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Rabbinical Alumni in the Academy-Part II

Alumni Honored at Founders’ Day 2004

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on the cover: HUC-JIR students, part of the first rabbinical student delegation sent to El Salvador by the American Jewish World Service, committed to tikkon olam.
The College-Institute stands at a crucial juncture in the history of the Jewish people. The challenges and blessings of living in an open American society, and the obligations to serve Jews and non-Jews throughout the world require us to marshal our resources wisely so that our graduates will prove capable of transforming Torah into an ever-growing stream of mayim hayyim – living waters – for our current as well as for future generations.

The beginning of a strategic planning process that will chart the future of HUC-JIR and that will occupy every sector of our community over the next eighteen months is therefore announced at the outset of this issue.

Our students are exceptional in every way, and their care and concern for humanity is nowhere more evident than in the tale Mark Miller relates of the eight College-Institute students who joined with their peers from other rabbinical schools and traveled to El Salvador under the auspices of the American Jewish World Service during their winter vacation to aid the residents of that ravaged land. The story of these students is inspirational and bespeaks their commitment to apply the teachings of Torah to the repair of the world.

Ginny Ben-Ari and Rose Ginosar – two of the dedicated members and guides of the HUC-JIR community in Jerusalem – report on our first-year students and their program in Israel. The Year-In-Israel Program remains the foundation for all subsequent education that our rabbinic, cantorial, and Rhea Hirsch education students will receive at the College-Institute, and the reader will receive a full description of that program as well as gain an appreciation of why HUC-JIR remains absolutely committed to the necessity of this year for the formation of our students as future leaders among the Jewish people.

Leslie Wexner is a name that is synonymous with many of the most exciting and innovative educational developments that have marked the renaissance and renewal of much of contemporary Jewish life. His programs – for laity and professionals alike – have helped foster a new generation of informed and dedicated leaders. In her article, Rachel Litcofsky reports on how significant numbers of HUC-JIR students have been supported and enriched by the Wexner initiatives.

HUC-JIR is extremely grateful for its alumni, and proud of its association with the Union for Reform Judaism. Jean Bloch Rosensaft draws a portrait of how our alumni serving at the Union were shaped by their experiences at the College-Institute and allows the reader to see – in these leaders’ own words – how the leadership they exert for the Reform Jewish community was initially forged in the crucible that is HUC-JIR.

The testimony our colleagues at the URJ provide bears witness to the truth that the influence of a teacher extends far beyond the classroom, and that professors – through the wisdom they impart and the models of integrity and devotion they represent – reside at the heart of the College-Institute. It is therefore with a great sense of satisfaction that we highlight several of those teachers in this issue. Eugene Borowitz is a legendary figure throughout the Jewish and academic worlds, and Stephen Passamanek has been a master teacher of Talmud and a prominent figure in the field of Jewish law for decades. His recent book on the ethics of Jewish tradition and their application to law enforcement is a first in this area. Michael Cook, an expert on the New Testament, has been at the center of the controversy that has swirled around the film, The Passion, and he offers his own thoughts on this movie and his assessment of its meaning for present-day Jewish-Catholic relations. Shaul Feinberg has served devotedly as an inspiring mentor and teacher to students on our Jerusalem campus for over twenty years, and he reports on his recent academic achievements in the field of education and a remarkable conference in China in which he recently participated.

These men all reflect the influence that our more veteran professors and administrators have had upon our students. However, a truly outstanding new generation of professors has come in recent years to “sit in this House of Study” – among them are Jonathan Cohen and Wendy Zierler. Jonathan is an exceptionally talented and caring scholar and was recently appointed as the initial occupant of the Rabbi Michael Matson Chair for Emerging Scholars. The words he spoke at the inauguration of this Chair are printed here, and the insightful new book of Wendy Zierler is excerpted and presented for our community. Wendy is just one of many women who have been appointed to the faculty in recent years, and her book reflects her scholarly talents as well as the unique feminist sensibility and interests she brings to her scholarship. Professors Cohen and Zierler, no less than their senior colleagues, strive “to make the words of Torah sweet to our generation,” and their influence upon our students and upon our world will surely grow in years ahead.

At HUC-JIR, we have much to celebrate as we approach the holiday of Shavuot, zman matan torateinu - the time of the giving of our Torah. Our bi'et midrash seeks its rightful role as a place of Torah, and we will continue to exert our best efforts to educate new generations of scholars and leaders imbued with and inspired by the ongoing and ever-changing teachings of our tradition for our people. Hag sameah!

Rabbi David Ellenson
The College-Institute has launched a strategic planning process that will strengthen its ability to fulfill its mission as the spiritual, intellectual, and professional leadership development center for the Reform Movement and the modern Jewish community. Co-chaired by Gregory N. Brown, HUC-JIR Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, and Barbara Friedman, Vice Chair, HUC-JIR Board of Governors, the goals of the process are to focus priorities for the College-Institute's programs and resources, address concerns of the accrediting bodies, create and establish a vision of the future for the College-Institute, and clarify fund raising priorities.

"When Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise articulated HUC-JIR's founding mission," states Rabbi Ellenson, "he was determined that the graduates of his institution be equipped to serve both the Jewish community and the broader world. Wise recognized that the content of the initial curriculum he framed as well as the specific schools and programs he established would require constant review and modification if the demands and needs of the Jewish people for leadership were to be served in a world marked by evolution as well as continuity."

"As we now embark on our own strategic planning process at the outset of a new century," adds Rabbi Ellenson, "I regard the concerns and frameworks Rabbi Wise identified as relevant today as when he first stated them. The vectors of modern Jewish life, however, move in a different direction today than they did a century ago or more. Nevertheless, the fundamental task of the College-Institute remains the instruction and formation of religious-intellectual leadership for the modern Jewish community. The vision of our founder is an enduring one that should guide us as we go forth to meet the demands of our own era."

Pointing to the 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey, Rabbi Ellenson indicates that the overwhelming majority of Jews in North America are highly acculturated and not halakhic. The religious movement that is most likely to address them is the Reform Movement, which consequently is growing faster than all the other movements in American Judaism today. Today's high rate of intermarriage, where individuals and their progeny may not be brought into the ambit of Judaism, makes the role of Jewish leadership ever more crucial.

"If we do not educate leaders who can speak to these people in synagogues and beyond, they are not going to be addressed," stresses Rabbi Ellenson. "While the synagogue is the central institution in Jewish life, the place where Jewish values and learning are conveyed, HUC-JIR cannot conceive its mission properly without addressing those who at best identify only as Jews and are not affiliated. This process stands as a vital opportunity to serve the Jewish people in an optimal manner."

"Furthermore," Rabbi Ellenson notes, "we stand at a crossroads, where the mission of the College-Institute extends beyond its principal focus in North America and is called upon to educate persons from Argentina, Australia, and the Former Soviet Union. We also have a burgeoning Israeli rabbincal program that is building the future of liberal Judaism in Israel and other parts of the world."

The strategic planning committee is comprised of members of HUC-JIR's Board of Governors, senior administration, and faculty. Sub-committees have been established to study the key components of the College-Institute: academic programs, co-curricular programs and resources, partnerships, faculty and student life, facilities, technology, compensation and benefits, and resources.

"We have a fiduciary responsibility to the institution and our constituents to be sure that the way we discharge our mission is not only responsible from the programmatic standpoint, but from a financial standpoint as well," says Burton Lehman, Chair of the HUC-JIR Board of Governors. "Strategic planning is only useful if it is followed, and the next challenge for us is to see that the plan is implemented to guide decisions and operations in the years to come and thus ensure success."

"New initiatives and programs, in addition to ongoing initiatives, will be part of the conversation, so that we are not just planning for the status quo, but planning for a dream of what HUC-JIR's future is going to look like," notes Gregory Brown. "Instead of looking at the College-Institute as a quid, however, the committee will look at it as a tapestry. The task will be to weave all of its components into a whole as they link into a long range plan, which must be supported by a financial plan that ensures a balanced, responsible, and sustainable budget."

