Kayla (’20) and Austin (’20) Hauser, married in August 2018, are pictured here with their Hillel friends: (back row) Marcello DeMiranda (’20), OU-JLIC staff Ariella and Rabbi Raffi Leicht, Joe Frank (’19), Dani Kessler (18), Aron Unger (’19), Ayelet Portman (’19), Shoshie Schwartz (’20), Rebecca Wiesman (’18), Jared Shein (’20), Reba Cohen (’17), Mollie Wald (’18), Ayelet Ehrenkranz (’20), Matt Wasserman (’18), Bari Stanger (’18), Ilana Shecter (’18), Harrison Shecter (’16); (front row) Maxine Wiesenfeld (’19), Lia Almekies (’17), Heidi Cowen (’19), Aliza Abolafia (’18), Jacob Wyner (’18), Aliza Yaillen (’18), Ruth Malkah Rohde (’18).

More Life Events, Page 5

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Sid Topol (’47) made TV history. Then he retired and really started to make a difference. Page 4

A virus changed virtually everything

“This is not how I expected Senior Ceremony to go,” said Carmela Dobrusin, about how the Coronavirus completely changed the final year at UMass Hillel for the Class of 2020. Page 2
Hi Everyone!

I am so happy to see this first newsletter come to fruition.

Student groups hosted by Hillel

More than 1,200 students engaged at UMass Hillel this past year

More than 78 years of Hillel at UMass

More than 15 years of OU-JLIC at UMass

More than 3,700 Shabbat dinners served over the last 3 years at Hillel

More than 100 people participated in Hillel’s march and forum to End Polarization and Promote Peace on campus.

More than 743 students visited Israel on UMass Birthright trips in the last 5 years

FROM THE RABBI

Rabbi Aaron Fine

L’shalom,
at aaronfine@umass.edu.

It has been a pleasure to get...
Sid Topol made TV history. Then he retired and really started to make a difference.

The next time you turn on CNN or HBO or ESPN, give a little thanks to Sid Topol.

You might remember the 1975 boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, famously referred to as the Thrilla in Manila. It was the first broadcast of a continuous signal via satellite, beamed across the world via a new cable channel called HBO, and it made television history.

That was Sid’s satellite technology, and it opened the door to his love of science and mathematics.

“I was a member of the Jewish fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi, and my frat brothers weren’t so religious, though we were all proud to be Jewish,” Sid says. “We were busy studying, listening to a lot of jazz, playing sports and were very cy nickal then. We drank a lot of scotch because the war was coming and we were always saying goodbye to someone.”

In 1943, he joined the army and was introduced to working with antennas within the Radar program at MIT. After finishing school, Sid was hired by Raytheon and, in 1965, became head of its communications division.

“I made it clear to Raytheon I did not want to work on military projects. ... I transferred out of the antenna branch at Raytheon to the Communications department and became a project manager on something called a portable microwave link, which, say, could be set up at Fenway Park on a tripod with a dish ... and connects to cameras so you could do remotes – fires, burglaries, baseball,” he said. “I was a pioneer in electronic news gathering. The key thing was that I was able to combine the audio and the color altogether in one. That was a breakthrough. It was a big commercial success for Raytheon.”

When it became clear that Raytheon was more interested in military contracts than communication, Sid – with his wife Libby and their daughters – moved to Georgia in 1971 to take the reins as president, and later CEO, of Scientific Atlanta.

It was his work at Scientific Atlanta that played a key role in the history of broadcast communication, creating the cable satellite connection, which allowed for signals sent from satellites in space to be received by portable stations on earth. When the Ali-Frazier Fight was beamed across the world by satellite, TV was forever changed.

Topol’s time at Scientific Atlanta was significant for him in another way: it’s where his philanthropic efforts really took shape. He realized he “not only had obligations to the shareholders, but also to the community.”

He backed progressive political candidates and was also heavily involved in social justice by supporting causes that fought poverty, racism, and inequality. In the mid-’80s, he worked on a project to fund a science and technology museum in Atlanta.

After winning the Electronic Industry Association Medal of Honor award in 1989, Sid retired and moved the family back to Boston in 1990. He started thinking about how he could use his financial success to further support causes he believed in.

“[Before I retired], I was in the corporate world, which is right or center. I had to be cautious, unfortunately, about some of my philosophical and political points of view,” he said. “Now I speak my piece, and I don’t have to be afraid.”

