

FALL 2005

CAROLINA CENTER FOR  
JEWISH STUDIES<http://ccjs.unc.edu>

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

## Center receives \$1 million gift from Leonard and Tobee Kaplan

### Kaplan endowment will establish distinguished professorship in Modern Jewish Thought

Leonard and Tobee Kaplan of Greensboro have made a \$1 million gift to the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to establish a new distinguished professorship.

Based in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Distinguished Professorship will allow the University to create an endowed chair to recruit a teacher and scholar in modern Jewish religious thought. The Kaplan professor will be housed in the religious studies department and chosen through a competitive search process which will begin in fall 2005. Additional funding from the North Carolina Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund brings the Kaplan endowment to \$1,334,000.

Leonard Kaplan, a 1949 Carolina alumnus, and his wife, Tobee, head the Toleo Foundation, a family effort devoted to a variety of philanthropic causes. They were the leaders in building a new home for the North Carolina Hillel chapter at Chapel Hill, and they have since worked with NC Hillel to support the hungry and the homeless in Carrboro and Chapel Hill. They also are deeply committed to the Women's Resource Center of Greensboro (a program that enables women to advance their career paths). In 2004,



Tobee and Leonard Kaplan

where we could make the biggest impact with a contribution to UNC-Chapel Hill. We hope this new professorship will bring to the forefront the modern world of Jewish religious practices, culture and social issues that are significant to not only the Jewish world, but people of all faiths."

"The Kaplan professorship represents a dramatic step forward for the Center," says Jonathan Hess, director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies. "It will enable us to recruit one of the foremost scholars in Jewish thought to UNC, giving generations of Carolina students the possibility to study with a national leader in this field."

The Kaplan gift counts toward the university's Carolina First Campaign goal of \$1.8 billion. Carolina First is a comprehensive, multi-year, private fund-raising campaign to support Carolina's vision of becoming the nation's leading public university.

#### Malkin Professorship

In 2005, Moses and Hannah Malkin, of Sun City, Florida, both members of the class of 1941, gave funds to establish the Moses M. and Hannah L. Malkin Distinguished Professorship in Jewish History and Culture. Look for details about this new professorship in the spring 2006 issue of *News from the Center*.

Leonard and Tobee initiated the Greenbrier Forum, a program to inspire greater generosity among philanthropists.

Leonard Kaplan explains that, "We have been contemplating

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



**Jonathan M. Hess, DIRECTOR**  
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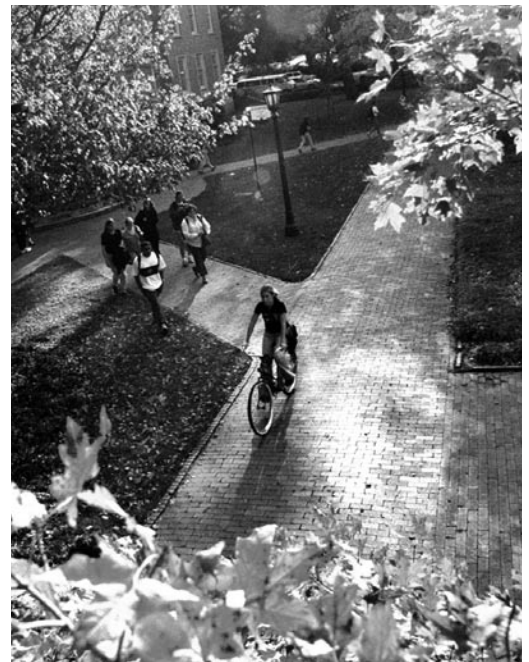
With thirty courses on the books, the Center now offers Carolina undergraduates unprecedented opportunities to study Jewish history and culture. Students this fall have had a rich set of classes to choose from, including lecture courses on Early Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, seminars on Jewish-American literature and the Jewish experience in the American South, and a special, hands-on opportunity to work with Israeli playwright Naomi Ragen on the local production of her play, *Women's Minyan*. Those of you who have watched our progress since the Center was created in 2003 will be pleased to learn that we now offer a three-year sequence in Modern Hebrew. It's wonderful to see students in our advanced course reading and discussing works by Israeli writers in the original Hebrew. All in all, we teach close to 1,000 students each year, and our undergraduate minor is flourishing.