In describing the strategic planning committee's expansive process and its outreach to the stakeholders in HUC-JIR's future, Barbara Friedman explains, "The committee will be talking to students, lay leadership, alumni, people in the Reform Movement, unaffiliated Jews, those involved in other institutions, and others to determine what they need from the College-Institute. We invite you to visit our website at www.huc.edu/strategicplanning for periodic postings, which we hope will give you a greater understanding of the purpose and direction of this process."
They displayed warmth and hospitality, opening their homes and telling us about how they fled to Panama before returning to build their village ten years ago. Reforms have been developing slowly, but individual farmers now own small plots of land throughout the country and work with the help of agonomists from the government. For several days in a row, we met these farmers, heard their stories, and learned about their work.

We learned first-hand about the reality of life for these farmers, and our work provided a backdrop for a number of serious discussions. We spent a significant portion of our time with a former priest named Chencho Alas, who appears to be a Martin Luther King, Jr.-like figure in El Salvador. After heroic activism throughout the civil war, today he preaches Liberation Theology and has been developing something he calls the Theology of Peace.

In addition, Dr. Leonard Fein, founder of Moment Magazine and Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger, accompanied us as our scholar-in-residence. He inspired us with tales of putting ideals into action and prodded us with tough questions about the nature of our responsibility as Jews and as future leaders.

We did not overcome all the difficulties we found in this developing country, but we did make an impact for a small group of Salvadoran farming families. We did not devise a workable plan to achieve klal yisrael tomorrow, but we did lay the foundation for action as a group of future rabbis across movement boundaries. And that, in the end, may be the key that allows us to extend this experience past one week in El Salvador and take us one step closer to achieving a dream that knows no bounds — our united Jewish vision of repairing the world one small field at a time.

Most important, perhaps, were the endless discussions we had amongst ourselves. Our conversations broke down into two primary areas — the nature of tikkun olam and the nature of klal yisrael. Repairing the world seems to be a fairly straightforward responsibility, but one of our primary debates was how to prioritize help for the non-Jewish world in the social justice work to which we all aspire. While nobody questioned whether reaching out to those in need was worthwhile, some thought it vital to help Jews first. It remained an open question.
When Dr. Nelson Glueck, President of HUC-JIR (1948-1971), met with Prime Minister David Ben Gurion in 1959 to discuss the acquisition of land to build a branch of HUC-JIR in Jerusalem, Glueck promised that he would bring all of his rabbinical students to Israel for a year of study. In 1970, he fulfilled his pledge and established the Year-In-Israel Program as a mandatory first year of study for all rabbinical students.

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, Glueck’s successor as President (1971-1996), nurtured and enlarged the program to include the students in the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles and the cantorial students in the School of Sacred Music at HUC-JIR/New York. These founders’ vision is now being sustained by Rabbi David Ellenson’s commitment to strengthening this Program and to instilling HUC-JIR’s students with a profound sense of Jewish peoplehood rooted in the Israel experience.

The Year-In-Israel Program, by its very existence, affirms the abiding conviction of the Reform Movement and of all Jews that kol yisrael arein zeh la’zeh – that all of Israel is responsible for one another.

"An ideological commitment to Israel has animated and informed our institution’s educational policy for over three decades," states Rabbi Ellenson. "It is a policy that holds that the State of Israel occupies a central position in the life of the Jewish people and religion, and that all persons whom we educate for roles of leadership in the Jewish community must have an extended first-hand acquaintance with the reality of Jewish national rebirth as evidenced in the State today. For all these reasons, HUC-JIR asserts that a significant Israel experience must be an integral part of the education we provide. HUC-JIR unequivocally regards the Year-In-Israel Program in Jerusalem as the normative program for all our entering students."

The impact of the Year-In-Israel Program on Reform Jewry worldwide can be seen in the leadership of the contemporary Reform Movement. Many graduates of the Program now lead the administration of HUC-JIR and the Union for Reform Judaism. They comprise 85% of North American congregations.

This year’s class of 65 Year-In-Israel students is the largest in over twenty years. As in every year, the students are a diverse group. Their ages range from 21 to 50, and they hail from small towns to large cities, from the United States and Canada, to as far away as Australia. Many have grown up within the Reform Movement while others have traveled different paths before reaching HUC-JIR. Some have spent significant amounts of time in Israel, while others are experiencing their first encounter through the Program. Together they all share this year, this time. It is an exhilarating journey – emotional, spiritual, and sometimes unsettling. The intensity of the program is often frustrating, but always rewarding.

The Year-In-Israel curriculum has changed over the years and continues to develop as students are challenged academically while involved in Israeli life and culture. The year begins with an intensive text and site study...
The Day After the February 22nd Bombing
Excerpts of a D’var Torah on Parshat Terumah
by Laura Baum, Year-In-Israel rabbinical student

I spent the day wondering what I was going to do with my D’var Torah: how could I just give it as planned, in light of the terrible tragedy our community had witnessed almost exactly 24 hours before? I decided to reexamine our parsha, Terumah, and to think about how I now connected to the text differently than I had earlier. After all, we read the same Torah every year, but it is what we bring to that experience, based on our own lives, that informs how we understand it. I discovered that Parshat Terumah, which on first glance may just seem like a series of instructions about how to build the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, may have a lot to say to us this morning.

At a time when we have come together so powerfully as a community to support each other, I began to see the building of the Tabernacle very much as a communal activity. Although God gave Moshe the instructions, God said “they shall bring Me an offering… they shall make me a sanctuary….and so they shall do.” Indeed, community has become a watchword of our faith. In the book of Genesis we read “It is not good for any person to be alone.” Later, Rabbi Tarfon tells us in Pirke Avot “Do not separate yourself from the community” and Sholom Aleichem observed “Life is with people.” Just as the Israelites were a people working together to physically build the Mishkan, we are working as a community as we begin to process what is going on around us, and to make sense of it as future leaders.

The journey to Jewish religious leadership is more than an individual spiritual quest, we are part of a people. By being here, we show our communities on other continents that we have a visceral personal connection to the State of Israel – we demonstrate this by being here. Though I am sure that we could somewhat successfully stand in classrooms in North America and Australia and try to convince people that Israel could have meaning in their lives, we serve as real models by simply choosing to be here. Sometimes telling is not enough; we have to act in ways which penetrate the hearts of others. Through our choices and actions, and how we communicate them, we demonstrate what is important to us. Having been created b’telem Elohim, we have a responsibility to look into each other’s faces and to see God – to experience God’s presence dwelling among us – and to remember that we have a common experience, and that we are here for each other.

Judaism is a religion that has long valued deed over creed. Each of us may have different reasons and beliefs about why we are here, but we share something in common: we all picked up our lives and moved to Israel, and we should not discount the importance of that action. Elazar ben Azariah questioned in the first century, “He whose wisdom surpasses his good deeds, to what is he compared? [He is like] a tree whose branches are abundant, but whose roots are few, and the wind comes and uproots it and overturns it.” This year we are growing many branches – our knowledge and wisdom are constantly expanding. But I also hope that we are growing roots through our act of being here – that what we do here somehow grounds us.

As a community, we hopefully find a sense of shalom – of peace and of wholeness, together. In difficult times, it may not come easily, and it does not happen overnight. It is a work in progress. Just as the instructions for the building of the Tabernacle were given in fractions, this is something that we can strive for, bit by bit.
The College-Institute takes great pride in all of the accomplished men and women who are admitted to our core Jewish professional programs. Through rigorous application and interview processes they have demonstrated their academic achievement and commitment to careers of leadership. Over the past two decades 50 of these students have been further distinguished by their designation as Wexner Graduate Fellows. There are 10 Wexner Fellows currently enrolled in HUC-JIR’s programs.

Chosen by the Wexner Foundation on the basis of grades, recommendations, and personal essays outlining their vision for the Jewish future and their aspirations to contribute to North American Jewry, these students augment their HUC-JIR coursework with supplementary studies and professional training through Wexner-sponsored seminars and institutes. In joining a select and pluralistic cadre of 20 full-time Jewish graduate students each year, these HUC-JIR rabbinical, cantorial, communal service, and education students partake in a unique program of scholarship and mentorship with peers enrolled in graduate programs in diverse Jewish seminaries and universities throughout North America.

HUC-JIR’s Wexner Graduate Fellows receive leadership training, peer support, professional mentoring, and networking both during graduate school and throughout their careers. “Fellows gather for two institutes in the winter and the summer months where we interact intensively with Jewish leaders and one another,” says Dara Frimmer, a third-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/New York. “At these institutes we focus on themes such as Israel, gender, and Jewish literacy, while also building leadership and group dynamic skills.”

