

## Torah on Tap at Fullerton Kicks off the New School Year

The first program of the new school year was kicked off with a class from Rabbi Drew at CSU-Fullerton. Although university classes only started the following week, on August 18<sup>th</sup>, the first program of the new school year, a Torah on Tap class, occurred. Rabbi Drew led a discussion on *mezuzot*, such as what they are, where to place them, how to place them, and more.

The CSUF Hillel group has been on the rise since getting off of the ground last school year. Having had only a couple of programs in the spring, the new student board has been powering the group forward and many more events for the group is in store.



Students with Rabbi Drew at Torah on Tap class

Beginning with issue #4, this space will be host to whomever would like to sponsor it. Sponsorship opportunities are available for \$100 per issue (although if you would like to contribute more, that is also welcome). Other sponsoring opportunities are available, as well. For more details, you can contact Rabbi Drew (information on page 4).

## Inaugural Camp Jewlicious

After six years of Jewlicious Festivals in Long Beach, the Jewlicious experience has been expanded camp-style. Over 100 people were involved with Camp Jewlicious, which took place at the Brandeis Bardin Campus of the American Jewish University in Simi Valley. The campgrounds were vast and lovely. As David Abitbol, a Jewlicious co-founder, described the camp, “This lush, verdant, 3000-acre facility located just 45 minutes north of Los Angeles is the largest piece of Jewish-owned property outside of Israel. Frankly, it’s overwhelming. Yes, there’s horseback riding, and mountain-biking, hikes galore and swimming pools.”

The inaugural Camp Jewlicious was powered by J-Connect and made possible by a grant from The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles Valley Alliance and the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles. Co-sponsoring Camp Jewlicious, in addition to SoCalJSS were American Jewish University, Beach Hillel, Birthright Israel Next, Jewish Free Loan, Jews for Judaism, and Nefesh B' Nefesh.

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Camp Jewlicious participants enjoying a barbecue lunch. (Photo courtesy of David Abitbol)

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hikes galore and swimming pools.” Abitbol added, “Prior to my arrival here, I saw photos but nothing compares to actually being here. I spent my first half-hour at Camp Jewlicious walking around like a stunned slack-jawed imbecile.”

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This first Camp Jewlicious, in addition to its camp atmosphere, had a central component of grassroots organizing. Sessions were led by Marcus Freed on topics such as "Create, Identify and Articulate Vision" and "Tell People About It." Also leading an important session was Shawn Landres, from Jumpstart: A Thinkubator for Sustainable Jewish Innovation, who spoke on “Real Money,” wherein he discussed some steps to getting financial backing



Horseback riding at Camp Jewlicious

for one’s cause.

There were sessions with Jewish content, as well. Rabbi Drew led a discussion on mamzerut/bastardy, as it was in the week’s parshah during Friday evening. The young folks who attended had little, if any knowledge on the topic, and were interested to hear about this Jewish idea.

In addition to the classes and sessions, there was also the Jewlicious staple of music. Moshav band headlined the Saturday night



Havdallah bonfire Saturday night

concert (for a video of one of their songs they performed that night: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89JI-pW9CRc>).

Also performing were Mikey Pauker and Jered Stein. A hilariously entertaining performance was put on by Eric Schwartz a.k.a. Smooth E.

However, Saturday night’s concert wasn’t the only music around; the evening was kicked off with a musical havdallah sing-along around a bonfire (very appropriate for

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Marcus Freed leading a session (Picture courtesy of David Abitbol)

# Area-Wide Leadership Gathering

The first area-wide gathering of Hillel student leaders came together for a leadership seminar on Sunday 29 August. Eighteen students from six different campuses came together at the Orange County Hillel offices to meet other Jewish student leaders as well as to get some training to bring back to their campus Hillel groups.

Organized by Southern California Jewish Student Services in collaboration with Orange County Hillel, Long Beach Hillel, and Desert & Inland Empire Hillel, made possible through a grant from the Rose Project of Jewish Federation & Family

Services, Orange County, it was the first such gathering for Hillel leaders in recent history. Campuses represented were California State University, Fullerton; California State University, Long Beach; California State University, San Bernardino; Chapman University; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Riverside; and University of Redlands.

One CSULB student, Karina Karol, said that the event “was really well organized; I never felt like it we were waiting for the next activity to take place.” Zach Katona, another CSULB student, added “even the schmoozing felt organized.”

A UCI student, Briana Booth said that, “I



Rabbi Drew introducing the seminar

feel like I have begun to strengthen my leadership skills. Part of this is attributed to my wonderful experience at the Hillel Leadership.” Booth continued, “I felt like I was able to delve deeper into the qualities that help create successful leadership, such as ensuring the entire board of Hillel students has a clear intention of where they want their programs to go, which can be accomplished by setting goals for themselves and as a team.”



