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**Greetings from MIT Hillel
to Alumni, Parents, and Friends in Cambridge and Beyond...**

1. Rabbi Fisher gathers with NYC young alumni at an event at Bowery & Vine (Left to Right): Michelle Kaufman '06, Luis Voloch '13, Maja Rudolph '14, Diana Liskovich '13, Yael Schein '13
2. Students from Hillel Technion visit MIT as part of the ConnecTech initiative
3. Andrew Viterbi '56 SM'57 addresses the MIT community at a Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT faculty luncheon

Mentshn of Mention



Oron Propp '18
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Hello, my name is Oron Propp, and I am a freshman from Brookline, MA. I came to MIT in pursuit of higher learning, rigorous academics, and a freethinking and motivated environment of innovation and achievement. Having been raised in an active Modern Orthodox Jewish community and equipped with twelve years of pluralistic Jewish education, I had long anticipated being involved in my university's Hillel. To my delight, what I observed in the MIT Hillel when I visited prior to my enrollment was an open, yet tight-knit, and respectful, but dedicated, group of individuals, with an excess of *ruach*/spirit. For the rest of my visit, I only ever saw these values reaffirmed, through students' interpersonal and collective interactions, whether at Hillel or at Burton 2 (i.e. "The Kosher Suite"). I came to realize that MIT's Jews, though not the most numerous, formed a community, and further, a bastion of Jewish culture and life at MIT. I now proudly live on Burton 2, and regularly attend Hillel's events and services.

Executive Director's Update



An early Chanukah greeting to all! Millennia ago, the Maccabees fought to practice as Jews, and they re-established Jewish sovereignty. The month of November at MIT Hillel was filled with Jewish gathering, Jewish learning, and reflections and connections to the Jewish state.

The month began with a delegation of students from the Hillel at the Technion arriving at MIT. Our ConnecTech ambassadors are students selected to participate in a peer-to-peer year of learning about Israeli Jewish and American Jewish identity. Tours of the Media Lab and local MIT-alumni start-ups were enjoyed, and the highlight was clearly the Shabbat experience, dinner on campus and services across the river in Brookline. The MIT students gained a new appreciation for synagogue services and life as



they saw and heard the Technion students awed by the open, welcome, family-nature of American shul community. It was an eye opener on both sides as to what Judaism is and can be.

Our newly organized Friends of Israel group ramped up activity throughout the month as well. For Veteran's Day, they co-sponsored, with [Active Minds at MIT](#), a talk by a former IDF soldier about mental health in combat conditions, and after, and in Israeli society as a whole.

An update by a political and military analyst specializing in the global war on terrorists and the Middle East conflict was attended by over 35 students mid-month. And as Thanksgiving approached, a free brunch accompanied a talk about identity narratives and the untold story of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Another group of students had an intimate conversation with the founder of Rabbis for Human Rights. Israel interest and education is clearly strong and growing on campus. Our consistent Birthright registration numbers means even more students will become connected to Israel in the weeks ahead.



The Maccabees most likely would have been rolling in their graves if they were around for some other of our learning on campus. I'm not sure if they would have understood, let alone approved of, "Jewish Greek life," but Jewish life and ethical exploration are thriving at MIT fraternities. By request, Hillel's Senior Jewish Educator led a discussion on "Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll": Jewish values in decision-making about the types of questions college students are asking and situations they are faced with.

In the 21st century, "kindling" is not just for fire and lights. In a modern twist on learning, we began a "Kindle Your Judaism" class this fall. The first round of this monthly "book" club is a group of seniors, who are taking time from classes, post-MIT job searches, and graduate school applications, to read such diverse books as [Gonzo Judaism](#), [Man's Search for Meaning](#), [The Great Partnership: God, Science and the Search for Meaning](#), and more. Those who complete every book and come to every discussion keep their Kindles. Due to the popularity, we are expanding it next semester to alumni of our December Birthright trip.

These are just a few of the ways we are touching students and making them think deeper and grow stronger. In just the past month, over one-third of all Jews on campus had an "organized" Jewish experience... not bad given the two four-day holiday weekends that also occupied November. Judah Maccabee and his brothers would be proud.

Being at MIT excites me due to the extent of the opportunities made available to students. It might be that my introductory algebra class is taught by a professor emeritus; the UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program) program that makes research readily accessible to students; the [MISTI](#) program, which fully subsidizes student research abroad (in fact, Israel hosts one of its most successful programs); or something else entirely. It is precisely this panoply of opportunities that creates the immersive and rewarding MIT educational experience (in cruder terms, "the firehose"). To me, Jewish activities at MIT are of the same vein: at times all-consuming, yet immensely satisfying. And of course, the opportunities are not

If you'll be around campus on the first night of Chanukah, December 16, at 5pm, stop by Lobby 7 for the annual Test Tube Menorah lighting!

L'shalom,
Rabbi Michelle Fisher SM'97
rabbif@mit.edu

Torah from Tech



Our Torah this month is taught by Judy Selwyn PhD'71 (Course V, physical chemistry). For over forty years she has been a consultant in the restoration of historic building materials. Her projects include Touro Synagogue, the Old State House (Boston) and Senior House, Building 18 (Dreyfus - Chemistry) and W1 (Maseeh) at MIT. She serves on the Board of many Jewish organizations, including MIT Hillel. She can be reached at jselwyn@preservationtechnology.net.