Elana Erdstein, a second-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles is heavily involved in research and committee meetings to plan this year’s summer institute. As an aspiring congregational rabbi, Erdstein values the ways in which learning with Fellows from different denominational backgrounds and career directions is broadening her own perspectives on serving her future communities.

Justus Baird, a second-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, praises the diversity of the Wexner Graduate Fellows. “It’s an opportunity to sit alongside a...”
Fellow who may not necessarily be part of the Reform Movement, to be challenged on some of your views, and to experience prayer in a pluralistic environment. You start to think about your role within the broader Jewish community.” It is this very aspect of the Program that expresses the ideals of kibbutz.

“What truly augments my HUC-JIR education is what I learn from my Wexner classmates,” concurs Sari Laufer, a third-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles. “Whether meeting at the institutes or corresponding over email, I see and learn things through their eyes, and broaden my understanding of the diverse perspectives within the Jewish community as reflected within this peer group.”

Recent college graduates, Internet entrepreneurs, and educators - HUC-JIR’s Wexner Graduate Fellows’ backgrounds are as diverse as their future career paths. Robin Nafshi, a fourth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/New York, is not only a current Wexner Graduate Fellow but an alumna of the Wexner Heritage Foundation Program in Los Angeles. “It was a life-changing experience that led ultimately to my decision to apply to rabbinical school,” explains Nafshi. After graduating from the University of California, she practiced consumer protection law in Philadelphia for five years prior to applying to HUC-JIR. Now, not only does she study with his American and Israeli HUC-JIR classmates but with other Wexner Graduate Fellows living in Israel, as well.

Justus Baird and Elana Erdstein, second-year rabbinical students, HUC-JIR/LA.

Throughout their studies, each Wexner Fellow examines what his or her role and contribution will be as a leader of North American Jewry. Elizabeth Rubin Kessler, a second-year cantorial student at HUC-JIR/New York, draws upon her student pulpit experiences in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, and her activities as a Wexner Fellow to develop her vision of an educationally focused cantorate in the synagogue.

Ariana Silverman, a first-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem, is seeking to find new ways in which Judaism can serve as a voice for social justice and public policy. She credits her past experiences of working at Hillel and as a legislative assistant for the Coalition for the Environment in Jewish Life and The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism as major influences on her decision to serve the greater Jewish community. “It was when I left the RAC to work for the Sierra Club for two years, that I realized that missed talking about Judaism and social justice from the perspective of my faith,” recalls Silverman. “I cared about environmental protection from seeing the world as holy. Once you see the world as holy it is impossible to take that language out of the way you talk about it.”

“We have a responsibility to make Judaism relevant in new and creative ways,” adds Brett Krichiver, a fourth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles. He is exploring ways in which Jewish text and ritual can be made accessible through the medium of theater and hopes to realize his vision of creating a Jewish theater company.

HUC-JIR’s Wexner Fellows bring a profound commitment to scholarship to their studies. Julie Pec, a third-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, is the co-author of joining the Sisterhood: Young Jewish Women Write Their Lives. “Six years before I became a student at HUC-JIR, while on a trip to Israel with the Kol Isha Young Women’s Retreat, I realized that there was not an extensive resource of creative and thoughtful pieces written by young women. This experience led to this anthology of young Jewish women’s writing,” explains Pec. Her association with the Wexner Program enabled her to concentrate on finishing the book. In fact, it was while attending one of the Wexner institutes that she had the opportunity to meet with scholar Riv-Ellen Prell, who subsequently wrote an enthusiastic affirmation for the book’s back cover.

Beyond their student years at HUC-JIR, there are many opportunities for Wexner Graduate Fellows to stay active as alumni through continuing leadership training and learning. Cantor Jeffrey Saxe (SSM ’03), a Wexner Fellow during his cantorial studies who is now continuing his studies as a fourth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/New York, has just returned from participating in the Wexner Alumni Institute, which focused on the theme of the Jewish family. He joined other alumni in a Wexner Alumni Institute, which focused on the theme of the Jewish family. He joined other alumni in to catch up with former classmates.

The Fellows learn not only through peer mentorship, but from professional mentorship opportunities, as well. The Director of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship Program is an HUC-JIR alumna – Rabbi Elka Abrahamson (N ’85), who has served as a member of HUC-JIR’s Clinical Faculty and on HUC-JIR’s Board of Governors. Rabbi Abrahamson serves as a mentor to
Internationally recognized as the dean of contemporary Jewish religious thinkers, Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz has been associated with the College-Institute for over sixty years. As scholar, teacher, and mentor, he has guided generations of students into positions of leadership for the Reform Movement and klal yisrael. In an interview with The Chronicle, he recounted his lifelong Jewish spiritual journey as a pillar of the HUC-JIR academic community.

"The first thing you have to know about me is that I am the result of an intermarriage between a Litvak and a hasid, and that may explain something of my intellectual stamp," Borowitz explains. Tracing his ancestry to a paternal great-grandfather, a Lithuanian rabbi who granted smichah (ordination) and was renowned as a maggid who lectured and taught, and to a maternal grandfather who was a Hungarian hasid, Borowitz's approach to Jewish religious thought can be understood as an amalgam of the rational and intellectual with the emotive and experiential.

Nurtured by Eastern European, Yiddish-speaking immigrant parents who settled in Columbus, Ohio, he grew up during the 1930s in a predominantly gentile world. "In those days, the Reform temple was very much like the Methodist church down the street," he describes. "We belonged to the Conservative synagogue and, from early childhood, I liked it there. I kept pestering the rabbi and others with questions, and everyone thought I should become a rabbi."

Borowitz was a commuter student at Ohio State University, where he joined a Jewish fraternity but lacked for meaningful Jewish intellectual mentors. On a campus with 15,000 students there was but one Jewish professor, who taught commerce and retailing. Observing Borowitz's struggle to define a career direction, his father warned him, "If I leave you alone, you'll go to classes all the rest of your life!" Borowitz initially concluded that he wanted to be with people and to work with ideas, and settled on teaching philosophy. "But as an undergraduate philosophy major, it became perfectly clear to me that they no longer had any significant answers and that they were in trouble," Borowitz recalls. "How I managed to figure that out at age 18, I don't know, because it turned out, as I have only learned in the past decade or so, the collapse of secular ethics took place in the last 50 years of the 20th century."

During his high school and early Ohio State years, Borowitz had inquired several times about admission to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz at 80: A Jewish Spiritual Journey at HUC-JIR

By Jean Bloch Rosensaft
In Renewing the Covenant Borowitz argues that the major motivation for the invigoration of Jewish religious life in our time is the spiritual crisis that has beset all of western religion as a result of a growing recognition that a secular ground for values is no longer possible. Borowitz argues that the confidence our forebears exhibited in the power of the Enlightenment and the certitude they displayed about the adequacy of reason as a ground for human values can no longer be sustained. The utter evil of the Holocaust has forced Jews and others to a radical reassessment of the humanistic heritage of the Enlightenment and compelled many of them to face the limits of tolerance and relativism.

Yet, ethical foundations for distinguishing between good and evil—between the Nazi SS officer and his Jewish victim—must be constructed and moral absolutes must be maintained. The need to oppose evil absolutely means that ethical warrants for guiding human values and actions must be produced....In a bewildering world of choices and indecision, religion offers the surest compass for navigating the shoals of competing moral claims. In offering this analysis of the postmodern religious situation, Borowitz, in effect, is arguing that the desire on the part of many present-day Jews to affirm a normative ethics has led them back to God. However, unlike earlier Kantian approaches that marked the writings of men such as Hermann Cohen, Borowitz points out that the move from ethics to God no longer engenders an idealist construction of God. Instead, this movement from the moral to the Divine in postmodern Jewish faith has been marked by a belief in a personal deity Who is at once transcendent and immanent....

Nevertheless, Borowitz is not prepared to retreat totally from the insights and affirmations of an Enlightenment world. The one survivor of modernist religiosity, in his view, is the concept of “the self.” Autonomy is so firmly rooted in the contemporary Jewish condition, so unalienable a right, that its surrender would be unthinkable. Borowitz asserts that the ongoing affirmation of this concept remains crucial for present-day liberal Jews...In contrast to his modernist predecessors who “considered it axiomatic that contemporary Jewish thought must be constructed on the basis of universal selfhood,” Borowitz claims that in the postmodern setting it is essential to “rethink” the meaning of this concept in Jewish terms. Simply put, “Jewish selfhood arises within the people of Israel and its Covenant with God.” It is a “self that is autonomous yet so fundamentally shaped by the Covenant that whatever issues from its depths will have authentic Jewish character. The secular concept of self must be transformed in terms of its Covenantal context.” For Borowitz, only a selfhood radically grounded in God and community can mandate postmodern Jewish duty.