Icebreaker activity, with CSUF students in the foreground

In addition to Rabbi Drew, presenters included Jordan Fruchtman, executive director of OC Hillel; Rabbi

Devin Villareal; Sarah Austin & Megan Kanofsky, program associates at OC Hillel; and Andala Zayas, Director of Academic Affairs at the LA Consulate General of Israel. Topics covered were a text study discussion on Jewish leadership, drawn from the Hebrew Bible; a session on considering what the strengths and weaknesses of the leaders were; and a creative session on using pictures to tell a story about a year in a Hillel group.

Rabbi Villareal’s creative use of Biblical texts to describe two different models of

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Jordan Fruchtman, the OC Hillel Executive Director, speaks while Adina Hemley, the Desert & Inland Empire Hillel Director, looks on, with UCI and UCR students

# Rabbi Drew Attends Hillel Professionals Conference

“More than 700 Hillel student activists, professionals and lay leaders gathered at Washington University in St. Louis, August 10-15, for the first Hillel Institute, a unique conference that brought together student and professional training in the same location,” David Baugher wrote in the St. Louis Jewish Light. “The gathering was the first of its kind because it was actually two events rolled into one beginning on Tuesday, Aug. 10 with the Hillel Institute for about 400 of the group's campus professionals. The professionals' get together had previously been conducted during winter break.”

The largest gathering of Jewish campus professionals in the world came together for the Hillel Institute at Washington University in St. Louis from 10-13 August. **Rabbi Drew was there, thanks to the financial support of Beatrice Sowald and Barbara & Leon Shoag.** The theme running throughout the conference was balancing breadth and depth. For decades, Hillel had sought to impart religious content. In the last

couple of decades, however, the model turned to doing simply Jewishly with other Jews - mainly trying to get more numbers, but lacking in depth, which was also reflected in hiring less rabbis to be involved with Hillel. However, in the last few years, Hillel has moved to a model that seeks to synthesize the two, yielding a Hillel that seeks to reach out to many Jews, but at the same time, doing so in a meaningful and distinctly Jewish way.

For two days before the Hillel Institute began, the New Professionals' Institute took place, which was an opportunity for new Hillel hires to get a better sense of the mission and task of were excited and enthusiastic and it was good to be around that vibe. Although I have been in the position for nine months, it was good to see what the new trainees are getting, nonetheless, hearing about some of the basics. One interesting



Rabbi Drew holding up cookies with the Hillel Institute logo



New Professionals Institute in progress



Rabbi Drew and Tanya Gutsol promoting Jewlicious Festival to other Hillel staff around the nation at the Hillel Institute

take-away from the NPI, besides meeting some of the new rabbis and other professionals, was getting to hear from the programming and engagement associates about their exploration of both their careers and Jewish identity as they venture into their new jobs working for Hillel.

Being able to spend a few sessions with fellow rabbis serving campus populations was invaluable. Moreover, to be able to discuss the broader question of breadth and depth within a group of fellow "Jewish content providers" also brought into the discourse how much do we do as not only teachers, but fill other roles of being rabbis, as well.

Also valuable was having Beth Cousens, Associate Vice President of the Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Experience, discuss findings about engaging students, taken from a study done on the Senior Jewish Educators. It was furthermore helpful to be able to discuss it amongst other rabbis.

Another positive yield from the conference was, along with Rachel Kaplan, the Beach Hillel director (and my wife), speaking with Raina Goldberg, the Director of Hillel Taglit-Birthright Israel & Follow Through, to get a Beach Hillel partial bus for a Birthright Israel trip in the summer.

The best part, in addition to meeting people working at the Schusterman International Center and fellow rabbis, were meeting new people and reconnecting with others. Something worked on in groups in keeping with the theme of balancing



**Rabbi Hyim Shafner, a new SoCalJSS Advisory Board Member, teaching a Beit Midrash class at the Hillel Institute (which Rabbi Drew attended)**

My two rabbis sessions went well - the component that I found most meaningful was the Professional Networking. My cohort was the rabbis sans the SJE rabbis. There, we discussed issues pertinent to us and we were able to engage in a discourse which helped frame what we do.

Schmoozing, of course, was a highlight in and of itself - being in the same place as many other Jewish campus professionals provides an opportunity for many enriching and engaging discussions.

Most of the conference had Hillel professionals from different Hillels grouped together. For instance, Rabbi Drew and his wife, Rachel, the Beach Hillel director, were grouped along with Hillel staff from Rutgers as well as few staff groups from Floridian Hillels and Maryland Hillel. Scott Brown, an executive vice-president of the group, said the idea was to encourage more personalized communication, Baugher reported. "What we've done is created mini-communities where people can interact," he said. "It's a form of modeling. When you are in a large group you are more anonymous. When you are in a smaller group you are more fully engaged." We got a better sense of different strategies to engage

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**New Professionals Institute Group Shot**

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more Jewish students, yet, at the same time, making sure to maintain Jewish content within the programming.

One of the biggest highlights of the conference was the Presidential Plenary Session, delivered by Wayne Firestone, the president of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish



Wayne Firestone speaking (photo courtesy of Adam Soclof/JTA)

Campus Life (available online at

<http://www.hillel.org/about/news/2010/aug/hi2010video.htm>).