Through our outreach programs, we are continuing to connect with citizens across the state through public lectures and seminars. This past July, I gave a lecture on German-Jewish life before the Holocaust in Banner Elk, North Carolina, and in the coming year our faculty will be speaking in a variety of venues across the state, from Wilmington to Charlotte and Asheville. We've continued to bring in crowds to campus for our events in Chapel Hill, which you'll find ample information about in the pages that follow. On December 5 we inaugurate the Morris, Ida and Alan Heilig lectureship with a lecture by Ian Lustick on the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace. This spring Joyce Antler will deliver the inaugural Sylvia and Irving Margolis lecture on the Jewish experience in the American South. We will also host a special presentation from Leonard

Rogoff and Steve Channing about their work with the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and their multimedia project about the history of Jewish life in North Carolina. Other major speakers include Paula Hyman and Deborah Lipstadt. As always, current information about Center events can be found at our website, <http://ccjs.unc.edu>.

In the last issue of *News from the Center* you read about the generous gift from the Crown family to establish the Sara and E.J. Evans professorship for the Center. In this issue you'll read about two new exciting faculty positions that will have a dramatic impact on the College of Arts and Sciences' course offerings in Jewish Studies for years to come: the Leonard and Tobee Kaplan professorship in Modern Jewish Thought and the Moses and Hannah Malkin professorship in Jewish history and culture.

The Center draws tremendous strength from UNC's committed alumni and friends. I hope you are as excited as we are about the momentum we've developed. As always, please feel free to get in touch with me directly should you wish to learn more about the Center.



# Hebrew Program Experiences Surge in Student Interest

Biblical Hebrew has been taught at Carolina for years. Instruction in Modern Hebrew, however, is a newcomer to the College of Arts and Sciences. Introduced in conjunction with the creation of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies in 2003, Modern Hebrew has grown quickly. In fall 2003, sixteen students enrolled in beginning and intermediate Hebrew courses. In fall 2005, more than fifty students signed up for beginning, intermediate and advanced classes. In some cases, the widespread interest in Hebrew courses has even made it difficult for incoming students to get into Hebrew courses, and in the coming years we plan to expand the program further.

Luceil Friedman, Lecturer in Modern Hebrew in the Department of Asian Studies, launched the first courses two years ago. This fall she is teaching a third-year course for the first time, working with a group of Carolina undergraduates who began their study of Hebrew in Chapel Hill and are now reading and discussing works by Israeli writers in the original Hebrew. The students in the third-year course, which is conducted entirely in Hebrew, will conclude the fall semester by presenting a play by Israeli author Aharon Meged.

Friedman attributes the success of the Hebrew program to the “enthusiasm and dedication of the students.” As she explains, “the most exciting and challenging aspect of my role at UNC was being entrusted to create a dynamic Hebrew language program. The experience has been tremendously

rewarding. The students bring a real passion for learning Hebrew to each class.”

Students come to Hebrew from diverse backgrounds. Many are Jewish and are interested in gaining a comprehensive mastery of a language they learned bits and pieces of in Hebrew school. And many come from non-Jewish backgrounds.

Michael Turner, a sophomore International Studies major from Elizabeth City, North Carolina, explains that he “has always had an interest in Jewish culture and the state of Israel. I am fascinated with Israel, and my enrollment in Hebrew here at UNC made me realize it was actually possible for me to go there.” Michael, who plans on also studying Arabic for his International Studies concentration in the Middle East, hopes to study abroad in Tel-Aviv next year on a UNC exchange program.

Rachel Duncan, a sophomore and native North Carolinian, was excited that UNC offered the opportunity to “study a Biblical language that is still spoken today.” “Learning Hebrew,” she explains, “is a unique opportunity that exposes me to different perspectives on the world.”

Lisa Estrin, a Communications Studies major from Boca Raton, Florida, has nothing



Carolina undergraduates studying Modern Hebrew

but praise for the rigors of UNC’s Hebrew program. “I had taken Hebrew for many years in Jewish day school, but I was still never able to hold a conversation. I learned in one semester of Hebrew at UNC what I learned in ten years in day school! And now, in my third semester, I finally have the proper foundation I have been looking for all of these years.”

For Jonathan Hess, Director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, the positive response to the Modern Hebrew program is just a beginning. “We’ve clearly launched a program that’s met with tremendous student interest. In future years we look forward to building on these early successes to create an even more comprehensive program. We need to accommodate more students in our introductory and intermediate courses, and we also need to give our advanced students even more opportunities to study Hebrew literature and Israeli culture in depth.”

