

Hillel to sponsor 'Latke vs. Hamantashen' debate

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It may hardly qualify as the debate of the century, but Alfred University's Hillel hopes that its upcoming debate, "Latke vs. Hamantashen," will provide food for thought to the Alfred community. The debate over which is better will be held at 8 p.m. March 18 in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. "It's supposed to be fun, not a serious debate," explains Jeff Spiro, spokesperson for Hillel at Alfred, the Jewish students' group. Panelists, who include Dr. Larry Greil, leader of AU's Hillel and professor of sociology; Nick Tobier, assistant professor of art, and two others to be determined, are being asked to be "creative and funny," said Spiro. "They can make things up or stretch the truth" in order to make their point. "Each speaker will be asked to address the question from his or her point of expertise," said Spiro. Tobier, as an art professor, might argue about which was more appealing from an aesthetic point of view. "Members of the audience will be given noise-makers, or they may bring their own - anything from drums to pots and pans - to indicate their approval of the speakers' points, Spiro explained. Samples of both will be available for those attending to taste.. A latke is a potato pancake fried in oil, symbolic of the 'miracle' of the one-day supply of oil burning a full eight days after the destruction of the holy Temple in Jerusalem. The rededication of the temple (and the eating of latkes in remembrance) is celebrated during Hannukkah (which means "rededication"). The hamantaschen is a cookie shaped like the three-cornered hat wore by Haman, the bad guy in the biblical story of Esther. The story is read in the temple during the spring holiday of Purim. There will also baked goods for sale. "The event is open to the public," said Spiro. "We want it to be fun, but we also want it to be an educational experience, to raise awareness about Judaism." More information about the debate, and about Hillel at Alfred, may be obtained by e-mailing hillel@alfred.edu