



MIT Hillel Update



Greetings and Happy Purim from Cambridge to MIT's Jewish alumni, parents, and friends on campus and around the globe!

Chag Purim Sameach,
The Students, Board, and Staff of MIT Hillel

- 1. AEPI brothers and other local Jewish college students enjoy ice skating at MIT Hillel's annual Jews on Ice event.**
- 2. Participants in the Lutheran-Episcopal Ministries/Hillel Dialogue pose in the Religious Activities Center following our interfaith dinner.**
- 3. MIT Mascot Tim the Beaver enjoys a latke-hamentaschen "sandwich" of Ruth Abrams '14 and Noa Gherstin '14 at the annual Latke-Hamentaschen Debate. [Watch the full video.](#)**

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Menschen of Mention



Jonathan Elzur '15,
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Fact 1) Name: Jonathan Hillel Elzur
 Fact 2) Birthday: 04/09/1992
 Fact pi) MIT-related factoid: I know the first 160 digits of pi.

Actually, let me tell you about myself beyond the facts and numbers... My name is Jonathan Elzur, I'm nineteen years old, and I'm a freshman at MIT.

My story starts in Israel, where I, along with my twin sister, was born almost 20 years ago. Most of my extended family in Israel was and is Orthodox. Due to my father's job, however, we moved back and forth from Israel to the US, until, when I was almost nine, we moved over to Irvine, California, where my family now lives.

So how did I get to MIT? In retrospect, it seems obvious. I have all the quirks of an MIT student: unabashed love of math, the odd sense of humor, procrastination... I'm a natural fit. But it took me time to realize it. Growing up, as I excelled in math and science, adults started dropping advice such as: "You should think about MIT," or "Have you heard about MIT? They like people like you." By the time I was in freshman year of high school, I had heard enough that when curious people asked me about colleges, I would shrug and say: "I dunno..." and after a pause - "...maybe MIT."

I applied, got accepted, and

Executive Director's Update



What an incredible weekend! I returned yesterday from three intense days in Washington, DC at the AIPAC Policy Conference. Two thousand high school, college, and graduate students -- two representing MIT -- were part of this year's conference, proudly participating first-hand in our democracy, as lobbyists and Israel advocates. In sessions and plenaries, we heard from President Obama, Israeli President Shimon Peres, Israeli Prime

Minister (and MIT alum) Benjamin Netanyahu, Republican primary contenders, as well as many Senators, Congressmen, and dignitaries from both sides of the aisle. Even in a crowd of 13,000 delegates, personal connections are unavoidable; on escalators, waiting in line, and at receptions, I randomly met and connected with several MIT faculty and alumni, and even the grandmother of MIT's AEPI chapter president. (Imagine her nachas when I texted on her behalf, "Your Safta sends her love"). I know that our student delegates will have as many stories as I to share. The MIT delegation is pictured to the right: Shoshana Gibbor -- MIT Hillel's Birthright and Israel staffer, Evgeny Feldman G, Daniel Handlin G, myself, and International Hillel President, Wayne Firestone.



Back on campus, students continue to make me proud in so many ways. The trio of Noa Gherstin '14, Sarah Toledano '15, and Ruth Abrams '14 led a deliciously successful Latke-Hamentaschen Debate, filling lecture hall 10-250 with comedians and food connoisseurs. [Watch the video](#) taken by Cambridge Community TV. Bari Rosenberg '14 and Matthew Monheit '14 created a "Greek Shabbat" dinner for 40 fraternity and

sorority Jews, mostly new to Hillel's Shabbat observance. 140 Jews at MIT participated in Shabbat dinner that week! Max Zimet '13 made the evening of "Jews on Ice" -- a Boston-wide ice party at

MIT's Johnson Skating Rink -- especially memorable for all by giving Sarah Geller '12 the opportunity to fulfill her dream of getting out on the ice in her wheelchair. Sarah's ecstatic response: "Sickest. Day. Ever."



That pretty much summarizes almost every day at MIT Hillel.

Happy Purim!

L'shalom,

Rabbi Michelle Fisher SM '97

Torah from Tech



Our Torah this month is taught by Michelle (Greene) Rosenberg '93 who graduated from MIT with a degree in Management Science. She uses the time-management and multi-tasking skills learned at MIT to be a full-time mom to Joshua (age 12) and Abigail (age 9). She may be reached at michelle@rosenbergs.org.

It seems hard to believe that it was twenty years ago that I walked the halls of MIT. Living away from home was the hardest when the holidays would come around. For the High Holidays and Passover, I'd hop on the Trump shuttle and fly back to Queens to spend the holidays with my family, but for the smaller holidays, this wasn't an option. This is one of the ways that Hillel would fill the gap, providing a community with which to celebrate the holiday. But this was still not celebrating with your family.

One year, a friend and I came up with the idea of contacting the parents of the Jewish students and offering them the opportunity of sending Shalach Manos, Purim Baskets, to their children. Not only was this a means of fundraising for Hillel, but what college student doesn't love getting a care package with food! And it gave families a way of celebrating together though far apart. We also gave students on campus a less expensive version where they could send "baskets" to friends on campus.