*For information about Hebrew language and Jewish Studies courses at UNC, go to: [www.unc.edu/ccjs/courses.html](http://www.unc.edu/ccjs/courses.html)*

**MY ENROLLMENT  
IN HEBREW AT  
UNC MADE ME  
REALIZE IT  
WAS ACTUALLY  
POSSIBLE TO  
STUDY IN ISRAEL.**



## Student Profile: **Dena Ratner, '06**

Dena Ratner, a senior history major from Asheville, North Carolina, has had long-standing interests in both modern European history and Jewish Studies. Eager to explore the history and culture of Jews in Central Europe, she spent the entire spring semester of 2005 studying in the Czech Republic.

The UNC study abroad program in Prague is run by CET Academic Programs and is dedicated to Jewish history and culture of Central Europe.

Dena was one of sixteen American students on the program. While in Prague she learned

Czech and studied intensively with local faculty, many of whom had participated in the political revolutions of 1968 and 1989. And most importantly, she got the chance

to engage in the type of first-hand learning experience so integral to study abroad.

As she explains, what drew her to the program were “both the course offerings and the opportunity to do some experiential learning on field trips, walking tours, and participation in Prague’s Jewish community.

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1968 AND 1989.**

While in Prague we learned in a fun experiential way. We went on many trips to museums, had several walking tours of the city with different themes: Kafka, art and architecture, Jewish literature, etc.”

Dena enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the Jewish

community of Prague. The program’s expedition to Poland, she explains, “was not just to see concentration camps but to also see Poland for what it was pre-Nazi



**Dena Ratner in Prague**

Germany and post—we witnessed the blooming of the Jewish community there today.”

*UNC-Chapel Hill offers Jewish Studies study abroad options not just in Prague, but in Israel, England, Germany, Poland and Australia. To learn more, go to [http://www.unc.edu/ccjs/study\\_abroad.html](http://www.unc.edu/ccjs/study_abroad.html)*



The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies wants to express its deep and abiding gratitude to Sam Magill '50, who is retiring later this fall after working six years in the Office of University Development. Sam’s vision of and commitment to a strong Jewish Studies program in the College of Arts and Sciences were instrumental in the

establishment of the Center three years ago. Please join us in thanking Sam and wishing him well as he steps away from his work at the University and embarks on new adventures.



The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and the Arts & Sciences Foundation are pleased to announce that Kate Brown has joined the Foundation as Associate Director of Capital Gifts. Kate is a graduate of Bowdoin College and has worked in the private and non-profit sectors, most recently raising money

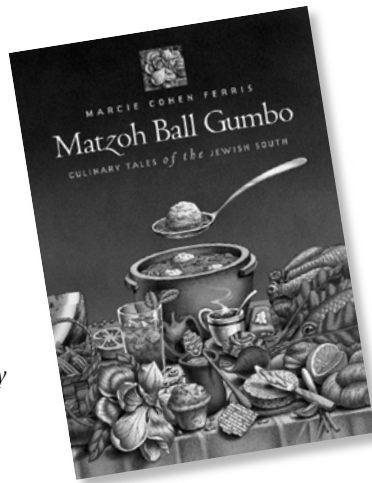
for a trade association foundation in Raleigh. She will be working with donors to raise private support for key departments and programs in the humanities, including the Center for Jewish Studies. Please join us in extending a warm Tar Heel welcome to Kate.

## ■ FACULTY RESEARCH

## Professor Marcie Cohen Ferris Explores Southern Jewish Foodways

Since early colonial times in America, Jewish southerners have been tempted by delectable regional foods. Because some of these foods—including pork and shellfish—have been traditionally forbidden to Jews by religious dietary laws, southern Jews have faced a special predicament.

In a new book published this fall entitled *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South*, Marcie Ferris, associate director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and assistant professor of American Studies, offers a culinary journey through the Jewish South.



Ferris explores how southern Jews embraced, avoided, and adapted southern food and, in the process, found themselves at home.

Featuring a trove of photographs, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo* also includes anecdotes, oral histories, and more than thirty recipes to try at home.

Ferris's rich tour of southern Jewish foodways shows that, at the dining table, Jewish southerners created a distinctive

religious expression that reflects the evolution of southern Jewish life. For more information, go to <http://uncpress.unc.edu>.