Eighteen Hundred Chanukah Candles

On December 18, the 25th day of the month of Kislev, I will be celebrating Chanukah for the fiftieth time in my own Jewish home. I arrived at MIT as a married graduate student in physical chemistry in the Fall of 1965. This was the first time I had truly lived on my own, not counting the previous summer as an undergraduate fellow living at McCormick Hall. That was when I met my soon-to-be husband, Lee, a Sloan student.

Everything was new to me that Fall. We set up our first apartment on Harvard Street and, fortunately, our few non-cash wedding presents included a brass and enamel Israeli Chanukah menorah and silver Shabbat candlesticks and we purchased the requisite two sets of dishes, flatware, pots and pans, as well as a bed, and a desk for each of us.

Lee and I had a pattern, meeting each other on the steps at 77 Mass Avenue each evening to take the Mass Avenue bus up the street to our apartment. On November 9 that pattern was interrupted as darkness slowly extended from 77 up and down the street in what became the Great Northeast Blackout of 1965. Our Shabbat candlesticks served us well and brought some light as thirty million people endured the darkness. A month later our little home was illuminated as we lit the menorah as a new family. The light of our wedding menorah marked the beginning of our new ritual as a Jewish family. Fifty years have passed and wonderful Chanukah memories have formed. There was the year that we went skiing with our three children, then high school and college age. Lee and I don't ski, but we brought along a favorite iron menorah and lit it around the table at the inn, surrounded by family and best friends on each night of our trip. Many travels have involved the purchased of menorahs of all kinds - antique and new, glass, brass and steel, traditional and contemporary. Among the most memorable was the smallest and cheapest of the lot - purchased at CVS! - on a trip with our grandchildren, after realizing that we had neglected to take one from their home. And, lacking proper head coverings, Lee and the boys used linen napkins as kippahs, as we all laughed and lit the menorah, taking cell phone pictures to memorialize the family event with a new generation.

So, this year we light the menorah as a family for the fiftieth time - by my count that is 1800 candles, not counting the shamosh. Our family has grown to include three children and two grandchildren. Each time we repeat the lighting of the menorah we carry on an important memory of the miracle of light of the first Chanukah celebrating the rededication of the Temple and trust that the light will radiate to continue these traditions forward to generations in Peace.

MIT Hillel's 2015 Annual Fund

Add to Jewish life @ MIT!



To our current and future supporters:

Thank you to [our 2014 Donors](#), everyone who helped us to meet our goal in FY14! Together our 789 donors fully supported our mission and our financial goals. A highlight was that we had 70 first-time donors: alumni, parents, and friends who now include Hillel among their MIT giving priorities. We invite you to [join us again this year](#) in supporting Jewish life on campus.

Here is an [overview of our needs](#) this year.

We are always happy to meet with donors in person, to learn why MIT Hillel is important to you and to talk about why your support makes all the difference.

On a personal note, I've especially appreciated the warm welcome, and it is hard for me to believe that my first year here is almost complete. It is an honor to join with you in maintaining and building a strong Jewish presence at MIT.

Thank you,
Marla Choslovsky SM'88,
MIT Hillel Director of Development
maria360@mit.edu

[Add your name](#) to MIT Hillel's 2015 Donor Roll!

Tamid Initiative - Planned Giving @ MIT Hillel

Endowment and planned gifts truly sustain and build an organization. MIT Hillel is excited to help you create your personal Jewish legacy at MIT.

We invite alumni and friends who care deeply about Jewish life at MIT to consider joining the Institute's **Katharine Dexter McCormick (1904) Society (KDMS)** and be part of the **Tamid Initiative** by making a bequest to MIT, for the benefit of MIT Hillel. Your generosity will help MIT Hillel engage today's students,

most—there's always a class, an event, a social gathering, to keep me happy and intellectually stimulated. I was initially worried about "maintaining" my Jewish identity at MIT, as I think many Jewish youth entering college are. However, I am now confident that, with MIT Hillel and the Jewish community on campus, not only can my Judaism survive—but also thrive.

Thank you for supporting MIT Hillel!

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



securing our Jewish future with confidence.

To inform us that you plan such a gift, download and send us a [pledge form](#).

MIT and MIT Hillel are eager to help you meet your objectives. For more information, please contact MIT Hillel Director of Development, Marla Choslovsky, marla360@mit.edu.

On the Calendar

Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT Fall line-up

- **Friday, December 12:** Evan Ziporyn, Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor



Tuesday, Dec 16-Wed, Dec 24: Chanukah

Tuesday, Dec 16: Annual Test Tube Menorah Lighting, 5pm, Lobby 7

Tuesday, February 10, 2015: Annual Latke-Hamentaschen Debate

Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT Spring line-up

- **Friday, February 6** – Mike Sipser, Dean of Science and Barton L. Weller Professor of Mathematics
- **Friday, March 20** – Felice Frankel, Research Scientist, Center of Materials Science and Engineering
- **Friday, May 1** – Alan Guth, Victor F. Weisskopf Professor of Physics and MacVicar Faculty Fellow

MIT Hillel wishes a hearty "Mazal Tov" to:

MIT Hillel Assistant Director Marissa (Feinman) and Jason Freed on their wedding on November 22. May they have a lifetime of being good to and for each other!

If you have life-cycle events to share with the MIT Hillel community, please [let us know!](#)

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