



Coordinator's Corner

Barbara C. Johnson

As I move toward retirement at the end of May, I look back with considerable wonder and gratitude at how the Jewish Studies program has evolved since I arrived at IC in 1990 as a new faculty member in anthropology. My first anthropology course, "Jewish Cultures: A Worldwide View," drew an enthusiastic student response from majors exploring a cultural area that was new to them, and from Jewish students throughout the College who were eager to learn more about their own culture. Frequent student requests for more Jewish-related courses then led to an interdisciplinary effort to create such a curriculum, course by course, based on the expertise and interests of faculty in many different departments. This faculty collaboration led eventually to the dream of establishing an official Jewish studies program.

When the growing student interest and faculty dedication encountered strong support from the administration, from the development office and from many loyal alumni and other donors, the dream became a reality. With the hiring of **Dr. Rebecca Lesses** in 2001, as our first full-time faculty member in Jewish studies, we could finally offer the essential core courses to create a Jewish Studies minor, and our growing budget has made possible the program's expansion. The latest milestone is this year's hiring of **Jill A. Goldsmith '96** in the newly created position of development officer for Jewish studies, assuring the program's future through the transition and long after my retirement. I'm delighted that the program's future rests in such capable hands!

For me the most inspiring aspect of our program - and what makes it unusual among small undergraduate Jewish studies programs has been the shared involvement of students, faculty, guest presenters, and "audiences" - Jews and non-Jews alike - in learning both through classes and through cultural programs about the rich diversity of Jewish cultures. Our 2006-2007 cultural programming exemplified this broad range, from the three-day residency of a young Iranian-Jewish-American musician and scholar in the fall, to the annual Klezmer Gala featuring our own student musicians, current and alumni, to our month-long series at the Handwerker Gallery, "The Arts of Jewish India: Explorations in Art, Architecture and Music," to a lecture this month from a prominent Latin American Jewish writer.

The India series was of course especially close to my heart, not only because of my long-term research on the Jews of India, but also because of the immediacy and personal involvement it brought to this semester's students. In addition to talking with my Asian Jewish cultures class, our guest artists participated in classes or had other first-hand contact with students and faculty in art history, music, religious studies and other departments. This broad outreach follows the model we have created in recent years through our music residencies and through having our guest lecturers on campus long enough for personal meetings.

Here I want to appreciate the creativity and energy of my interdisciplinary Jewish studies Colleagues, the many who have developed new courses and programs and the loyal core who have served on the Steering Committee that now administers the program I also want to mention with thanks the loyal and good-natured help of Lola Schissel, who retired in January after several years as our Administrative Assistant. Along with the entire College, Jewish studies mourns the tragic death last fall of our work study assistant, Danielle Goren '07 of Allentown, PA.

In addition to appreciating the creativity and energy of my interdisciplinary Jewish studies colleagues, I want to note the generous support of my own department in encouraging me to develop and teach a total of four Jewish-related anthropology courses, when that was not what I was originally hired to do. I'm pleased that my anthropology replacement will be a young scholar with a specialty in India and in music - and I hope very much that the Jewish studies program will not have to wait too long for a faculty position to fill in the Jewish-related curricular gaps that I'm leaving behind.

What a privilege it has been in recent years to reconnect with former students and to meet so many others of you who are receiving this newsletter (in its new, improved format) - alumni, parents, and friends of the College whose support has made the IC Jewish studies program possible. A year ago when you received our spring 2006 newsletter, I was away for a semester's research leave in India and Israel. With retirement I'll have time to continue that research and to concentrate on the many writing projects I've had to put aside in recent years. But I'll certainly miss Ithaca College - the teaching, the students, my colleagues, and the Jewish studies program.

My heartfelt thanks to all of them and to all of you,

Barbara Johnson

Development News



L-R: Barbara C. Johnson, Leah Golberstein and Rebecca Lesses at a café in Jerusalem.

MILESTONE ENDOWMENT: GOLBERSTEIN TRAVEL GRANT

The Golberstein Jewish Studies Travel Endowment was established in fall 2006 by Mrs. Leah Golberstein. In the Chronicle of Higher Education's March 30, 2007 issue you can find IC's Jewish studies program cited: "Leah Golberstein, who has created an endowment for the Jewish studies program at Ithaca, says her generosity is a direct result of the positive relationships her son (Rafi '06) had with his professors and the stewardship faculty members have provided for the money she has given." We are truly grateful for Mrs. Golberstein's generosity.

Rafi Golberstein '06, New York, NY, was the recipient of a 2005 Student Grant from the Jewish studies program that enabled him to travel to Prague, Czech Republic for a summer study program. In order to make such enriching experiences more accessible to our students,

Mrs. Golberstein established an endowment to enable Ithaca College students to travel to communities that have important historic significance to the Jewish people, in places they have never before visited.

