Shalom,

The year's end is a time for spiritual reflection and thinking deeply about the meaning of life and the path that we have chosen. In this issue, you will see the lives of many who have contributed so positively to the world; engaging in their own tikkun (repair) of the world. Dartmouth College Hillel plays a significant part in this tikkun by nurturing the Jewish N'Shama (soul) in the students who enter this sacred space.

We decided to make this a special issue; one that focuses on the many lives that have come through the doors of Dartmouth Hillel whether it be in a small conference room in Collis, a rented house on Summer Street or, for the last nearly twenty years, in the Roth Center for Jewish Life on Occom Ridge. What all the people who have walked through Hillel’s doors have accomplished is to have laid the foundation for future generations who create a vibrant Jewish life at Dartmouth College.

Our community is not only here for us, but also for the college at large. On any given Friday night at the Roth Center, you will see Jewish and non-Jewish students sharing a meal, listening to students speak on our sacred texts, and genuinely engaging in meaningful Friday night experiences. The value of this priceless experience has been shared by generations of students.

Under the leadership of Sam Libby ’17, the students on the executive board provided an impressive number of ways for our students to deepen their expressions of faith. Hillel had record attendance at Friday night services and dinners. During the High Holidays, a wide range of students led Conservative and Reform services, blew the Shofar, performed aliyyot (reciting blessings over the Torah), chanted Haftorah (the prophetic reading) and lead the entire community in worship. Two recent graduates, Ariel Wertheim ’16 and Evan Griffith ’15 returned to Hanover to serve as cantor and choir director.

The hard work of interns Jaclyn Eagle ’19, Asaf Zilberfarb ’17, and Israeli exchange student Maya Zrachy, made it possible for Hillel to exceed the number of seats for its annual Birthright Israel trip. In a few weeks, more than twenty students will travel to the Jewish homeland.

Your support has made all the difference and I cannot express my deep sense of gratitude for the extraordinary commitment you have made in being part of our Hillel family. At the close of the Minchah services this year, a group sang the closing to Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms. It is a verse that you may be familiar with; one that has great significance to all of us working together. How good and pleasant that we, as a community, are together!

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Edward Boraz
Hanover, NH
RABBI NICOLE GRENINGER ’02

It might be unusual to think that a building can be responsible for a person’s career path, but Rabbi Nicki (Leiser) Greninger ’02 believes that without the Roth Center for Jewish Life, she might never have become a rabbi. Rabbi Greninger grew up in a suburb of Denver, where she became a bat mitzvah and was confirmed in her family’s Reform congregation. As a child, one of Rabbi Greninger’s main connections to Judaism was through Jewish summer camps. After a transformative USY trip to Israel, she began keeping kosher.

Rabbi Greninger describes herself as already “Jewishly connected” when she arrived at Dartmouth in the fall of 1998. She had spent time over the summer chatting with other incoming Dartmouth students through AOL chat rooms and via email. When she attended a bagel brunch in the brand-new Roth Center, there were people she “already knew” like Hillary Schrenell ’02, Jesse Cook-Dubin ’01, and Dan Greninger ’02 whom she’d marry in 2005.

Rabbi Greninger spent a lot of time at the Roth Center, where, in addition to serving in many different leadership positions, she became involved with the UVJC as a tutor, teacher, and assistant director of the religious school. Rabbi Greninger says that multi-generational buildings, like the Roth Center, are important for a community feeling where people of all ages are engaged in a range of activities for many different reasons. “There would be a group of students making challah in the kosher kitchen, community members having a Torah study, and students schmoozing and planning events in Claudia’s office.”

During Rabbi Greninger’s sophomore summer, she was studying in the Koreman library when she began casually chatting with Rabbi Boraz about her future career plans. As she and Rabbi Boraz talked about her interests in Jewish life, psychology, education and youth, he told her he thought rabbinical work might be something she’d enjoy. This conversation planted the first rabbinic seed, which only grew as she learned about rabbinical programs and began studying Jewish ideologies.

After Dartmouth, Nicki studied at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. She was ordained as a rabbi in 2008 and is currently the Director of Education at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette, California. She is especially passionate about liturgy, prayer, worship and ritual.

Rabbi Greninger explains that she is grateful for the Roth Center as it gave her a “Jewish home” while she was at Dartmouth – through Hillel as well as the UVJC. Moreover, she realizes that her conversation with Rabbi Boraz about rabbinical school may not have happened if the Roth Center were not such a warm, welcoming, inviting place to hang out, to study, and to talk. “Who knows,” she says, “maybe it’s thanks to the beautiful Roth Center (not to mention, of course, my connection with Rabbi Boraz) that I ended up on the path to becoming a rabbi!”
AMY FOLBE ‘84 P ‘15 P ‘19

Amy Folbe is a partner at Honigman, Miller, Schwartz & Cohn in Michigan. She and her husband raised four children who are currently in or have recently graduated from college.

