argue and yell at each other, and will be totally honest with you, but in the end, Israelis really care for each other and for other people, and they will always be there for each other. It’s relieving to have people be impolite but truly compassionate instead of having people being superficially polite but in their hearts apathetic.

Israelis have always lived under the threat and with the actuality of war. However, the Intifada that broke out September 28 has created a very depressing situation. The optimism and hope of the 1993 Oslo Accords has almost disappeared as both Israel and the Palestinians have committed more and more brutal acts of violence. The turning point for me came after Yasser Arafat rejected Ehud Barak’s most far reaching proposals - all of Gaza, 95% of the West Bank, parts of Jerusalem, and discussions of compensation of Palestinian refugees. I think many Jews were opposed to such large concessions, but when they were rejected by the Palestinian Authority and the Intifada continued, I think left-leaning Israelis gave up. Israelis want peace, but they will not threaten their own security and the existence of the only Jewish state for a doubtful peace. For overseas students, the Intifada was a major shock. Most were not familiar with the situation and many went home in October. Tel Aviv feels far away from the conflict - you see people going to work and going to classes - but there are

*Continued on page 12, STUDY ABROAD*



During the 2000-2001 academic year, the Center faculty offered more courses on a wider range of subjects than ever before.

Jewish Studies Course Offerings 2000-2001

## Fall 2000 Semester

### Hebrew/Hebrew Literature

- ◆ Beginning Modern Hebrew 1
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Modern Hebrew 1
- ◆ 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Modern Hebrew 1
- ◆ Biblical Hebrew
- ◆ Intro to Modern Hebrew Literature 1
- ◆ Semitic Languages
- ◆ Hebrew Conversation

### Jewish Culture/History/Thought

- ◆ Introduction to Judaism
- ◆ Israeli Literature in Translation
- ◆ Hebrew Scriptures
- ◆ Religion and Politics in Antiquity
- ◆ Anthropology of Religion
- ◆ Early Rabbinic Judaism
- ◆ Geography of the Jewish Population
- ◆ Gender/Judaism
- ◆ Jewish Mysticism
- ◆ Jewish Literature - Modern Fiction
- ◆ History of Jewish Music
- ◆ Religion and Politics

## Spring 2001 Semester

### Hebrew/Hebrew Literature

- ◆ Beginning Modern Hebrew 2
- ◆ Hebrew Conversation
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Modern Hebrew 2
- ◆ Intro to Modern Hebrew Lit 2

### Jewish Culture/History/Thought

- ◆ Judaism and Romanticism
- ◆ Modern Jewish Thought
- ◆ Approaches to Jewish Studies: Identity
- ◆ Hebrew Scriptures
- ◆ Comparative Mysticism
- ◆ Religion and Politics in the U.S.
- ◆ Jewish-American Fiction
- ◆ Politics of Israel
- ◆ Jewish Art Music in Western Culture

## Programming 2000-2001

The Center lecture series for 2000-2001 had a decided "Florida" flavor to it, highlighting and exhibiting the contribution of Floridians and UF graduates to Jewish Studies. We welcomed back two distinguished alumni, **Edward Abington** (B.A., M.A. in Political Science) and **Edward Glick** (Ph.D. in Political Science), and a Jacksonville native who has gone on to achieve considerable renown, **Stephen Whitfield**. The lecture by **Chris Monaco**, a resident of Micanopy and another UF alumnus, was even closer to home!

## Fall 2000 Lecture Series

In October, the Center for Jewish Studies, along with the Political Science Department, hosted **Edward G. Abington**, who spoke on a very timely topic, "*The Imperatives of a*



Abington

*Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement.*" Abington, who served a distinguished 30-year career in foreign service for the Department of State, worked on the Arab-Israeli dispute in the Middle East and Washington, D.C. In his lecture and classroom talks, Abington reflected on his experiences negotiating agreements between Israel and the

Palestinians and his subsequent work as an adviser to the Palestinians at the Camp David talks. He argued that Israel's extensive experience and skill in negotiation often resulted in one-sided agreements that ultimately diminished Palestinian support for peace efforts. He called for more balanced negotiations as the most likely route to lasting peace in the Middle East.