### Other Recent Faculty Titles

*Evangelizing the Chosen People*,  
Yaakov Ariel



*The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942*,  
Chris Browning



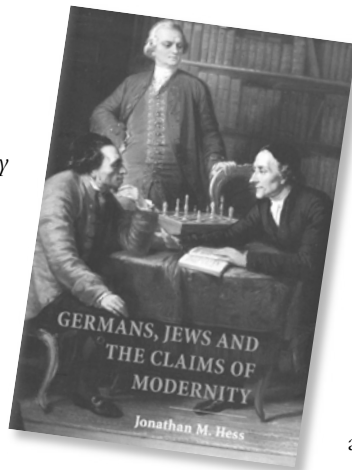
*The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*,  
Jodi Magness



For more information about UNC Jewish Studies faculty, visit [www.unc.edu/ccjs/faculty](http://www.unc.edu/ccjs/faculty)

## Professor Jonathan Hess earns honors for book on German-Jewish history

Jonathan Hess, professor of Germanic languages and director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, has received international recognition for his book *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* published by Yale University Press. The Modern Language Association awarded the book honorable mention for the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literature.



The judges' citation called Hess' work "a fundamental reappraisal of the way Jewish intellectuals reacted to emancipation, modernity and the promises of secular universalism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries." The committee described Hess's book as "a remarkable, well-written, and much-needed work of intellectual history."

The American Library Association's Choice magazine earlier named the work, an outstanding academic title for 2003.

## Fall Lecture Series Focuses on Modern Israel, Ancient Judaism, and Jewish Life in the American South

The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies lecture series kicked off its fall lecture series on September 13 with a southern Jewish perspective on the profound religious and cultural changes in the South today. It will culminate December 5 with a presentation on the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace. All Center lectures are free and open to the public.

Eli N. Evans '58, delivered the first talk in the series, "Southern Jewish Insights into the Religious Ethos in the South Today." In commemoration of the 350<sup>TH</sup> anniversary of Jews in America, UNC Press has published a new edition of Evans' classic memoir, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South*, with a gallery of family and historical photos. Evans is chair of the center's advisory board.

Evans' lecture was followed on September 22 by a presentation by Naomi Ragen, an American born playwright and novelist who has lived in Jerusalem since 1971. Ragen, who is spending three weeks in residence on campus this fall, spoke on "The Compelling Jewish Narrative."

On September 27, Ross Kraemer, professor of religious studies at Brown University, lectured on "Jewish Women in

Greco-Roman Antiquity: Representation and Reality," exploring the roles of real and imagined Jewish women in the classical world.

On October 26, Yoav Gelber, a visiting scholar from the University of Haifa, delivered a lecture entitled "Changing Israel's Ethos: Recent Transformations in Israeli Society." Gelber investigated the challenges that recent developments in the Middle East have issued to traditional forms of Zionism.

On November 2, Marcie Cohen Ferris, associate director of the Center and assistant professor of American Studies, gave a presentation on her recent book, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South*.

On November 8, architect Ralph Appelbaum spoke about his experiences designing the permanent exhibitions of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

The Center's final fall lecture will take place on December 5. Ian Lustick, professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, will deliver the inaugural Morris, Ida, and Alan Heilig Lectureship in Jewish Studies. Lustick will give a presentation entitled "The Wizard Behind the Curtain: The De-Fetishization of



Ian Lustick will deliver the inaugural Morris, Ida, and Alan Heilig Lectureship in Jewish Studies on December 5

Jerusalem and the Prospects for Israeli-Palestinian Peace".

Many of the lectures were made possible by a grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation in honor of Eli N. Evans. They are co-sponsored by a variety of other

units on campus, including UNC Press, the Center for the Study of the American South, the Creative Writing Program, the Department of Religious Studies, the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, the Curriculum in Peace, War and Defense, the Curriculum in International and Area Studies, the University Center for International Studies, the Ackland Art Museum, the Department of Political Science and North Carolina Hillel. For more information, visit <http://ccjs.unc.edu> or call (919) 962-1509.