I grew up in a conservative family in Rochester, NY. We kept kosher and I attended Hebrew school throughout high school. I went to Dartmouth because I fell in love with the campus through the trips I took driving my older brother, Barry (Baruch) Eisenberg ’82, back and forth. Jewish life was especially challenging for Baruch because he was on his journey to becoming orthodox and there were very few, if any, religious Jews at Dartmouth. I remember the initiation was Christian-based. There were only a few other Jewish girls in the sorority, and we were surprised by the initiation. When I was at Dartmouth, there was a sense of discovering other Jewish people. We had a community, but it was small with limited opportunities. I tried to change my German major to Yiddish, but there was no one who knew Yiddish or could teach it.

My children [Elana ’15 and Aidan ’19] have had such different Jewish Dartmouth experiences. It’s amazing to think that students today can be involved with Hillel or Chabad or both. It’s incredible that a Rabbi is now the Dean of the Tucker Center. The main difference for Elana and Aidan is that there’s a place for them to go. When I was at Dartmouth, Jewish issues were never discussed. With the building of the beautiful Roth Center, there’s a space to have intimate dialogues, a place to cook kosher meals, a sanctuary in which to pray and lounge where students can just hang out.

While at Dartmouth, my daughter, Elana, was Hillel president for several terms and always very involved. When I walked through the Roth Center with Aidan before his freshman year, he smelled the chicken soup cooking and noticed the basket of kippot outside the sanctuary, the kosher kitchen, and the Hebrew bulletin boards. He said he felt like he was home. I couldn’t have imagined feeling that way in a Dartmouth building when I was a student.

The Roth Center and Hillel have provided my children vastly different experiences of Jewish life at Dartmouth. Elana was fortunate enough to extend her Hillel experience beyond Hanover when she traveled to Lutowiska, Poland with Rabbi Boraz and Project Preservation. Aidan will have a similar global opportunity when he travels to Israel through Hillel’s Birthright program in early December.
BRUCE PACTH ’67

When I came to Dartmouth, the Jewish Life Council was contained inside the Dartmouth Christian Union. My small circle of friends were nearly all Jewish, but we disdained the “professional Jews”, as we called them. In the 1963-67 period, the college hosted “Bagel Brunches” on occasional Sunday mornings where Jewish students could eat cream cheese and bagels, which were not generally available in local stores at that time. I remember being at Yom Kippur services one year when Dartmouth was playing football at home and the bells at Rollins (where we were worshiping) began to ring out the victory.

I first joined the Board of the UVJC when I was living in Canaan, NH. A bunch of us shared two vehicles, so sometimes I had to hitchhike in. Having a child (born in 1970) made me realize how important it would be to have a Jewish community where my son could learn Jewish values not only from me, but from other adult Jews; where he, together with his age-contemporaries, would be given enough education in Hebrew to be able to pray in that language; and, where he could be trained to become a bar mitzvah.

In the early 1980s, I was approached by board member Bernie Gert, asking me to serve as president of the community to get us through a difficult time. A group of well-meaning individuals were offering to fund a rabbi for the community so that the UVJC could split from Dartmouth. However, the governance proposal accompanying their expression of financial largesse would have removed a substantial portion of the UVJC’s democratic structure.

Members of the community took positions on both sides of the proposal. Meetings were held, culminating with a large meeting of the entire community in Spaulding Auditorium at Hopkins Center, after which the community voted to continue sharing a rabbi with the College. Rabbi Daniel Siegel contributed his passionate arguments in favor of continuing the partnership. I believe that our renewed commitment to the UVJC/Dartmouth partnership contributed to the gathering energy needed for the UVJC to support Dartmouth College’s raising the funds to construct the Roth Center.

What role did you play in the building of the Roth Center?

I was on the board in the 1970s, then served as president of the UVJC in (I believe) 1981-82. Years after my board service concluded, I returned to serve on a committee which re-wrote the bylaws, serving as secretary to the newly-elected Board following adoption of the changes. When the College became serious about constructing a Jewish student center, I received a letter from the Dartmouth Trustees asking me to serve on a board to be called the “Foundation for Jewish Life at Dartmouth College.” The purpose of the Foundation was to raise the money, build and operate a Center for Jewish Life to serve both students and the Upper Valley Jewish Community.

The Foundation Board consisted of Dartmouth alumni, UVJC members, and students. I was elected chair of the Board, perhaps because I am both an alumnus and a member of the UVJC. Mel Alperin ’58, headed up the alumni fund-raising committee, working closely with Dartmouth’s development office. On the UVJC side, Mort Wise also worked closely with Dartmouth. I served on the group that chose the building’s architects, but my main role as chair of the Foundation was to maintain the organizational integrity of this new entity (the Foundation) throughout construction, and then to see to creation of an ongoing structure which would facilitate productive communication among Hillel, the UVJC, and the College once construction was completed: the Joint Building Committee was the answer.