I am delighted by the fact that the College-Institute should choose to bestow such an honor upon a student (or emerging scholar) of medieval Jewish law. The choice is not an obvious one. After all, Jewish history is an academic area that has developed alongside 19th and 20th century Liberal Judaism, and has illustrated the promises of the modern, open, university-modeled study of Judaism of which we are so proud. The study of liturgy celebrates Jewish continuity, tradition, creativity and evolution throughout the ages. The practical significance of Jewish education to Jewish leadership these days is so apparent, it hardly bears elaboration. The study of medieval Jewish law, on the other hand, is the study of a pre-modern, pre-liberal (and some might say illiberal), anachronistic tradition, a discontinued tradition, and one that has rather little following among liberal Jews of the 21st century.

In fact, prominent scholars of medieval Jewish law (or halakhah) trace and describe a rabbinic tradition that ends in expulsion, destruction, and catastrophe. The most important creative centers of halakhah during the High middle ages are in the countries of Western Europe (today’s France, Germany, and Spain), and Jewish law evolves there at the same time as the European centralized nation state. It is precisely the emergence of that centralized, unified state which spells disaster for the Jewish communities of England, of France, and ultimately of Spain, during the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. Much of the scholarship of Ephraim Urbach, for example, describes the decline in creativity from the middle of the 13th century in France and some areas of Germany, and the shift in these areas towards editing, copying - towards preservation, among rabbis. Likewise, the decline in creativity in late 14th and 15th century Spain is well documented: By the end of the 15th century, large parts of Western Europe are empty of the Jewish communities that had inhabited these areas - some for about one thousand years, and with these communities goes the halakhic study that they generated and sustained. That

Setting Examples: Role Models and Heroes in Medieval Halakhah

by Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Rabbi Michael Matuson Professor, and Director, HUC-UC Center for the Study of Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati

At the dedication of the Rabbi Michael Matuson Professorship for Emerging Scholars on October 26 at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: (from left) Rabbi Michael Matuson and Dr. Jonathan Cohen.
medieval European Jewish tradition is gone.

And yet, it is precisely these medieval European rabbis, living in both safety and comfort at some times, and in insecurity at others, that produce both the substantive core and structure of the system that we, today, recognize as Jewish law. Their writings and purported writings are codified in the Shulkhan Arukh – a 16th century text that, along with later commentaries, forms the cornerstone of Jewish law as we know it. Let us consider the implications of this:

The French and American legal systems are clearly products of the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, the English legal system is defined by the particular modernism of Victorian England, German law is to a great extent a post-World War II creation, and Canon law is profoundly, structurally influenced by developments in the 19th and 20th centuries. Jewish law, on the other hand, remains largely pre-modern, pre-liberal, pre-Enlightenment – medieval at its core. Little wonder we have such trouble with it. Little wonder that there is such a large gap between 21st century students and aspiring scholars and the texts they wish to study. Not only is this gap substantive, since we come to these texts – informed by liberalism and the Enlightenment – with a baggage that medieval authors could hardly have imagined, it is also linguistic: these texts are composed in Hebrew and Aramaic. But the gap is also methodological and stylistic: the methods and forms of the argument are often alien to us, and much of the terminology obscure. Even if we understood the dictionary meaning of words on the page, we would still find it difficult to make sense of the text. One illustration of that gap relates to a Biblical passage that Jews throughout the world have been reading and studying this last week – the opening chapters to the Hebrew Bible. Following the Genesis stories, we learn of stains, and that various elements were touched by the blood (vegetation, trees, rocks, earth): these produced the effect of plurality. Another suggestion is that Cain, that early man, was not expert in killing, and did not know wherefrom in the body Abel’s soul might depart. Consequently he inflicted upon Abel multiple wounds, hence the use of the plural form. Some rabbis cited in the Talmud adopt a different explanation.

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Some rabbis cited in the Talmud adopt a different explanation for that use of the plural in the Biblical story. In tractate Sanhedrin these rabbis explain that a person who kills another also kills their potential offspring. The implications of the act of killing extend beyond the victim and the present. They extend to the potential offspring indefinitely into the future. In the Talmud, this verse is cited in the context of the warning that judges must offer to witnesses in capital cases. Witnesses must be aware of the responsibility they take upon themselves when testifying. If their testimony leads to the execution of a person who should not have been executed, the implications of this miscarriage of justice extend beyond the victim indefinitely.
In February 1976, Dr. Stephen M. Passamanec came across an article in the Los Angeles Times about the Chaplains Unit of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. “I wanted to be involved in something that was very much hands on and was unusual,” said Passamanec. “I have always gone after the unusual.” The phone call that followed would forever change his life and lead him to rewarding accomplishments as a Chaplain and Reserve Deputy Sheriff.

Referred to by his students and colleagues as “Dr. P.,” Passamanec is Professor of Rabbinics at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles and an esteemed senior member of the HUC-JIR faculty and campus community since 1963. His career is full of many noteworthy achievements, including the publication of several books and numerous articles and distinguished positions with the Jewish Law Association and the International Conference of Police Chaplains.

That newspaper article and initial phone call in 1976 first led him to take and pass the rigorous departmental physical exam and subsequently found him assigned as a volunteer Chaplain at a Sheriff’s substation in a high crime area. “Very few people understand the world of a police station and I had to learn it on the job, first-hand. It’s another kind of a world, and a very fascinating one.”

In addition to serving as a Chaplain with the largest Sheriff’s Department in the world, he continued to maintain a full academic schedule. A typical week would include teaching and faculty responsibilities at HUC-JIR, scholarly research and writing for a new book or article, and serving as the Chaplain to approximately 150 deputies in patrol, traffic, and detective bureaus. “As a Chaplain, I was not only serving the Jewish law enforcement personnel; in fact, most of my law enforcement ‘congregants’ were non-Jewish,” explained Passamanec. “In addition to counseling, debriefing, and sick calls, I was always on hand to anyone who wanted to talk and certainly was available in case of serious incidents.”

After serving as Chaplain for two years at his first station, he was assigned in 1978 to the Sheriff’s West Hollywood station where he would continue until 1985.

“With law enforcement chaplaincy you really learn a great deal about the work as you perform it and much of that learning is done while riding alongside officers who are out on patrol,” noted Passamanec. It was in his position as Chaplain that he logged over 1500 hours as a ride-along, working in the field.

Early in 1986, Passamanec concluded that he could better serve the deputies if he took police training. He applied to the Sheriff’s Reserve Academy, took the physical and psychological examinations and survived the regular training course as a line officer.
Reserve. Later that year a classmate from the Academy started a Reserve Company with a surveillance and apprehension group, a specialized detective unit. As part of this special unit, Passamaneck participated in warrant service and surveillance of some rather dangerous criminals. During this time, while still maintaining his teaching responsibilities and academic writing, he was promoted to Supervising Chaplain in the department. He even became an expert pistol shot. Although he retired in 1992 from the surveillance and apprehension unit with the rank of Reserve Captain, he remained active as a Chaplain. His years of distinguished service were recognized when he was awarded the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Exemplary Service Medal in 1991.

It was his work as a Chaplain with the Sheriff’s Department that led him to focus his writing on law enforcement and criminal justice in Jewish sources. His earlier academic work was in the field of maritime law related to Jewish sources and texts; from the early 1980s on he wrote on such topics as the use of excessive force, reasonable cause arrest, and entry and seizure.

His writing in this area of law enforcement propelled Passamaneck to focus on the administration of justice in Jewish law and to probe traditional Jewish sources to see if there were any concepts that might be useful in the context of police ethics. In 2003 he published Police Ethics and the Tradition, a work of commentary and theory that is not intended by Passamaneck to be a scholarly study. Rather, it takes a first look at the idea that Jewish tradition may offer some prospective on the evolving world of police ethics and explores several areas of interest: loyalty, bribery and gratuities, and deception.