Entitled “יהיה טוב: It Will Be Good,” Firestone discussed the I’s about which the organized Jewish community has become pessimistic regarding the youth: Individuality, Incivility, and Israel. But, he said, “I’m tired of the

handwringing. I’m tired of the pessimism. I think that our movement has something to offer the Jewish world that shows a different vision about

where we are headed.” He insightfully described the college students of today by saying, “If you want to understand this generation, you have to understand that they get connections, that they actually get

community, that they understand how to act as a

group,” he said. “They go through deep experiences as individuals but they process them as groups. That presents a tremendous opportunity to do community building and process issues of identity building in a deeper way than we could ever imagine before.”

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camp), including Pauker and Stein playing music on a guitar and a violin(!).

The Thursday night bonfire with s’mores was also a fun bonfire song-fest, where Rav Shmuel Skaist performed some songs on a guitar before switching over to a ukulele(!).



project proposal and to hear it discussed in a frank and open way.”

“Meeting other Jews from different college campuses, I had a chance to experience Judaism in a different way than I am used to. Since I

Here are some quotes from participants from anonymously-submitted surveys:

“The people were amazing. It was such a friendly, dynamic group. I also REALLY enjoyed the Carlebach services with Yehuda.”

“The Hot-seat funders session was an opportunity for me to hear real feedback on my

was born and raised in Israel, being religious is very limited in options of how religious you are.



Swimming was a Camp Jewlicious option

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I got to experience faith in a setting that is more relaxed and open, and I really enjoyed it.”



More horseback riding at Camp Jewlicious (photo courtesy of David Abitbol)

“The activities! I had an amazing day Saturday. I woke up, ate breakfast, did yoga, ate more, napped,

ate lunch, did ropes course, swam, went on a hike, and then had dinner and an awesome concert.”

“Allowing participants freedom to roam the campus.”



Marcus Freed and Eric Rosen ripping up standard understandings of goal-setting activities (photo courtesy of David Abitbol)

“The relaxed camp atmosphere. The inclusion of all Jews regardless of background was amazing and a credit to Jewlicious programming. I can't wait to see what next year is like.”

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changes leaders employ was received well by the students. “I enjoyed Rabbi Devin's energetic and fun presentation about the different types of changes (technical and adaptive) that leaders undergo when dealing with people and situations. He presented them with



Rabbi Devin Villareal leading a text-study session on leadership



Andala Zayas, the Director of Academic Affairs at the Consulate General of Israel in Los Angeles, speaking about opportunities for free speakers to come to campuses

examples that I could relate to which helped me put into perspective the message he was trying to relay to us,” Booth said. “As a leader, I need to be able to take a step

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back and analyze the situation and the people in it, and approach it in the most quality way possible to ensure an everlasting and positive change.”

Overall, the program went excellently and there has been a desire for a mid-year event, as well.

## Advisory Board Formed

To help Rabbi Drew, he has formed an eleven-member advisory board to consult for advice as he moves forward in his first full academic year. Rabbi Yonah Bookstein, Rabbi Joshua Feigelson, Dr. William Kahn, Josh Kaplan, Rachel Kaplan, Jeffrey Rips, Neil Scheier, MD, Rabbi Hyim Shafner, Heather Sowald, JD, Rabbi Avi Weiss, and Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz have all agreed to help me out and I look forward to gaining from their wisdom!

## Follow Rabbi Drew



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Twitter

Want to keep up with what Rabbi Drew is doing? Follow him on

Twitter at <http://twitter.com/RabbiDrew>

## Rabbi Drew Joins Board of Rabbis

Rabbi Drew joined The Board of Rabbis of Southern California recently. The Board of Rabbis of Southern California brings together more than 320 rabbis throughout southern California.



The Board promotes and enriches Jewish learning and living through programming and leadership in the areas of Community Learning, Professional Growth, Interreligious Action, Social Justice, Healing & Spirituality, Media Relations and Israel Advocacy.

The SoCalJSS Newsletter is a monthly publication of Southern California Jewish Student Services (SoCalJSS), an enterprise of Beth El Synagogue, a synagogue without walls, generously funded by Allen & Deanna Alevy. SoCalJSS’s mission is to facilitate Jewish living and learning, and engaging with the Jewish people in colleges and universities in Southern California. SoCalJSS provides the only rabbi for two universities (California State University (CSU) – Fullerton and CSU-Long Beach) and Polytechnic High School’s Jewish Club, in addition to providing rabbinic support to five other universities (Chapman University, CSU-San Bernardino, UC-Irvine, UC-Riverside, and University of Redlands) and students at many area community colleges.

Tax-deductible donations to support the work of SoCalJSS can be made out to Beth El Synagogue and mailed to Rabbi Drew, 3801 E. Willow Street, Long Beach, CA 90815. Rabbi Drew Kaplan can be contacted at 562.400.5627 and [RabbiDrew@SoCalJSS.org](mailto:RabbiDrew@SoCalJSS.org).