Salute to Israel

All pictures taken in Israel by Steve Schuster. See About the Cover on page Nat 2.
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Oh, the places you’ll go!

Story by Sarah Pellegrino
Photos by Jane Reeves

Last year, I won a Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program scholarship to major in Jewish studies. I wrote the Borns’s a thank you note, prompted by my advisor, Carolyn Lipson-Walker. At the end of the school year, I declined an invitation to attend the Jewish studies student-faculty awards dinner. However, having attended the awards dinner one year later, I realize how foolish, and probably rude of me it was to skip out on the first one.

The annual dinner highlights the accomplishments of Jewish studies students; various awards, scholarships, and general involvement at IU are spoken about. The new college graduates are shown off and receive coffee mugs. Sounds pretty straightforward, right? Wrong.

What made the JSP dinner different was that I felt the magnitude of these students’ accomplishments. Never before at high school graduation or other banquets had I realized the true gravity of graduating college and having done several other impressive things along the way. I can only hope that younger students see me that way when I graduate. I thought I would give you an idea of what these Hoosiers have been through and where they are going.

One extremely remarkable student, Aren Wilson-Wright, was deemed the “most outstanding graduating student,” by the Jewish Studies Program and was awarded the 2010 Leonore and Louis Prize of $750. What is more impressive than numbers is what Aren plans to do with his future. Next year, he will begin a Ph.D. program in Hebrew Studies at the University of Texas. His long-term goal is “to be a professor at a university like IU and teach the next generation of students.”

I consider myself a very busy person. I love to be involved and thrive on the energy. But when the list of organizations that Sarah Wilensky is a part of was announced, I felt like a couch potato. Not only was she Jewish Studies Student Association (JSSA) secretary, but held positions in STAND: A Student Anti-Genocide Coalition, Divestment for Darfur, and Keshet, a group of GBLT Jews and Allies. On top of that and various other organizations, she wrote an essay that won her the 2010 Henry A. Bern Memorial Essay Competition, and $750.

Besides the past accomplishments of these students, one of the most gratifying parts of attending the dinner was listening to their futures, their dreams. Still in the process of defining what I want to do, to hear goals and motivation is most encouraging especially from peers. Lauren Vandersluis, an incoming senior from Dayton, Ohio, wishes to eventually work in administration for Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Israel.

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The Stratford at WestClay Proves Service and Location Breed Success

Active seniors continue to choose award-winning continuing care senior living community

Despite U.S. consumer confidence recently dropping to its lowest level in several months, The Stratford at WestClay continues to prove that good hospitality and a great location can triumph over a struggling economy. The Stratford at WestClay, a premier continuing care retirement community (CCRC) located within Carmel’s award-winning Village of WestClay neighborhood, is pleased to announce that it has sold out its penthouses.

That milestone can be attributed, in part, to The Stratford at WestClay and its construction partner, St. Louis-based Paric Corporation, recently being recognized as the North American winner in the Best Large CCRC category in this year’s “Best of 50+ Housing Awards.” The award, presented by the National Association of Home Builders’ 50+ Housing Council, recognizes The Stratford at WestClay’s architectural excellence. Paric served as construction manager on the project for the Stratford Companies, with The Lawrence Group of St. Louis providing architectural and interior design services.

So far in 2010, The Stratford at WestClay, which has created 96 jobs and counting since opening in spring 2008, has more than tripled its sales compared to the same time period in 2009. Additionally, unit occupancy has climbed 33 percent and the number of residents at The Stratford at WestClay has seen a healthy gain of 25 percent.

“By focusing heavily on hospitality, The Stratford at WestClay is able to offer its residents a number of different amenities and services, including something we call ‘The Good Life’ – a personalized, customized program that brings physical and mental wellness to life for our residents,” said Wendy Horn, chief marketing officer for The Stratford Companies. “We’re also removing the uncertainty that comes with selling a house, moving to a new home and downsizing possessions through our relationship with The Moving Station – a provider of relocation services that specializes in seniors. Other services currently offered at The Stratford at WestClay include premier concierge services; a fitness and aquatic center and personalized meal plans.

In addition, space is almost completely full at The Stratford at WestClay’s assisted living residence as well as Trude’s House, a small, specialized program for residents living with Alzheimer’s and dementia. Trude’s House encourages resident independence through an activity-based model of care that focuses on art and music programs, horticulture and pet therapy. Trude’s House honors Gertrude Zalar, whose husband, Dr. Richard Zalar, established a foundation in her name to assist families struggling to find Alzheimer’s care. With the high demand for Alzheimer’s and dementia care, The Stratford at WestClay will make more apartments available in the coming weeks and months.

Some of the 39 undergraduates graduating from Indiana University’s Borns Jewish Studies Program. At the April 14, 2010 Jewish Studies Student-Faculty Dinner. Front row (left to right): Brad Ashba, Francie Schrank (Northbrook, Ill.), Lauren Jacobson (Englewood, Ohio), Towah Lieberman (Jamesville, NY), Emily Berman (Louisville, Ky.), Rachel [Shelly] Farahan (Carmel), Jessica Wainer (Oak Park, Ill.). Second row (left to right): Aaron Ofengender (Indianapolis), Riley Holzman (Santa Barbara, Calif.), Mark Swick (Silver Spring, Md.), Eric Goode (Deerfield, Ill.), Jessica Gross (Northbrook, Ill.), Sara Gehoff (Longwood, Fl.), Sarah-Beth Kirshner (Marietta, Georgia), Aten Wilson-Wright (Greencastle).

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Jessica Wainer, a new IU graduate from Chicago, is a Jewish studies major, graduating with honors. Her minors are psychology and Hebrew. Next year she will be attending rabbinical school at Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Institute of Religion.

“My favorite aspect of the Jewish studies program would probably be the wide breadth of classes offered. Also the close-knit community and how much the professors are willing to help you out and go the mile for you,” said Jessica.

One retiring faculty member, Professor Bronislava Volkova, and a visiting professor from Israel, Yossi Turner, were both honored.

While I wish I could sit here and list all the accomplishments that were achieved, the goals that were reached, and the futures still to come, they wouldn’t fit in this column.

The Jewish Studies Program at IU truly has character and I can only hope that when (knock on wood) I walk up there to get my coffee mug, I feel just as accomplished and certain of my goals.

Congratulations JSP graduates, you did it!