In November, the UF International Center joined us in hosting the Middle East Advisor to then Vice President Al Gore, **Shibley Telhami**, who presented "*Is the Arab-Israeli Conflict Finally Over?*" Telhami, a native of Haifa, holds the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland. He is also a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. He was nominated by President Clinton to the Board of Directors of the United States Institute of Peace.



Telhami

Telhami maintained that the failure of the Camp David talks was due, in part, to the failure to prepare Arab leaders to support Yasser Arafat and the concessions he would have to make. While Arafat himself deserves some of the responsibility, Telhami maintained, the United States did little to build support among other Arab leaders. He warned that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could soon be transformed from a nationalist struggle, which can in principle be resolved, to a genuine religious conflict that has no solution.

## Spring 2001 Lecture Series

Late in January the Center for Jewish Studies hosted **Stephen J. Whitfield**, Professor of American Civilization at Brandeis University, who spoke on "*Songs of the South: Dixie in the Jewish Musical Imagination.*" A distinguished scholar of American culture, Whitfield entertained a

public audience and various classes with his account of the Jewish composers of Tin Pan Alley and their influence on popular music in the twentieth century. Many of these composers, only recently removed from the ghettos and shtetls of eastern Europe, seized on the American South as a theme for their music. Although few had even visited the South, their lyrics helped determine how



Whitfield

Americans thought about the region for decades.



After a distinguished career at Temple University, **Edward B. Glick** retired as a Professor Emeritus. During his career he wrote extensively on Israeli issues and served as a consultant to various agencies. He returned to Gainesville in early February to discuss his views on Israel's security needs in the post-Oslo era in a lecture entitled, "**Israel: Existential Security in the New Middle East.**" With the apparent collapse of the peace process, Israel faces no immediate dangers from its closest neighbors, and the Palestinians are capable of inflicting pain, but not of seriously threatening the state's existence. Glick discussed the longer-range threats to Israel in the form of weapons of mass destruction possessed by Syria, Iraq and Iran.



Glick

During the month of February we also hosted a local historian and documentary film maker, **Chris S. Monaco**, who lectured on "**Utopian Dreams and Railroad Schemes: The Levy-Yulee Family of Antebellum Florida.**" Monaco, who returned to his native Florida after a professional career in New York, reported his ongoing research about the earliest Jewish settlement in Florida. He chronicled the flamboyant career of Moses Elias Levy, after whom Levy County is named, and his equally illustrious son, David Yulee. Levy conceived a grand plan to resettle Jews from Europe in rural North Florida and amassed considerable land holdings in the effort. Although the plan drew relatively few immigrants, Levy has considerable significance as the author of one of the first anti-slavery tracts published by a Jew. Through exhaustive research in Florida and England, Monaco has provided conclusive evidence of Levy's authorship and the tract was recently republished. Ironically, Levy's son David became a champion of slaveowners and went on to represent Florida in the U.S. Senate.



Monaco

In cooperation with Jewish Awareness Month in March, the Center cosponsored a visit to Gainesville by the ABC film critic and reporter **Joel Siegel**, who spoke on "**Being Jewish in America.**" Siegel reflected on the meaning of Judaism in his life and the practical challenges of maintaining a Jewish commitment in contemporary society. In talking about the role of Jews in film, Siegel, the child of European Jewish immigrants, called the Jewish producers and studio heads of the 1930s and '40s "some of the worst human beings who ever lived." "They gave us the ideas of Prince Charming and the way we live our lives," Siegel said. "And the way they showed us to live our lives was a life with white Anglo-Saxons and not Jews." But Siegel also noted his culture's positive contributions to America, many of them through the Jewish culture's strong vocal tradition and the Yiddish language.



Siegel

Reported with the assistance of Diana Moskovitz

Rounding out Jewish Awareness Month and our 2000-2001 Program Series, the Center for Jewish Studies cosponsored Holocaust survivor, writer and 1986 Nobel Peace Prize recipient **Elie Wiesel**. Speaking to a standing room only crowd in the jam-packed Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, Wiesel discoursed about his life, the corrosive impact of hatred, the meaning of Judaism, and other topics posed by students in the audience. As a Jew, Wiesel noted, he has an obligation to speak out against hatred and bigotry, such as the defacing of the Institute for Hispanic Culture on UF's campus that occurred just a few days before his visit.