I remember the ceremony and the parade when we moved the ark and Torahs from the tiny house on the corner of Summer and South Park Streets to the Roth Center. Thirteen years later, we celebrated the building’s bar mitzvah. Many of us from the 1960s and ’70s hardly could conceive that such a thing would come to pass.

Describe your involvement with bringing the UVJC community into partnership with the College.

Bruce Pacht is the former CEO of two Upper Valley not-for-profit corporations. He lives in Lebanon, NH.

What was Jewish life like when you were a Dartmouth student?

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When we arrived in the Upper Valley in 1974, the Upper Valley Jewish Community (UVJC) was still a very informal group and depended largely on volunteers for whatever activities it undertook. The first full-time rabbi, hired to serve both students and the regional community, arrived in 1975. Over the years the UVJC became more formal (at first it was getting by without annual dues), the number of families and the range of activities both increased, while the close ties with Dartmouth have continued. In all, my wife, my children and I all felt that the services, the religious school, and the community as a whole provided a wonderful environment. I was involved with several UVJC committees during the 1980’s. In the early 1990’s, I served for three years as the organization’s president. Currently, I am on a committee that is putting together a history of the UVJC.

It can be difficult for both students and community members to experience Jewish life fully without a dedicated building. The Roth Center has met a vital need by providing just such a facility. For many years, Jewish activities on campus were somewhat peripatetic. Most services (not just those for the High Holidays) were held in Rollins, while other events took place in whatever space was available. During the decade before the Roth Center opened, both students and the community had the use of a small house near Leverone. The space was inadequate for many purposes, and the rabbi’s main office was still in the former Tucker Foundation, which made it difficult to feel a true sense of community.

Several years after the Roth Center opened I became provost at Dartmouth; in addition to the Roth Center’s role both in providing a kind of “home” for Jewish students and for allowing a closer interaction between students and the broader Jewish community in the Upper Valley, I saw its importance in making Dartmouth a more welcoming place for new Jewish members of the campus. Thus it had come to play a role not only in recruiting undergraduate and graduate students, but also in convincing new faculty and others whom the College as well as the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center were trying to hire that the Hanover area would be an attractive place in which to work.

The Roth Center became just what its name implies, a true center for Jewish students and for the Upper Valley community. It has been responsible for a more vibrant Jewish life in the area, and I would like to see it continue to fill that role for many years to come.

"I WAS THRILLED TO USE MY EMPLOYEE MATCH PROGRAM TO BENEFIT DARTMOUTH HILLEL. I KNOW THAT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY HAD EVEN MORE IMPACT ON FUTURE PROGRAMS."

-LYNNE KOREMAN ’91 DP
Gary Katz is a managing partner at Downtown Capital Partners. He lives with his wife and children in White Plains, New York.

I attended public and Hebrew school in Great Neck, New York. Before Dartmouth, I was more culturally Jewish than religiously observant. My mother and grandmother were concerned about my attending Dartmouth because Jewish life at the time was so shvach (Yiddish for “blah”), but my father thought it would actually strengthen my Jewish identity to go to a school without a Hillel House, kosher food, or local synagogue. My freshman year orientation was held on Rosh HaShannah, which I spent in Rollins Chapel—a “non-denomination” church—where ALL Jewish services, not just high holidays, were held at the time.

When I was at Dartmouth (1986-1990) Jewish life was definitely not mainstream. Like my father predicted, the lack of Jewish life forced me and the other Jewish kids to work hard to affirm our Jewishness. There was no kosher dining so in order to stay there during Passover, I had to request that Thayer buy frozen kosher airline meals (thank God my mother also sent me up with a ton of food). There were no bagels for sale in Hanover, so each term the president of Hillel would drive to the bagel store in West Lebanon, pick up a carload of bagels, special order TempTee cream cheese and lox, and hold a brunch in Collis. Over one hundred Jewish students would show up! For Shabbat dinners, student volunteers would cook dinner in a tiny Collis lounge. About twenty kids would show up for the kosher chicken and challah.

A Hebrew class was first offered in 1988 and there was no FSP or LSA for Hebrew or Judaic studies, so seven of us (me, Mike Kanerack ’90, Josh Hofheimer ’91, Vickie Weinberg ’91, Sue Shankman ’91, Josie Sandler ’91, Jake Tapper ’91, and David Hillman ’91) made our own by working out a special program with Tel Aviv University to accommodate the D-Plan. I still remember the stack of pink forms we had to fill out by hand to get Parkhurst to approve us!