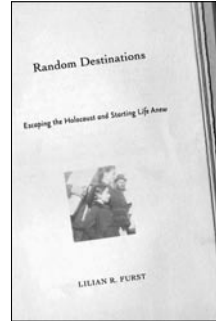


## Inaugural Uhlman Family Seminar Focuses on Holocaust Refugees

This October, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies in cooperation with UNC's Program in the Humanities and Human Values launched its "Uhlman Family Seminar" series, an annual two-day Jewish Studies continuing education seminar open to the general public. The topic was "Escaping the Holocaust and Starting Life Anew." The series was made possible by a gift from Tom Uhlman, UNC-Chapel Hill Ph.D., '75.

The inaugural seminar featured three prominent Carolina faculty and scholars, including Lilian R. Furst, Marcel Bataillon Professor of Comparative Literature. Professor Furst, who escaped from Vienna with her parents in the 1930s, gave a talk drawn from her recent book *Random Destinations: Escaping the Holocaust and Starting Life Anew*. Professor Furst examined the social, economic, and psychological problems that Holocaust refugees faced at their various foreign destinations. The seminar also included a screening of Deborah Oppenheimer's prize-winning documentary about the Kindertransport, *Into the Arms of Strangers*.

Jonathan M. Hess, Director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, spoke on the contours of modern antisemitism, and Allan J. Stern, Training and Supervising Analyst and Past Director, UNC-Duke



Keynote speaker Lillian Furst's book *Random Destinations: Escaping the Holocaust and Starting Life Anew*

the best educational formats for transformational learning."

Please look for information about next year's Uhlman Family Seminar in future issues of *News from the Center*, and at both our web site, <http://ccjs.unc.edu>, and the web page of UNC's Program in the Humanities and Human Values, <http://www.adventuresinideas.unc.edu>.

Psychoanalytic Education Program, offered a psychoanalytic perspective on the trauma of dislocation after the Holocaust.

Tom Uhlman's generosity has made a dramatic difference in the Center's outreach programs. "Inviting North Carolina teachers and community members to come together to learn about Jewish culture and experience is an important mission of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies," says Marcie Ferris, associate director of the Center. "The Uhlman Seminar, an in-depth, hands-on institute, provides one of

## Undergraduates Work with Visiting Israeli Playwright

Carolina students in Joseph Megel's course, Jewish Ritual in Performance, have had a special surprise this fall. Not only are they studying the work of Israeli playwright Naomi Ragen, but they had a chance to work with Ragen on the North American premiere of her hit play, *Women's Minyan*.

Ragen, an American-born novelist and playwright, has lived in Jerusalem since 1971. She has published six best-selling novels in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel, and she spent three weeks in residence this fall on the UNC campus. Her play, *Women's Minyan*, was performed during the week of October 14–30.

Professor Megel was delighted to bring

a renowned playwright into his classroom. "Ragen, an Orthodox woman and strong advocate for women's rights, represents a strong female voice in an inherently patriarchal culture. She is deeply connected to her Judaism, yet is more than willing to stand up to the male-dominated power elite," said Megel.

Megel, a visiting artist in the Department of Communications Studies and co-artistic director of StreetSigns Theatre, directed *Women's Minyan* as part of this year's StreetSigns season (co-producing with North Carolina's relatively new Jewish Theatre — Theatre Or). "This work, based on a true story, looks at the struggle of women



Naomi Ragen

in Israel's Ultra-Orthodox community. These women must find their voices and justice in a male-dominated world.

*Women's Minyan* examines some of the basic divisions in Israeli society today between the "religious" and the "secular" world," Megel said.

Students read books and plays, viewed films that use Jewish ritual, and ultimately prepared their own performance pieces.

## A Closing Word



As I look back over the articles and photographs in the preceding pages, I am amazed at how far the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has come. With thirty courses now available to undergraduates, an impressive series of lectures, and a vigorous outreach program that reaches across the state, our accomplishments in just three short years are truly remarkable. The Center now plays a pivotal role in providing rich educational experiences in Jewish history, culture and thought to our students and to citizens across the state.

Much of what the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has achieved has been made possible through the generous support of alumni and friends like you. We are grateful to you for your support of the Center and invite you to consider renewing it.

Gifts at all levels assist us in our efforts to ensure the continued excellence of Jewish Studies at Carolina. You can use the enclosed envelope, make a gift online at <http://ccjs.unc.edu>, or, if you have questions about the different ways of making a gift, you can contact Kate Brown at the Arts & Sciences Foundation, (919) 843-9853.

Sincerely, Bernadette Gray-Little

DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

### Gifts to the College of Arts & Sciences are recognized in the following societies:

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