"Jewish tradition has a great deal to say about morals and ethics in various modern fields of public concern, including police ethics," he notes. "Loyalty will always be a part of police culture, and administrators are faced with the task of minimizing its abuses. Jewish tradition encourages the support of the whistleblower who exposes wrongdoing for the sake of the public good."

In the area of bribery and gratuities, Passamaneck explains, "Jewish law prohibits bribery, but modest gratuities may be accepted. Tradition allows a given class of persons to enjoy preferential treatment. In police culture, limits must be imposed on any gratuities. Any expression of respect and appreciation must have no relation to the manner in which a police officer performs his or her duties."

In the area of deception, he says, "From the point of view of the three-fold typology of deceptive tactics in law enforcement, the Jewish tradition suggests that forms of pre-trial deception would generally be acceptable, although deceit as a feature of ordinary human intercourse and certainly where innocence would come to harm would be unacceptable."

During his service as a Chaplain and Reserve Deputy, Passamaneck has also held the offices of both Chairman and later Honorary President of the Jewish Law Association, where he is still an active member of the board.

Dr. Passamaneck's experiences in law enforcement chaplaincy inspired his study of Jewish law and police ethics.

Passamaneck joined the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) in the late 1980s. The ICPC has an international membership of 2,500 Chaplains of every conceivable denomination. In 1994, Passamaneck was awarded the John Price Award "For Excellence in Chaplaincy as a Volunteer Chaplain in a Larger Department," the first Rabbi ever to receive the ICPC’s highest honor.

It was his membership with ICPC, an organization dedicated to maintaining professionalism in law enforcement chaplaincy, that would bring his years of training and commitment as a Chaplain to another community faced with crisis and tragedy. The ICPC was contacted on September 12, 2001 with a request for Chaplains to help the Port Authority Police Department (PAPD) in New York City. Passamaneck heeded the PAPD’s call and flew to New York, where he spent thirteen-hour days at Ground Zero, alongside emergency crews, police officers, firemen, construction workers, and other Chaplains in the days immediately following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Even though he retired in 1997 from the Sheriff’s Department, Passamaneck was not prepared to retire completely from law enforcement. He became a volunteer Chaplain with the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATFE), and was the recipient last June of the ATFE Director’s Honor Award in Washington D.C., presented to him by the Director of the ATFE (since retired), Brad Buckles. In April he was honored by the Shomrim Society, the association of Jewish men and women in the fields of federal, state, and local law enforcement, public safety and administration of justice. Passamaneck is currently on sabbatical from HUC-JIR and working on his next project concerning fire and public safety in halakhah.


As a sustainer of law and order through rabbinical pastoral care and counseling and scholarly research and publication, Dr. Passamaneck serves as a unique teacher and mentor to the students of HUC-JIR in Los Angeles.
As protesting Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ worth it? I have more reason to ask than most. In April 2003, together with four Roman Catholic and two other Jewish scholars, I was invited by the Catholic Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs to assess the script. There was concern that the film might violate Catholic teachings on how to present Jews in Passion dramas. Vatican Council II, in 1965, had absolved Jews as a people from blame for Jesus' execution.

Our efforts were derailed when Icon threatened to sue the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Anti-Defamation League (which had been asked to partner the venture with the Secretariat). Apparently not yet fully informed, the Bishops' Committee (to whom the Secretariat reports) withdrew from the fray, postponing their evaluation of the film until its release (February 2004). The Secretariat that had convened the scholars now seemed discredited and we along with it.

The actual revisionists, however, were leaked (not by us), Gibson supporters promptly attacked us as "revisionists." Some Talmudists, meanwhile, chiming in that rabbinic sources confirmed Gibson's views, embarrassed us all, including themselves. They overlooked the most elementary consideration: rabbinic writers based their knowledge of Jesus entirely on Christian tradition itself. "Agreement" of rabbinic sources with Christian testimony was thus meaningless. Intruding themselves in the wrong way, in the wrong connection, and at the wrong time, these commentators added their confusion to bolster that of Gibson, who has jubilantly quoted himself merely a cop directing traffic. His cop out enables him to deflect criticism and shirk responsibility for his film's potential consequences: psychological trauma for children; poisoning another generation of minds against Jews; anti-Semitic applications of his film here and abroad; etc.

The finished film justified our fears from the April 2003 review. Of forty-eight motifs I myself had then identified as worrisome, thirty-four remain on screen. Still absent now, as before, is any persuasive explanation of what crime Jesus had committed that warranted his heartless torture. This omission has only worsened impressions of the Jews' villainy. Gibson protests that the Holy Spirit guided him, leaving him merely a cop directing traffic. His cop out enables him to deflect criticism and shirk responsibility for his film's potential consequences: psychological trauma for children; poisoning another generation of minds against Jews; anti-Semitic applications of his film here and abroad; etc.

It is too early to gauge the movie's impact on Jewish-Christian relations, and the most intense furor may still lie ahead. Until now, viewers not liking a screening were muzzled by oaths of confidentiality, and most potential critics were kept away from screenings to start with. Matters henceforth could be quite different, however, and could even constitute a "teachable moment."
One positive has been the courage of my scholar colleagues, especially the four Roman Catholics who were in an even more untenable position than we Jews. Additionally, the Catholic Secretariat deserves praise for trying properly to pursue its mandate. Boding ill, by contrast, has been continued reticence to help by the upper Catholic hierarchy. This makes one wonder whether the recent “saturation-bombing” of reprint-ed Vatican II documents has not, in effect, served as cover for a strategy of intentional avoidance – i.e., of dodging the need to apply the 1988 “Criteria” directly to the film itself by instead reiterating Catholic positions without mentioning the film. What was needed was not any reprinting of documents as much as Catholic press conferences explaining the “Criteria” in application to the Gibson film, and demonstrating the Church’s abiding commitment so to apply them.

The unusual alliance between Gibson and Evangelicals points to the vast chasm in how persons apply Scripture. No wonder the Gibson affair has struck me, throughout, as a referendum vis-à-vis 9/11 – whether the religious world can become more open to examining the sacred texts we love in a fashion improving society rather than engendering hatred and destruction. Many who have never thought in those terms might do well to reflect on them now. Is there no commonality of mind set involved, here, no commonality at all between 9/11 and the Gibson phenomenon? Both suggest the danger of slavish devotion to sacred texts, and idolatrous worship of “bibles” instead of God (“bibliolatry”). 9/11 was a warning that unswerving loyalty to literalist readings of ancient religious texts has the capacity to destabilize our entire world.

As for Gibson, Albert Schweitzer keenly observed that most persons view Jesus as they are more so than as Jesus was. Visualizing the world stage, we can see Mel Gibson, himself, playing his traditional role as lead martyr. Is this film, then, not really “The Passion of Gibson” more so than that of Jesus? If so, then Gibson himself has become the revisionist par excellence!

We are now suddenly hearing that this film is only Gibson’s “interpretation, not a documentary.” No, he consistently trumpeted his drama as the most accurate historical reenactment ever produced! It was mainly on this basis that we scholars assessed his actual script in April 2003. Any forthright openness by him to learning historical truth (his professed preoccupation) could have constituted one giant step forward for bibliolatrous humankind. Instead, his medieval fascination with torture and pain not only dragged all of us backward but helped him come to personify Icon’s favorite (made-up?) mantra. For after this extraordinarily tiresome ordeal, what is it that we discover? Evidently, Gibson, too, still “is as he was.”

In 1988, the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs added “Criteria” for evaluating Passion productions. Would a film by the popular Gibson erode four decades of progress in Jewish-Catholic relations?
And Rachel Stole the Idols
The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Women's Writing

Wendy I. Zierler
Wayne State University Press, 2004

Anxieties of Authorship: The Example of Yokheved Bat-Miriam (1901-1980)

The tradition of Hebrew literature is one that extends from the Bible to the present day. It includes prose and poetry, interpretive and homiletic writings, codes of law, responsa, liturgical works, and memoirs. From the time of the Bible, however, until the 19th century, the number of literary contributions made by women to this wonderful rich Hebrew literary tradition is excruciatingly small. The point emphasized by scholars who have researched the stories of such extraordinary medieval or early modern Hebrew women poets – women such as the wife of Dunash Ben Labrat (late 10th century Moslem Spain) or Asenath Barzani (16th century Kurdistan) – is their sense of wonderment that these women poets even existed. It is not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the emergence of such poets as Rachel Luzzato Morpurgo (Trieste, Italy, 1790-1871), and later, Yokheved Bat-Miriam (1901-1980), Rachel (Bluwstein, 1890-1931), Esther Raab (1894-1981), Elisheva (1888-1949), Shulamit Kaluag (1891-1972), Anda Pinkerfeld-Amir (1902-1981), Miri Dor (1911-1945), and Leah Goldberg (1911-1970) that this picture begins to change.