We are pleased to announce that we have awarded the first Golberstein Jewish Studies Travel Grant to **Adina Mindick** '08, Spring Valley, NY, a journalism major in the Park School and a Jewish studies minor, for a summer internship learning first-hand about the Jews of Greece on the islands of Crete and Rhodes. She will work at the Etz Hayyim synagogue in Hania, Crete, and at the Rhodes Jewish Museum, where she will learn about modern Jewish Greek history, especially the effects of the Holocaust on Greek Jews and the life that has been rebuilt since the war. She will also be interviewing members of both communities and creating a photographic record of her visit. We eagerly look forward to hearing from Adina in the fall about her exciting summer travel and study.

ACADEMIC GRANTS

In addition to the Golberstein Travel Endowment, contributions to the Ithaca Fund made it possible for us to give the following Jewish studies grants to Ithaca College students and participating faculty:

David Cutler '08, Arlington Heights, IL, a minor in Jewish studies, was awarded a grant to help support his 2007 internship at Machon Kaplan Summer Internship Program of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, in Washington, D.C.

Susan Wheatley '07, Liverpool, NY, a member of the IC Klezmerim, received a grant for accordion lessons to further her participation in the ensemble.

Annette Levine (Spanish) was awarded a faculty grant to participate in the Latin American Jewish Studies Association's XIII International Research Conference: "Jewish Cultural Productions in Latin America" in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Don Beachler (Politics) made use of a faculty grant to purchase research materials in support of his teaching two Jewish studies courses, "The Holocaust" and "The Political Implications of the Holocaust."

ITHACA COLLEGE CAMPAIGN TOTAL TOPS \$100 MILLION

Ithaca College recently passed a very important milestone in the largest fund-raising campaign in IC history. To date, the College has raised a total \$101 million toward its \$115 million goal for the Campaign for Ithaca College: Making a World of Difference.

Vice President of Institutional Advancement Shelley Semmler said the College is particularly grateful for the support of its alumni. "This campaign is as much about relationship-building as it is about financial support," she said. "All of us involved in this unique enterprise have been incredibly heartened by the widespread loyalty of our alumni. It's been thrilling to visit Ithaca graduates across the country and share the good news about their alma mater."

Scheduled to run through December 31, 2007, the campaign will fund new academic programs, scholarship aid, a new School of Business building, an athletics and events center, improved student residence halls, and continuing support of the Ithaca Fund. For more information about the campaign, please visit, www.ithaca.edu/campaign, or you may choose to make a gift online at www.ithaca.edu/giving. Your unrestricted contributions to the Jewish studies program will be channeled through the Ithaca Fund.

Student and Faculty News

STUDENT NEWS

This year we have graduated the largest class of Jewish Studies minors since our inception – two in December 2006 and five in May 2007. December graduates were **Monica Goldenberg**, Queens Village, NY (writing) and **Sarah Eson**, Slingerlands, NY (art history). May graduates are **Jessica Carroll**, Armonk, NY (organizational communications, learning, and design); **Elias Goldstein**, Albany, NY (cinema and photography); **Tamar Lerner**, Skokie, IL (physical therapy); **Sarah Vaynerman**, Livingston, NJ (organizational communications, learning, and design); and **Jenifer Weaver**, Atlanta, GA (sociology).

In addition to the seven minors, **Deydra Bordoy**, New Milford, CT graduates in May 2007 with a double major in Jewish studies and politics. She created her own Jewish studies major through the IC planned studies program, including a 2006 summer internship at the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. Deydra has been active in organizing campus events related to Israel, serving this year as Presiding Officer of the Student Alliance for Israel. She is the third IC student to graduate with a Jewish studies major through Planned Studies. Starting in the fall, she will be the officer of Domestic Political Affairs at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, D.C.

Jewish studies minor **Jeremy Greenberg**, Pikesville, MD (cinema and photography) has been awarded a Steiner Summer Program internship at the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA. The eight-week program will immerse Jeremy in Yiddish culture through study of the language of Jewish culture of central and Eastern Europe. He will also work with the Center's comprehensive collection of Yiddish literature. This highly competitive award carries a generous stipend along with housing and free tuition for two upper-level courses. See www.yiddishsummer.org/internship-information for information about the program.

Two graduating School of Music students, clarinetist **Will Cicola**, Indiana, PA and flutist **Leslie Harrison**, Cape Elizabeth, ME included Klezmer performance in the repertoire for their senior recitals, accompanied by other members of the IC Klezmer ensemble. Both have been active in the IC Klezmerim throughout their years at the College, and both will be continuing their studies after graduation. Will's recital was in November 2006 and Leslie's in May 2007.

FACULTY NEWS

Recent publications by **Rebecca Lesses** (Jewish studies) reflect her ongoing research in early Jewish mysticism. Her articles appeared in April DeConick, ed., *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006); Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); and *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism*, edited by LiDonnici and Lieber (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

Annette Levine (Spanish) was awarded the 2006 Northeast Modern Language Association best book award for *Cry for Me, Argentina: The Performance of Trauma in the Short Narrative of Aída Bortnik, Griselda Gambaro, and Tununa Mercado* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, forthcoming). Two of her translations (a book and a story) were published this year and two other articles on Latin American Jewish writers have been accepted for publication.