Besides giving generously to his alma maters, Boston Latin high school, UMass and UMass Hillel, and offering scholarships and grants through various universities, Sid continues to fund organizations promoting education, peace and nonviolence.

He traces the beginning of his philanthropy at UMass Hillel to the dedication of the Maxwell H. Goldberg Jewish Living and Learning Community in 1998. Goldberg was a UMass alum and professor, who helped establish Hillel in Amherst.

“I wanted to give in recognition of Goldberg,” he says.

Sid continues giving this to day. His foundation has provided nearly $4 million to his chosen causes.

Among those causes are Americans for Peace Now, J Street, and the Parents Circle-Families Forum, organizations advocating for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to end through peaceful and diplomatic measures.

“I grew up in a very progressive family and now I’m very focused on Black Lives Matter and non-violence,” he says. “I’m pro-Israel and also pro-Palestinian, and all about reconciliation and peace.”

www.umasshillel.org | Email: umasshillel@gmail.com
Rosa Kramer Franck (2000) fondly recalls her time at Hillel:
What I loved about Hillel was just how easily everyone got along, such a sense of community and belonging among so many people. Living in the residence, you just leave your door open and people would wander in and out and schmooze and hang out!

FROM THE ARCHIVES
JLC students in 1995-96 created a homemade, spiral-bound scrapbook of life in the Hillel dorms. It included an individual page from each student with photos, quotes and poems! The front page lists the first names of those here at the time.
Among them were: Stephanie Pure, Jon Croopnick, Alan Weinfeld, Josh Altwerger, Adam Bushbaum, Mark Strauss, Zeesie Perti- tain, Jennifer Elbaum, and Marc Assa.

If you know anyone else who was part of JLC at this time, let us know!

ABOUT UMASS HILLEL
Our Mission: UMass Hillel empowers students through the vitality of Jewish life to cultivate purposeful, healthy lives and relationships that better our community and world.

MEET THE STAFF
Rabbi Aaron Fine
Executive Director
Rebekah Steinfeld
Assistant Director
Melanie Gerard
Director of Advancement
Rabbi Raffi and Ariella Leicht
OU-JLIC Educators
Rich Kassirer
Office Manager/Development Associate
Sapir Ben Svi
Israel Fellow
Ashley Nalven
Senior IACT Birthright Coordinator
Emily Kopka
Innovation Springboard Fellow
Emerson Finkle
Social Justice Springboard Fellow
Rich Kassirer
Office Manager/Development Associate
Jan Veshia
Development Associate

GET IN TOUCH! Want to reach out to a staff member? Click HERE to email us!

OUR STUDENT GROUPS
Challah For Hunger brings people together to bake and sell challah to raise money to combat food insecurity.

Degel is for students from Orthodox backgrounds to gather and support each other religiously and socially.

Jewish Leaders in Business connects students to networking opportunities and educational events to better prepare students for the competitive business world.

JewMass organizes social events for students of different Jewish backgrounds.

JStreet U works to create an open dialogue on campus about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Kehilah is a community for LGBTQ Jews at UMass.

Mishelanu provides a home on campus for Israeli-American students.

Mizmor offers opportunities for students to engage religiously, spiritually, and culturally with Conservative Judaism.

Rusch is the Reform and Reconstructionist student group at UMass Hillel.

Student Alliance for Israel helps to enhance understanding of and appreciation for Israel at UMass.

to learn more about our programs, visit www.umasshillel.org/our-groups.html

www.umasshillel.org | Email: umasshillel@gmail.com
Support Jewish Life at Hillel!

We are grateful to our community of alumni, faculty, families, and friends who believe in the importance of supporting UMass Hillel. As an independent non-profit, individual donations are our largest source of revenue. Your donations ensure that UMass students have a vibrant Jewish community to support them and help fund a diverse array of educational, spiritual, social, and community-focused programs and experiences.

For more information about how you can join our growing list of supporters, please contact Melanie Gerard at mgerard@umass.edu or make your gift online now.

We are excited to welcome you into our donor community.

To donate online, go to umasshillel.org/donate

“In my time at UMass Hillel, I learned leadership skills, the importance of community, and to always be proud that I am a Jew.”
- Dr. Jesse Katz ('13)

“Hillel taught me that there’s no wrong way to be Jewish and encourages me to engage in the community in any and every way I can.”
- Dora Berg ('22)

Connect with your former classmates on our LinkedIn Alumni page, and for weekly updates on what’s happening at Hillel, sign up for our News4Jews newsletter.

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