Wiesel

When asked about the most meaningful moments of his life, Wiesel spoke about the impact of his book, *The Jews of Silence*, and his early work on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Meeting Russian Jews who used his book to gain freedom and promote awareness has brought him profound happiness, Wiesel acknowledged. Wiesel also discussed at length his concern that memories of the Holocaust will disappear when the last survivor is gone. He pointed to other events and developments that have been lost from the historical record. In the end, he concluded, the Holocaust is probably the best-documented event of the twentieth century and is not likely to fade from memory. Before his talk, Wiesel received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from UF President Charles Young and Provost David Colburn. 📌

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### STUDY ABROAD, *Continued from page 10*

reminders. The security has been stepped up everywhere. People are more afraid of terrorist acts occurring. One of my friends' buses was shot at last week near Jerusalem. Another friend of mine was lucky not to be riding the bus she usually takes to visit her boyfriend when a bomb exploded on it near Ramat Gan. It is painful to see innocent people and children getting killed and wounded everyday and the conflict is heating up again. Neither side is willing or able to back down. So the Intifada has affected people here in different ways. Although a regional war is unlikely, it is just as unlikely that the violence will end anytime soon.

I still recommend that Jewish students from America study abroad in Israel if they want to learn more about their history and the issues that affect their lives. It is an experience like none other. Although first and foremost students who come to Israel should keep security in mind, Israel is not a giant war zone, though it may seem that way in the newspapers. I recommend that students interact with Israelis as much as possible and insist on learning and speaking Hebrew. It is beneficial to live in a different country to better understand your own country and the rest of the world. 📌



## Welcome New Faculty



### Judith Page

Dr. Page, who joined the faculty in the Fall of 2000, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, a M.A. from the University of New Mexico, a B.A. from Newcomb College of Tulane University, and studied for a year at the University of Birmingham in England. Before coming to UF, Dr. Page taught most recently at Millsaps College, where she received awards for her teaching and served in several administrative positions.

Dr. Page's interests include British Romanticism, Jews, and Judaism. She is writing a book tentatively entitled *Imperfect Sympathies: British Romanticism and Judaism*, and has published several articles on this topic. She has also published an edition of Judith Montefiore's Private Journal, a record of Montefiore's self-styled pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1827 with her husband, the philanthropist Moses Montefiore. She is also the author of numerous studies on British Romanticism, including *Wordsworth and the Cultivation of Women* (University of California Press). In her current works, Dr. Page uses feminist criticism and theory as a model for studying Jews and Judaism in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century British literature. Dr. Page has developed a new course on Romanticism and Judaism for English and Jewish Studies.



Page



### Leah Hochman

Dr. Hochman joined us in the Fall of 2000 as Assistant Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies. She received her B.A. from Pitzer College and her M.A./Ph.D. from Boston University. She has studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and has taught at Boston University. Dr. Hochman wrote her dissertation on Moses Mendelssohn and his theories on language and religion. She has received research fellowships from the Leo Baeck Institute in New York and the DADD, German Academic Exchange Service of Bonn, Germany. She conducted post-doctoral work on 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics at the Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum in Potsdam, Germany.



Hochman

Since coming to the University of Florida, Dr. Hochman has taught Introduction to Judaism, Gender and Judaism, Modern Jewish Thought, and Approaches to Jewish Studies: Identity.

## The Center Staff



Sosnow



Hamilton



Ruderman

### Kayla Sosnow, Program Assistant

Kayla has been the administrative mainstay at the Center for Jewish Studies through three Directors. She is responsible for the Center's budget, coordinating the lecture series, and advising students toward their major or minor. Kayla recently assisted UF custodians in reversing management's decision to move them to the graveyard shift. In the future, Kayla plans to lead the workers revolution.

### Cindy Hamilton, Graduate Assistant

Cindy began her part-time assistantship with the Center in the Fall of 2000. She is responsible for designing and distributing publicity for the Center's program events and editing this edition of Amudim. Cindy also began full-time graduate studies in the Fall of 2000, working toward her M.Ed./Ed.S. degrees in mental health counseling from the Counselor Education Department. Her future career plans include providing mental health services to older adults as well as grief and bereavement counseling and Hospice care to terminally ill patients and their families. Cindy also keeps busy as a single mom to two daughters, Stacey 15 and Lindsey 9.