Barbara Johnson (anthropology) continues to publish and present her research on the "Cochin" Jews of Kerala in India and Israel. An article of hers appears in *Indo-Judaic Stud-*

ies in the Twenty-First Century: A View from the Margin, ed. Nathan Katz et al, (Palgrave Macmillan 2007) and another in *Tapasam: A Quarterly Journal for Kerala Studies*, 2006, 1 (3).

Don Beachler (politics) is the author of "The Politics of Genocide Scholarship: The Case of Bangladesh," forthcoming in the journal *Patterns of Prejudice*.

Michael Richardson (German) is co-editing a book on Holocaust representations: *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, and Memory*, ed. David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael D. Richardson (Camden House Press, forthcoming 2008).

In a collaborative partnership with the National Center for Jewish Film, **Peter Rothbart** (music) composed an original score for Edward Sloman's silent film *His People* (1925), based on immigrant Jewish life on the lower east side. Its world premiere took place April 1, 2007, in Ithaca with a performance by Rothbart's Laptop Orchestra and the IC Klezmerim as part of the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival.

COURSE OFFERINGS

Spring 2007

- Judaism** (Lesses)
- cross-listed with religious studies
- Gender and Sexuality in Judaism** (Lesses) - cross-listed with religious studies
- Jewish Mysticism** (Lesses)
- cross-listed with religious studies
- The Klezmer Movement: A Survey of Yiddish Street Music** (Zawel)
-cross-listed with music
- Germans, Jews, German Jews** (Richardson) – German
- Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Medieval Spain** (Clancy)
- art history
- Asian Jewish Cultures** (Johnson)
- anthropology
- The Political Implications of the Holocaust** (Beachler)
- politics
- Elementary Hebrew II** (Faber)
- Intermediate Hebrew II** (Grunes)

Klezmer Chamber Ensemble (Rothbart) – music

Fall 2007

- Hebrew Scriptures** (Lesses)
- cross-listed with religious studies
- Judaism in the Greco-Roman World** (Lesses)
- cross-listed with religion
- History of Modern Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict** (Gutman)
-cross-listed with history
- The Holocaust** (Beachler)
- politics
- Jewish-American Writers** (Wasson)
- english
- Elementary Hebrew I** (Grunes)
- Intermediate Hebrew I** (Grunes)
- Biblical Hebrew** (Faber)
- Klezmer Chamber Ensemble** (Rothbart) – music

Cultural Programming 2006-2007



October 2006

Middle Eastern Jewish (Mizrachi) music energized the IC campus and Ithaca community through a dynamic series of musical performances and lectures by musician/scholar-in-residence **Galeet Dardashti** and the **Divahn** ensemble, daughter and granddaughter of well-known Jewish musicians from Iran. Galeet performed and discussed music from Iran, Iraq, Israel, and Morocco. She is an anthropologist, cantor, founder and the lead vocalist of "Divahn."

November 2006

"On a Narrow Bridge: Journey of a Gay Jewish Writer" was the subject of a lecture by prize-winning author **Lev Raphael**. The son of Holocaust survivors, Raphael came out twice, once as a proud Jew, a second time as a gay man, and he has been integrating those two identities for two decades in his life and his writing.



February 2007



A quintet of alumni "all-stars" performed with the Ithaca College Klezmerim at the **Fourth Annual Klezmer Gala**, a concert and dance party attracting an enthusiastic audience of students, faculty and Ithaca area residents. The IC Klezmerim is a School of Music-supported student ensemble, under the direction of Professor Peter Rothbart, that explores klezmer, the secular music of the Eastern European Jews. The Alumni All-Stars were Adam Berkowitz '01 and Steve Solook '03 (both from the original IC Klezmer Ensemble), Ryan Zewel '05, and C.J. Glass '05.

March 2007

With "The Arts of Jewish India: Explorations in Painting, Architecture and Music," Jewish studies brought a month long series of art exhibits, lectures, and performances to the Handwerker Gallery and IC classrooms.

Artist **Siona Benjamin**'s exhibit "Blue Like Me" feature dramatic and brilliantly colored paintings exploring her identity as an Indian-Jewish-American woman. Bangladeshi-American dancer **Ishrat Hoque** joined her in a lecture/performance aptly titled "Color Me Blue."



Cochini singer **Zipporah (Venus) Lane** performed traditional South Indian Jewish folk songs, with background and commentary by Barbara Johnson. Born and raised in the Jewish community of Cochin, Kerala, Venus is a song translator and a member of the Nirit Singers in Israel.

Architect and scholar **Jay Waronker** exhibited and discussed his watercolor studies of India's Synagogues.

April 2007

Latin American Jewish author **Nora Strejilevich** talked about "History, Memory, Testimony" in relation to the Argentine Dirty War (1976-83), during which she survived kidnapping and torture, and her brother and other family members and friends disappeared at the hands of the military junta.



For further information on Ithaca College's Jewish studies programs, please go to our website at www.ithaca.edu/hs/minors/jewishstudies or contact Jill Goldsmith at 607/274-1988 or jgoldsmith@ithaca.edu.