It was a major rite of passage for Jews at the time to take Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg’s Religion 6, officially called Introduction to Judaism but known more commonly as “Jews at 2” because he always taught in the 2A slot. Mel Alperin ’58 had a tremendous impact on Jewish life by making a generous grant to rent the school’s first Hillel House on Summer Street. Amanda Roth ’93 basically “informed” her father, Steve ’64, that the school “had to have” a real Hillel House, which along with the leadership of President James Freedman zl’ became the Roth Center.

The late 80’s saw the rise of diversity of all kinds as a serious issue on campuses across the country. I believe Dartmouth did an outstanding job of nurturing and supporting students who sought to deepen their own cultural identity. One example: My father died after my freshman year. I considered not returning to school because without a synagogue or minyan, I wouldn’t be able to say Kaddish for him. Rabbi Hertzberg and my close friends came to Collis every day so I could say Kaddish. Typically, we’d need two or three more people for the minyan. I became a kind of a cross between a Conservative Jew and Chabad Rabbi, running around in my jeans and Dartmouth sweatshirt asking likely candidates, “Excuse me, are you Jewish?” What was amazing was not only the number of Jewish kids who had never been to a minyan and were willing to help, but that almost every non Jewish student, when they understood why I was asking, would volunteer. I’ll never forget their openness to what was fundamentally a strange request, and their kindness in wanting to honor my father’s memory in a Jewish context.

Gary and his family with sled dogs in Alaska.
Meredith Katz Gantcher is a partner at Downtown Family Advisors, LLC in White Plains, NY. She lives with her husband and children in Scarsdale, NY.

As soon as I arrived in Hanover, I became involved with Hillel, which was a rented house up and running on Summer Street under Rabbi Siegel. As a freshman, Hillel was a great way to meet other ’93’s and upperclassmen. I was drawn in by the fun, tight-knit group of students including: Todd Eagle ’90, Sue Shankman ’91, Kayla Ship ’92, and Amanda Roth ’93. On Friday nights, the small house was usually packed to capacity for Shabbat dinners; celebrating Shabbat was an integral part of our social lives before heading to a basketball or hockey game or out to a fraternity party.

Hillel was also an important part of my social activism and engagement in the broader Dartmouth community. Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a Dartmouth Professor, had a tremendous impact on many students as we forged our Jewish identities and asserted ourselves on campus during a controversial period sparked by racist and anti-semitic articles in The Dartmouth Review. During that time, many of us felt empowered to make Jewish life visible on campus, whether by lobbying the administration for kosher food or building a sukkah right beside Collis.

Looking back, one of the great benefits of having a small Jewish population was that we were able to lead the community, rather than relying on Rabbi Siegel or a paid staffer to direct us. It was amazing that the students were actually responsible for building the Jewish community we wanted.

I hope that today’s Jewish Dartmouth students appreciate how precious it is to have a place like the Roth Center on campus. I was involved with Hillel all four years and served on the board as President, VP of Religion and Education, Community Service Coordinator, and House Manager. I also taught in the UVJC Hebrew school and served as a bat mitzvah tutor.

For me, nearly every room in the Roth Center has significance. I had great time baking, with a few friends, nearly one hundred loaves of challah in the kosher kitchen for a Challah for Hunger campaign. Each term, I spent many hours in the Koreman library studying and writing papers. Claudia’s office was always the place to take a break and hang out. Highlights from the time I spent in the sanctuary include organizing professor shabbats, leading a multi-faith service for an Avi Schaefer Shabbat, and watching modern dancer Kyle Abraham perform a freedom dance during a Seder.

The Roth Center was one of my main anchors while I was at Dartmouth. I was involved with Hillel all four years and served on the board as President, VP of Religion and Education, Community Service Coordinator, and House Manager. I also taught in the UVJC Hebrew school and served as a bat mitzvah tutor.

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Madeline Cooper is spending the 2016-2017 school year as the Director of Education for the Upper Valley Jewish Community. In June, she’ll move to Jerusalem to begin her rabbinic training through Hebrew Union College.

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The Roth Center for Jewish Life

is open daily from 8 a.m. until 10:00 pm during the academic year and staff is on site weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For directions to the Roth Center or information about upcoming programs, please call 603-646-0410. You can also find information on our website dartmouthhillel.org and at Facebook.com/dartmouth.hillel.

Dartmouth College Hillel of The William Jewett Tucker Center

The Hub of Jewish Activity at Dartmouth College

Dartmouth Hillel, a part of the William Jewett Tucker Center, seeks to promote a welcoming community to all those who identify with or are interested in Judaism. Hillel is dedicated to providing resources to help students express and explore Judaism on campus; it strives to engage students of all observance levels through religious, cultural, social, and educational programming. Along with weekly programming, Hillel hosts many special programs including: High Holiday services, weekly Shabbat dinners, an Israeli film series, and Havdallah, just to name a few.