What does it mean to be a poet or prose writer in a language and culture where women’s contributions have been relatively absent? What does it mean to be a writer and a pioneering builder of an old/new Jewish homeland? To be sure, early Hebrew women writers both in Israel and abroad demonstrated mixed feelings about their distinct positions in Jewish social and literary history. The early poetry of Yokheved Bat-Miriam, collected under the title Merahok, provides an excellent example of the ambivalent responses offered by the first Hebrew women poets to their remarkable historical position. The ambitious, aspiring pose adopted by the speaker in many of her early poems, her complicated and original syntax, her striking metaphors of color and recurrent use of images of wide-open space and distance all connote a brave discovery of new geographical and literary worlds. Even before her immigration to Palestine in 1929, Bat-Miriam wrote poems proclaiming the desire and ability to span continents and oceans, to explore unprecedented vistas in order to unite with the “you” of love, transcendence, and/or

Dr. Wendy I. Zierler is Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies at HUC-JIR/New York, where she teaches courses on American Jewish literature, popular culture and theology, modern Hebrew literature, and Holocaust literature, in addition to courses dealing with gender and Judaism. Recently, she has lectured on the issues of gender and sexuality for the CCAR-HUC Joint Commission for Sustaining Rabbinic Education.

Dr. Zierler holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Princeton University, where she wrote her dissertation on Jewish women writers and the immigrant experience in Israel and the U.S. She received her B.A. from Yeshiva University, Stern College and studied at Hebrew University and Michelelet Bruria in Jerusalem. She has published numerous articles in books and journals, including Jewish Women in America: A Historical Encyclopedia, Shofar, Journal of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Prooftext, among others. Prior to joining HUC-JIR, Professor Zierler lived in Hong Kong for five and a half years while she was a Research Fellow in the English Department of Hong Kong University. She is married to Daniel Feit and they have three children.
Notice the way Bat-M iriam mixes images of space and utterance. Indeed, at the heart of this poem is a concern with how one commits the transgressive act of speech. The poet-speaker aspires not only to collapse the distance between her and the addressee but also to say something to him, to encapsulate the moment with some momentous (poetic) declaration. Then the speaker stops short. What shall she say to him? Will she say anything at all?

Right here, at the very moment of union and poetic utterance, the speaker falls silent, the poem folding in on itself “like gathered wings,” and the poet trembling before the seeming omnipotence of her male addressee. What begins as a triumphant ascension or transgression seems to culminate in a disappearance, an autumnal fall from aspiration (as signified from the fall leaves of Elul, the Jewish month of penitence preceding the New Year), a shame-filled repentance for daring to speak.

According to Ruth Kartun-Blum, this and other poems in the title cycle of Merahok are primarily about the conflict between a desire for material bodily love and a spiritual desire for transcendence. Kartun-Blum reads this poem as expressing the speaker’s regret at violating her monastic ideal and giving worldly expression to her romantic desires; for Bat-M iriam, “the sin inheres in the desire to realize the feeling, to achieve a resolution.”

I’d like to suggest an alternative reading, one that concentrates more on the poet’s fervent and transgressive desire to claim (or steal) a poetic voice in a formerly masculine literary culture. As noted earlier, the poem divides into two neat halves, with the second half expressing regret or undoing the bold assertions of the first. Yet what do we make of the fact that the lines in the second half are longer and far more redolent with metaphor and description? Does this increased poeticism represent a falling away from speech? Is it possible that in imagining a union with the (male) addressee, the poet-speaker has experienced a kind of artistic epiphany, allowing her to speak even more freely and poetically? Is this a poem about the speaker’s regret over daring to speak or does it dramatize the poetic process that begins with an impatient spring-likeburst of feeling and ambition and culminates with a contemplative emotional autumn?

Throughout the poem cycle, Bat-M iriam’s speaker expresses feelings of sinfulness and regret, but unlike Kartun-Blum, who reads these expressions at face value, I see them as dubious declarations at best. Notice, for example, the celebratory description of sinful excess in the second poem of the cycle:

In my dream
I saw a green flame,
rise and flicker,
and kindle my hands and feet –
and rose in my eyes,
and trembled on my lips,
and kindled my hands and feet –
and they were carried like winds
in silent thirsty deserts.

And raised me aloft – exposed
and open to all four winds of the world
and before a screaming bursting sun,
I was presented
sevenfold as bright as him, wicked
bound to fiery flame
a wild scream on my lips
against the day sun.

The first stanza of the poem circumscribes the vision, tucking the marvelous oxymoronic image of the green flame neatly into the nether world of dreams, between the repeated lines: “In my dream I saw a green flame.” In the second stanza, though, it is morning. The speaker awakens from her dream and faces the daylight sun – inspired and emboldened by light – like H. N. Bialik’s poet in his famous poem Tsafririm (Imps of the Sun). In contrast to Bialik’s poem, where inspiration comes to the poet in the form of mischievous, “wanton, mad-caps of light” that “leap and dance and touch [his] soft skin” in a form of sexual play, Bat-M iriam describes a far more aggressive and explosive encounter. In the third stanza the poetic vision overcomes all boundaries of time, space, even gender. In defiance of the daylight sun, the dream persists, exceeding its nocturnal incarnation.

(continued on page 29)
(continued from page 11)

at him from the earth.’ The language he employs is extracted directly from the Biblical Cain and Abel narrative. But the reference he makes is not to the Biblical narrative. Rather, it is to the midrashic and Talmudic interpretation of that narrative. The point Rashba makes using these words is not simply that defamatory statements can sometimes be regarded as serious as an act of unlawful killing. The point is that should these statements have their desired effect, these families would be wiped out. Consequently, those making the defamatory statements would not only be responsible for the damage and hurt caused to the immediate victims, but also for the loss of potential life in the indefinite future. Further, with these words, Rashba identifies one party in this dispute with the Biblical figure of Cain, and employs a rabbinic paradigm constructed on the basis of the Biblical narrative. Should we miss the example and reference – we would also miss much of Rashba’s argument.

2) Rashba describes the rabbi who found the statements to be defamatory as an authority who ‘refines and purifies’ – metzaref u-metaher (transliterated from the Hebrew). According to Rashba, once his court has found the family in question to be pure, no other court may reconsider the case. These words metzaref u-metaher appear in the Bible once, in the book of Malachi,7 one of the twelve so-called minor prophets. There, the same words are used to describe how the angel or messenger of God will come to “refine and purify” the priestly casts (particularly the Levites) so that they respect the laws of the covenant to assimilated family that is ‘tainted’ by a person of questionable lineage may be treated as pure, since it would be declared pure in the end of days. The Biblical prooftext is the same verse from Malachi, but the rabbinic interpretation is particularly relevant to the case under consideration.

The implication is that the rabbi who chaired the proceedings in the south of France would still exercise Jewish law properly, in accordance with this Talmudic ruling, even if he found that there were a doubt regarding any one member of the family, and nevertheless declared the entire family pure. In addition, should these statements have their desired effect, these families would be wiped out.

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lead the people of Israel justly, and fully observe the Temple rituals. This complimentary reference, once we recognize it, elevates the status of the rabbinic court to that of the messenger of God from the book of Malachi.

Yet, it also contains an implied message. In the Talmudic tractate of Kiddushin8 (a tractate that deals with the laws of marriage) we find a ruling to the effect that an assimilated family that is ‘tainted’ by a person of questionable lineage may be treated as pure, since it would be declared pure in the end of days. The Biblical prooftext is the same verse from Malachi, but the rabbinic interpretation is particularly relevant to the case under consideration.

contradistinction, statements to the contrary effect, suggesting that the family is suspect, are all the more inappropriate. Again, should we look at the Biblical words and miss the reference to the Talmudic text, we would miss Rashba’s point.