I remember coming together as a community to pack the baskets and sort them by dorm and living group and sending them out with Hillel members to be delivered. Someone even got a hold of a shopping cart (I didn't ask how) to make it easier to get from dorm to dorm. Graduate students got them delivered to their offices. It was a wonderful way of bringing together the Jewish community on campus and bringing them a touch of home and a reminder of the holiday.

Now I am a parent who carries on the tradition of Shalach Manos with my children. While I grew up with my German grandmother bringing over large yeasty hamantaschen filled with poppy seeds, I now bake my own. And given how MIT teaches us all to think out of the box, I have developed my own recipes for different flavored doughs and unusual fillings. My kids' favorite are the chocolate hamantaschen with the Nutella and raspberry filling. We fill bags every year with nuts and candies and boxes of my homemade hamantaschen and then drive around delivering these treats to our friends. When we deliver the bags, we get the opportunity to spend a little time with each of these families. It is one of our most cherished holiday traditions.

Purim baskets are probably one of the most enjoyable mitzvahs. First of all, there is food involved. Fun foods. It is sharing these foods with the people who you care about and make up your community. By giving Shalach Manos, you are giving gifts to those who affect your lives and show them that you care and notice. All too often, we are rushing through our lives, taking our friends and family for granted. Whether you spend hours baking your hamantaschen yourself or just buy them from the bakery, why not put together a couple of special Purim baskets and give them to a couple to friends who are always there for you.

Here's [my recipe](#) (it will download as a Word doc) you can even enjoy!
Happy Purim!

Todah Rabbah/Thank you! ...to our [2011 Annual Campaign Donors!](#)

Your leadership and generosity contribute to a depth of Jewish life, experiences, and growth for the Jews and Jewish community of MIT.

then deferred for a year. I felt like I wanted to strengthen my connection to Israel, and with strong encouragement from my parents, embarked on a gap year to Israel. That year, last year, I was part of a leadership program with pre-army kids in Israel.

As a freshman at MIT, I'm still clueless about my major, and my current classes reflect that: math, chemistry, physics, more math, and even Intro to Acting. After sitting in a bio lecture, I think genetic engineering is the future. And while solving math problems, I remember how much I enjoy pure math. It's good I still have time to decide.

What I was always sure about is that I wanted to maintain my connection to Judaism at MIT. Consequently, I joined AEPi, the Jewish fraternity. I really like the guys, and the fact that everyone is Jewish also helps me keep a Jewish lifestyle. I also participate in MIT Hillel events, especially attending Shabbat dinner as much as I can.

And then, I was afforded the opportunity to do my very own Jewish teaching. MIT Hillel organized a Hebrew class for students going to Israel, and I was going to teach it.

During my gap year in Israel, I learned a lot about leadership, and that included standing in front of an audience. But I didn't think I'd get a chance to practice it so soon! It turns out lecturing to a group of about 15 people about a language you know is much harder than it seems. There are many challenges I didn't fully anticipate, for example: how to keep everyone interested, how to make the class go at the appropriate pace, and how in the world to ensure people remember what they learned in the last class. I'm definitely still learning on the job, but that's OK - Hillel has partnered with a Masters in Education student to help us student Hebrew teachers strengthen our classroom teaching techniques. I like the feeling that I'm sharing my knowledge with others and doing something that relates to my heritage. We are already talking about expanding the Hebrew classes next year, and while I'm not sure how that will affect my sleep schedule, I'm having so much fun, and these things have a way of working out...

In the meantime, I'm excited to be in this environment where I have opportunities to do influential things in research and technology, as well as in teaching Hebrew. It's going to be a great 3 more years.

[Find out who supports Jewish Life @ MIT.](#)

If you like what you read and hear about Jewish life at MIT, [add your name](#) to Hillel's 2012 Donor Roll.

On the Hillel Calendar

Purim

Wednesday, March 7-Thursday, March 8

Megillah Readings on campus Wednesday, 6:30pm
Hillel Center (Orthodox) and W20-201 (Conservative/Reform)

Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT

Friday, March 16, noon, Maseeh Hall

These things happen.
Why people get hurt in hospitals, and what we can do about it.
Paul Levy '72

Hillel's popular faculty/staff/alumni lunchtime seminar series continues. Our second presenter for the spring term is Paul Levy '72, Former President and CEO, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. In the vicinity of MIT, [join us!](#)



Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT... on the Road

Wednesday, March 28, Aventura, FL

A New Approach to Finding Treatments for Alzheimer's Disease
Richard J. Wurtman, MD
Cecil H. Green Distinguished Professor Emeritus

Our on-campus series now goes "on the road" -- first stop, Florida, hosted by Riccardo '72 and Raquel Di Capua. In the area and want to come? [Drop us an email](#) for details.

Passover

Friday, March 6-Saturday, March 14

As part of the new meal plans in Maseeh Hall, kosher food will be available through MIT Dining for MIT students, faculty, and staff. Advance sign-ups will be required -- check the [Hillel website](#) for details.

Campus Preview Weekend (for admitted pre-frosh)

Wednesday, March 18-Sunday, March 22

Jewish Music and Materials @ the MIT Libraries

Ongoing

A new fund established by MIT alumnus Michael Gruenbaum '53 has enabled the [Lewis Music Library](#) to add more Jewish music to its collection. It is open to the public in 14E-109. [Learn more...](#)

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supporting
MIT Hillel!**

Your generous support allows us
to help keep Jewish life vibrant
on the MIT campus!



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