and MacArthur fellow Peter Cole will speak on “The Poetry of Kabbalah.” This coming spring, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hannah A. Quint Lectureship in Jewish Studies, established in 1988 by Elliot Levinson ’84 and his late mother Mrs. Hannah Quint, for which we will host a major symposium: “The Jews in America: Past and Future.”

We farmed, hiked, biked, and canoed, while studying Jewish texts on environmental and social justice issues, and I was richly rewarded by our shared experience. As you’ll see in this issue of Hillel, students brought well-informed speakers to campus to help explore and understand Israel and the Middle East. They engaged the academic expertise and personal experiences of Jewish faculty and are broadening the scope of Jewish studies and interests, with Hebrew, Yiddish, and American Jewish pop-culture finding its places in our community.

The article by Robert Schine, the Curt & Else Silberman Professor of Jewish Studies, gives us a comprehensive look at Jewish studies on campus. The coming years will bring a number of significant anniversaries. In addition to this year’s 25th anniversary of the Quint Lectureship in Jewish Studies, 2013–14 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Jewish Center, and in 2014–15, we will celebrate 60 years of Hillel at Middlebury College.

My thanks and appreciation for all your support, and I look forward to seeing you on campus!
Woody Allen Film Series
Michael Arment ’13.5
This past year, we showed two of acclaimed comedian and director Woody Allen’s most famous movies: Annie Hall and Manhattan. These films capture Mr. Allen’s well-honed analysis of love, relationships, and modern urban life. However, for us at Hillel, the most important component of these movies was the “Jewishness” that permeated everyiting, comic moment. Mr. Allen is a master at distilling Jewish comedic sensibilities and neuroticism into both high- and lowbrow humor. This movie series would make Jewish Middlebury mothers proud, and chagrined—just as Woody Allen would want it.

Israeli Film Series
Steven Dunmire ’13
As part of Hillel’s efforts to find new and innovative programming, this fall saw the group’s first Israeli Film Series. The initiative was conceived as a way for Hillel to put on Israel-themed programming in a manner that respects the wide variety of political beliefs within our organization. Choosing to focus on events that emphasized Israeli culture, we screened two Israeli films for the campus community. The first, Walk on Water, was directed by acclaimed Israeli filmmaker Eytan Fox. It is a fictional story that focuses on the friendship between Eyal, a Mossad agent, and two German citizens he is assigned to observe. The second film, The Bubble, follows three young friends living in Tel Aviv and centers on Noam, an Israeli, who falls in love with Ashraf, a Palestinian.
Both films were well received, and we hope to screen more in the future.

Alum Spotlight
Gabi Friedman ’11
AVODAH Chicago Corps Member
This year, I live in Chicago with direct-service providers and community organizers who participate in AVODAH, a domestic Jewish service corps. We are trying to address issues such as homelessness, foreclosure, hunger, and unemployment. I work with survivors of gender-based violence, primarily from South Asian and other immigrant communities. As a legal advocate, I support survivors in making informed choices, planning for their safety, and navigating state and federal legal processes. My housemates and I are sustained in our work by discussing related Jewish texts, giving nonprofits, and participating in educational programming about social justice and Judaism.
I joined AVODAH because of its commitment to serving immigrants and other diverse communities. After studying ethnic conflict in Cameroon, I was eager to study the psychology and politics of race and ethnicity at Middlebury and, after graduation, to advocate for the rights of immigrants. My interest in AVODAH heightened last spring when Ruth Messinger of American Jewish World Service came to Middlebury to deliver a career conversation about social justice work. I was proud to hear other Hillel members describe their commitments to issues like education reform. As we read each Friday at Middlebury Hillel, “May we so live that we can face the world with serenity and with grace,” I wish for graduates that you maintain your commitment to your values and sustain your faith with the support of new communities.

Academic Forums / Rachel Dicker ’14
This was an extremely successful year for Hillel’s Academic Forum series. On November 2, 2011, Associate Professor of International Studies Ted Sasson gave a lecture entitled “A Look at Israel and the Diaspora: Influences of Taglit-Birthright.” He discussed his research on the differences in involvement with the Jewish community of Birthright participants in comparison with applicants who did not participate. Birthright participants were both more likely to marry someone who is Jewish and stay involved with the Jewish community than nonparticipants.
On November 30, 2011, Professor of Geography Tamar Mayer spoke about her experience as an Israeli professor at a liberal arts institution, her education both in Israel and in the United States, and the research she conducted abroad on Uighur identity.
On March 14, 2012, Charles A. Dana Professor of Political Science Murray Dry gave his lecture for the series: “What I Learned from Leo Strauss about Being Jewish, and about the Study of Philosophy and Revealed Religion.” This lecture filled the Hillcrest Orchard room to well over capacity and was video recorded. Please contact me at muddick@middlebury.edu if you would like access to this lecture online.
It was an honor and a pleasure to serve as Hillel’s academic chair this year, and I look forward to next year’s forums!

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer Addresses Middlebury College on Israel / Sarah Cohen ’15
On April 17, Middlebury College hosted former ambassador Daniel Kurtzer, who delivered a powerful lecture on Israel’s strategic position in a volatile Middle East. Ambassador Kurtzer served from 2001-2005 as the U.S. ambassador to Israel under President Bush, and from 1997-2001 as the U.S. ambassador to Egypt under President Clinton. He currently teaches at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.
During the fall, many students in Hillel sensed a growing imbalance of views on campus regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following an incident that many perceived as unfairly critical of Israel, we felt it was imperative to change the conversation to a more centrist outlook. Shortly thereafter, a group of Hillel students invited Ambassador Kurtzer to address the campus.

The New Hebrew House
Caroline Kohlenberg ’14
When I signed up for Modern Hebrew 101 last spring, I had no idea what the community I was entering would be like. A combination of the intimate class setting—only five students—and the language’s inherent uniqueness has led to a special classroom dynamic. So when I heard about the potential for a Hebrew house, or bet ivrit, beginning this fall, I recognized it as a natural extension of this close community and eagerly signed up. There will be three of us living there, but of course the house is welcome to anyone excited to learn and speak Hebrew. We’re looking forward to hosting Israeli movie nights, hummus hours, Hebrew sing-a-longs, and other fun events related to the Hebrew language and Israeli culture. See you there, I’tizatav!

Challah for Hunger / Dave Yedid ’15
This spring, I decided to bring Challah for Hunger, a challah sale that raises funds for hunger organizations, to Middlebury. Hillel members and interested non-Hillel students banded together to sell the challah in Arsteter Dining Hall on Thursday evenings and sold them Friday afternoons. Baking 50 challot at once was a fun challenge, and all three of the sales were successful. Hillel collected more donations for HOPE Addison County and MAZON than we had hoped. I look forward to Challah for Hunger becoming an established part of Hillel’s future events and commitment to social justice.