By identifying parties to this dispute with positive and negative Biblical figures, by setting Biblical examples, and employing both positive and negative Rabbinic models, Rashba uses a technique that we would not expect to find in modern, or contemporary legal literature. Further, in this text, Rashba simply cites Biblical words, and does not explicitly, openly make reference to any rabbinic text. We could understand the dictionary meaning of every word in that document, identify the Biblical citations, and still miss much of the meaning of the text. Such is the gap between the 21st century students and emerging, aspiring scholars and the texts they wish to study.

Mr. Lehman, members of the Board, Mr. and Mrs. Edelman, rabbis, teachers, colleagues, and friends, I dedicate this Rabbi Matuson Professorship to the work of bridging this gap: of identifying arguments, and explaining the modes of explicit and implicit reference, of studying modelling, and recognizing citations. My work will aim to assist readers in acquiring the tools to read the sources of halakhah effectively, to become better, more competent readers, and to gain access to the core texts of our legal and ethical tradition. I could not do this work without your encouragement, and support, and consider myself very fortunate to be granted the opportunity to engage in the study of Torah in this way.

Thank you.

1 I am thinking particularly of his The Tosafists Their History, Writing, and Methods (Heb.), Mossad Byalik, 1955.
3 Genesis 4:10.
5 Genesis Tanhuma, Genesis 9 (cf. Va-yehi mi-ketz).
6 B. Sanhedrin 37a.
7 Malachi 3:3.
8 71a.
My journey from Jerusalem to Shanghai to present the keynote address at the First World Curriculum Studies Conference, served as a uniquely memorable catalyst for reflection, quite appropriately during the month of Elul.

East China Normal University’s faculty, administration, and students literally and figuratively rolled out the red carpet. Meeting on this campus of more than 20,000 pupils, with a huge status of Mao in its center, was exhilarating!

My initial stop was Beijing and the World Union Progressive Kehilat Beijing, where I served as that congregation’s rabbi for the High Holy Days and where my wife, Tania, and I encountered a circle of newly-found friends. At such a time of spiritual introspection one looks around for familiar sources of strength and inspiration. Notwithstanding the warmth of the congregation, I clearly felt the other, surrounded by dissonant impressions as I tried to make sense of the China that we met on our own and through the eyes of our hosts. As an American passing the Embassy of the United States, I had immediate recollections of the belligerent past and of the Cultural Revolution. And yet, the increasingly strong ties that have grown between China and Israel, the safe haven provided by Shanghai to refugees fleeing Nazism, and the remarkable history of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng also filtered into my consciousness.

At Shanghai’s East China Normal University, the site of the conference, I discovered that I was the only delegate from Israel amongst the more than 200 scholar and student delegates from fifteen Asian, Pacific Rim, European, and North American countries. Pleased as I was that HUC-JIR/Jerusalem in Israel was acknowledged prominently in this academic gathering, clearly the language of education far transcends our institutional diversity and biases. Beyond the words is the spirit that seeks to unite us in the repair of our communities and the world.

From Jerusalem to Shanghai

My opening session address was grounded in research conducted in a number of Jerusalem high schools on a curriculum, “You Shall Choose Life: The Value of Human Life in Israeli Society.”

The conference presentations stressed the need to know and honor the local traditions and mores of educational milieus beyond our own. While not novel in itself, this perspective was particularly pertinent amidst this vast sea of differences. For example, the Chinese word for ‘curriculum’ can be rendered as ‘enable something to function, many persons gathered in one room and sharing,’ pointing also to ‘temple, symbolizing great cause,’ enhancing our own spirit. While there were proposals for intellectual and technical rethinking of our work, the focus on empathetic relationships was key. My presentation citing Buber in considering integrity as key to enhancing curricular work resonated with quite a few of those present.

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Organizational ly, I was prompted to initiate steps to forming an Israeli chapter of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, under the guiding spirit of Professor William Pinar, co-chairman of the conference. I look to my Israeli and stateside colleagues at HUC-JIR and elsewhere for guidance and support in this effort.

From feeling pangs of alienation in one setting to a sense of much wider belonging, I joined the concluding friendship circle, with a unique twist. What I hadn’t anticipated was that the closing event was to be marked by a sharing of songs of our respective peoples in native languages! I took the plunge, teaching “shalom chaverim… lishmahot, shalom” – quite appropriately, as we kept speaking of the next gathering and continuing contacts. And then, to everyone’s delight, a South Korean professor spontaneously translated the Hebrew verse into English and led dancing around the tables to his tune of hava nagila! The distance between Jerusalem, Beijing, and Shanghai had narrowed considerably.
How do you become a national professional leader of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the synagogue arm of the North American Reform Movement? For many the gateway has been the College-Institute. Distinguished alumni of HUC-JIR’s rabbinical, cantorial, education, and Jewish communal service programs lead the organization that is shaping the future of the largest growing denomination of Jews in America—\(39\% \) of the Jewish adults affiliated with a synagogue belong to one of the URJ’s 920 congregations. The URJ’s leaders spoke to The Chronicle about their enduring relationship with HUC-JIR, where their studies prepared them for careers that are influencing the destiny of the Reform Movement and the Jewish people.

**The Path to HUC-JIR**
For many URJ leaders, the journey to HUC-JIR began in the Reform Movement’s congregations, religious schools, camps, youth movement programs, and emphasis on social justice. Indeed, some first emerged as leaders within that context. Rabbi Eric Yoffie, N ’74, URJ President, describes how he grew up in “a tightly knit Jewish community of 10,000 in Worcester, Massachusetts, the sort that does not exist anymore, attended religious school at Temple Emanuel three times a week, was in a confirmation class of 142 teenagers, and spent my high school years devoted to NFTY.” Transferring from a Jewishly-barren Stanford to Brandeis, where he was student body president, majored in politics, and intended to go to law school, he recalls how “my courses in Bible, modern Jewish thought, and the excitement of learning the Hebrew language changed my life. I began to look on Torah study as an inspiration, a source of joy. I felt connected with the sacred for the first time, and began to struggle with serious theological questions. I traveled to Israel in the summer of my junior year. By my senior year I knew I wanted to be a rabbi.”

**A Vital Partnership:**
HUC-JIR Alumni Leading the Union for Reform Judaism

By Jean Bloch Rosensaft

- Rabbi Eric Yoffie, N ’74
- Rabbi Lennard Thal, N ’73
- Rabbi Daniel Freelander, N ’79
- Rabbi David Saperstein, N ’73

- President
- Senior Vice President
- Vice President
- Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Co-Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Having grown up observing his father, the rabbi of a single congregation which grew from 40 families to nearly 1,000 in his 50 years of leadership, Saperstein “landed in college wrestling between being an English professor, or a rabbi and attorney. Why the rabbi-attorney combination? Because in my mind, religion and law were the two great institutions capable of helping individuals and transforming society.”
Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, N ’87, Director of Worship, Music, and Religious Living, who recalls her parents’ role in founding the Pound Ridge Jewish Community and as members of the Eisner Camp Commission, was active in the NFTY youth movement and as a camper at Camps Eisner and Kutz, attended the EIE program for high school students in Israel, and worked at Camps Jacobs, Coleman, and Haram. “From the time I was 16, I was focused toward going to HUC-JIR,” she explains.

Rabbi Daniel Freelander, N ’79, URJ Vice President, remembers his regular participation in services and the synagogue choir of Temple Emanuel in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he became proficient in worship leadership, the rabbinate. Although she faced some hurdles, her persistence and determination prevailed and she became the 49th woman ordained at HUC-JIR.

In some cases, graduate studies redirected interests toward Jewish professional careers. At Stanford Law School, Rabbi Lennard Thal, N ’73, URJ Senior Vice President, was consumed with matters of social justice and did not find very much responsiveness on the part of faculty members, recalling his civil procedure professor’s response to a student’s question about justice, “Justice, what are you talking about? This is a law school.” Instead of a summer law firm internship, he worked at Camp Saratoga, now Camp Swig, where he “discovered that there were rabbis sitting under the redwood trees who validated the very questions that my law professors seemed to disdain or treat with benign neglect at best. I saw Judaism come alive and saw the impact it could have on young people.” Back at law school, Thal remembers going to the pay phone after a class in creditors’ rights, “and calling Rabbi William Cutter at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles and asking him what would be involved in entering rabbinical school.”