### Julie Ruderman, Student Assistant

Julie, originally from New York, has been a student assistant at the Center for Jewish Studies for the past two years. She is graduating this semester with a degree in Decision and Information Sciences. After graduation, she will move back to New York to work for Ernst & Young and take graduate classes. While at the University of Florida, Julie was involved in many activities, including Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority, Business Administration College Council, Accent, and the National Society for Collegiate Scholars. Last summer, she had the privilege of going to Israel on Birthright with Keshet. She enjoyed her trip and looks forward to visiting Israel again in the future. Julie works on a variety of things at the Center, including maintaining the website (<http://www.jst.ufl.edu>).



## Hold the press...

### UF's first summer Holocaust Educators Institute to be offered June 2002.

The Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida has joined the Commissioner's Task Force on Holocaust Education. Commissioner of Education Tom Gallagher made it official by appointing Geoffrey Giles to the Commission. Giles is a Holocaust historian in the Department of History and a faculty associate in the Center for Jewish Studies.

"This appointment marks a significant expansion of our mission," noted Center Director Kenneth Wald. "Although we have always given a great deal of attention to the Holocaust through classes and speakers, our primary audience has been UF faculty and students and members of the local community."

By joining the Commission, he noted, UF has become a site charged with educating Florida's K-12 teachers about the Holocaust. "By educating the teachers," he observed, "we hope to reach the students and produce a better-informed public in Florida."

The Task Force grew out of legislation passed in 1994 mandating the inclusion of Holocaust materials in the K-12 curriculum. Recognizing that most teachers were unfamiliar with this material and how to relate it to students, the Task Force was created and given responsibility to prepare teachers to carry out this new mandate. UF will join five other statewide sites in offering annual summer training workshops for classroom teachers.

"This is a natural step for the Center," Wald commented, "because we have both scholarly expertise on the Holocaust and a superb library collection that includes books, journals, videos, and other documents."

Wald says that the first summer Holocaust Educators Institute at UF, to be offered in June 2002, will draw on the expertise of several campus units. "We've already had conversations with several faculty members in the College of Education," he reported, "and they are willing and eager to work with us on developing a program that will appeal to teachers." Noting that UF is developing new strengths in using art as a teaching tool, the Director also indicated that he may try to incorporate that emphasis in UF's summer program. Wald also hopes to involve Santa Fe Community College.

UF will also take advantage of an advisory committee of citizens and teachers that came into being in the spring of 2000. According to Wald, "When I mentioned the idea of UF becoming part of this effort, I heard almost immediately from a number of teachers in Alachua County who were desperate for exactly this type of training." By word of mouth, he was able quickly to

assemble a committee that will provide advice on all facets of Holocaust education.

Although the Center will receive a small stipend for the project, Wald notes that it will not come close to covering the actual costs of putting on a week-long training session in Gainesville. Some of the necessary funding will be provided by school districts as in-service education for teachers. To keep the workshop affordable, especially for teachers in rural North Florida, Wald has embarked on a fundraising effort. "We hope to be able to provide stipends to teachers so they will not have to reach into their own pockets for this effort."

The initiative on behalf of Holocaust education is not narrowly tailored to Jewish concerns. Rather, as Merle Safirstein contends, it is driven by a larger purpose. According to Safirstein, Director of Education Outreach for a Holocaust center in South Florida, "it is imperative that



young people understand that through life experience a person learns to be prejudiced." Hence, the summer institutes hope to teach students about the dangers of targeting people based solely on their racial, religious or cultural characteristics. In the long run, she argued, "We need to stop the prejudice and the violence."

Apart from focusing on multicultural awareness, the summer institutes also fit in with Florida's growing emphasis on character education. Tom Baird, an educational policy consultant for the Florida Department of Education, stresses that character education is meant to produce citizens who respect and honor people from different groups and backgrounds. The Holocaust is an excellent teaching tool for that purpose, he told the Task Force at its May 2001 meeting.

Given the sheer amount of material to cover, the Task Force has developed two compact discs and accompanying resource manuals for teachers. One set is directed to students in the K-3 age range and the other intended for students in grades 9-12. They include literature selections with teaching objectives and strategies appropriate to different age groups. Florida is the only state that developed its own curricular materials for Holocaust education.✍



Your gift to the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida will help support student and community programming. Donations will enable a greater number of students to study in Israel, and spur the continued academic growth of the Center. We welcome and appreciate gifts of any amount.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**I wish to make a gift to:**

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