“I had a master’s degree in public administration, some technical skills, and lots of passions, but I didn’t know what Jewish leaders need to know,” confesses Rabbi Andrew Davids, N ’99, Co-Director, Youth Division. "I found that HUC-JIR would provide me with a great opportunity to deepen my understanding of Judaism through text study, a perspective and would give me entrée to a national Jewish professional position where I could help shape the agenda for the future of the American Jewish community.” For women a generation ago, the path to HUC-JIR required a pioneering initiative. “I knew that my major at the University of Pennsylvania would be Jewish studies and that I was destined for a professional role within the Jewish community. Without having had any exposure to women rabbis, however, it never occurred to me to consider the rabbinate,” recalls Rabbi Marla Feldman, N ’85, Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. It was her classmates’ consideration of the rabbinate that finally clicked with her. “Once I realized that this was an option for me as well, it became clear that this was what I had been working toward most of my life.”

Aron Hirt-Manheimer, MAJE ’76, Editor, Reform Judaism Magazine, found his way to HUC-JIR through his passion for Jewish journalism, born out of his identity as a son of Holocaust survivors and the impact of the Six Day War. As a student at UCLA he founded the cutting-edge West Coast quarterly magazine, Davka, in 1969 – an expression of the Jewish radical community’s countercultural protest against the Jewish establishment.

(continued on page 22)
Despite studies at Tel Aviv University, Hirt-Manheimer felt he lacked for a strong background in formal Jewish studies and was looking to “infuse more depth and knowledge into the work I was doing, not just passion and energy.” Dr. William Cutter, who had written for Davka, encouraged him to enter the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, recognizing that Hirt-Manheimer would not become a conventional educator but someone who would teach through mass communication.

**STUDENT YEARS AT HUC-JIR**
Alumni look back upon their studies with some of the intellectual giants of higher Jewish learning at HUC-JIR. Lennard Thal reminisces about “the opportunity to study with Dr. Eugene Borowitz, who was unparalleled as a pedagogue and teacher,” and his thesis research on the legal terminology and context of the Book of Job, under the supervision of Dr. Harry Orrinsky, “who insisted on engaging with me in his study, in his apartment, in the hallways, and sharpened my ability to grapple with both the text itself and the conceptual challenges the Book of Job presents.”

“Professor Abraham Aharoni was the head of the Hebrew language program, a wonderful mentor who advised me on my thesis on the Zionist writings of Moshe Lieb Lilienblum,” recalls Eric Yoffie.

“Then, as now, struggling with the religious significance of Israel and Zionism were the central concerns of my intellectual life.”

Elliott Kleinman, C’92, Director of Program, came to HUC-JIR with a master’s degree in public administration after several years as a political consultant who worked with campaigns, including speech writing and media management. He remembers the gift of time, in the classroom and at their homes, spent with Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, founder of the American Jewish Archives, Dr. Jacob Petuchowski, then Bronstein Professor of Judaic-Christian Studies, and Dr. Ben-Zion Wacholder, Professor Emeritus of Talmud and Rabbinics. “It was fantastic to be in the presence of that kind of intellect.” He also was the student manager of the College Bookstore, where he could indulge his love of books.

The Vietnam years provided a challenging context for some of these alumni’s studies at HUC-JIR. “My years at HUC-JIR were tumultuous,” Eric Yoffie recalls. “The war was raging, students were more outspoken, and the faculty was attempting to adapt to a more assertive student culture.”

“The Havurah Movement was changing the way we thought about the structures of Jewish life, making it more relevant and Jewishly richer than we had experienced in most of our congregations growing up.” adds David Saperstein. “The success of the counterculture values in the Jewish community together with the successful protests at the Council of Jewish Federations General Assembly in Boston in 1968, the Six Day War, and the beginning of the mobilization of the Soviet Jewry Movement – all these led us to feel that we could fix the world.”

Richard Address, C’72, Director of Jewish Family Concerns, describes his student pulpit in Dothan, Alabama, at the height of the civil rights era. As a Northeastern Jewish activist, he experienced “the precarious position of the Southern Jewish community” as it negotiated its place in the racial struggle between blacks and whites and was told, “You can’t impose what you can do in Philadelphia in Alabama.” He later “took a 600 family congregation outside London,” when a number of rabbinical students took a year off after their third year to extend their deferments and avoid the draft. He has vivid memories of Ordination in 1972 when Sally Priesand was ordained by President Gottschalk and his entire class stood in support.

“All of us there on that Shabbat morning were aware that the world had now changed.”

Deborah Hirsch points to the important lessons learned at HUC-JIR. In addition to deepening her Jewish knowledge and commitment, HUC-JIR provided the backdrop for Rabbi Hirsch to “trust her own abilities, confront surmountable challenges, and tap into her own internal resources and spiritual understanding in an effort to serve and strengthen the Jewish community.” Reflecting on the early years of women in the rabbinate as a veteran of the first decade of women in the rabbinical program, she believes that women clergy have had a profound impact on modern Reform Judaism. Women have not only served as spiritual leaders, counselors, and teachers, but also have been role models to generations of Jews.
Rabbi Andrew Davids, J "99  
Co-Director, Youth Division

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, N "89  
Executive Director, ARZAV World Union for Progressive Judaism North America

Rabbi Jan Katzew, C "83  
Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning

Cantor Alane Katzew, SSM "81  
Director of Music Programming in the Department of Worship, Music, and Religious Living

herself served as assistant rabbi at Temple Beth-El in Great Neck, New York, and was among the first women to have a full-time pulpit in a major city - fifteen fulfilling years as Rabbi of East End Temple in New York City. In addition, she served as chair of the CCAR's Finance Committee and the first woman CCAR officer. In 2000, she joined the URJ as Regional Director of the Greater New York Council of Reform Synagogues and, last year, was named Director of Regions.

"I was in one of the huge rabbinical classes of the mid-1970s," says Daniel Freelander, who began working for the Union immediately upon returning to HUC-JIR/New York after the Year-In-Israel Program. "I loved being at HUC-JIR/New York on the Upper West Side, because the UAHC (now URJ) was right across Central Park. So I could finish my classes by 2 o'clock and take the cross-town bus and work at the Union for four or five hours. I did that for all four years at HUC-JIR. The most important thing I learned at HUC-JIR was the real relationship between the study of Judaism and the practice of Judaism. Whatever I learned in school, I was always trying to translate into my youth work and my camp curriculum. I realized, in retrospect, that I studied in order to teach."

Sue Ann Wasserman describes the "very intense five years" of her rabbinical program, juggling her academic coursework with internships and jobs - working in the library during her first year in Jerusalem, teaching religious school at her childhood congregation of Beth Elohim in Brooklyn several days a week for four years, a weekly pulpit at Temple Beth Am and Hospital for the Aged during her third year, and her fourth- and fifth-year student pulpit at Temple Beth Am in Monessen, Pennsylvania. "More than anything else," she says, "my years at HUC-JIR were really about growing as a Jew and taking on the role of a pulpit rabbi, which allowed me to be a counselor, a teacher, an officiant, and a mentor."

Maria Feldman and her classmates petitioned for, and then took, a course on Social Action taught by Al Vorspan. She interned as the Critical Issues Liaison for the Women of Reform Judaism (then NFTS), and summered as Legislative Assistant at the Religious Action Center (RAC) of Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C., which "ignited my passion for social activism, political engagement, and community organizing. As a result I became the first HUC-JIR student liaison to the Commission on Social Action," the department which she now directs after some years in congregational pulpits, law school, and community relations positions in Delaware and Detroit. She praises the "symbiotic relationship so crucial to successful rabbinical training, with HUC-JIR providing the academic foundation for my rabbinate, and the practical application of that learning coming from my student opportunities with URJ departments and congregations."

"I think it was enormously beneficial to have had the opportunity to study with rabbinical and education students, especially from the vantage point of working in synagogue management, because it provided me with insights and with a network," says Dale Glasser, MAJCS '85, Director of Synagogue Management. He entered the double masters program in Jewish Communal Service and Social Work at HUC-JIR and the University of Southern California after getting a master's degree in counseling and starting the first Jewish community center day camp in Orange County.

Grateful for HUC-JIR's scholarships and financial aid, which made his graduate study possible and launched his career, Aron Hirt-Manheimer adds, "one of the best experiences was to be in classes with cantorial, education, rabbinical, and communal service students, with very different career goals, in the midst of a pioneering institution marked by creativity and flexibility, and not hindered by inherited patterns or formulas of how things should be done. Research interviews for his master's thesis, which analyzed the UAHC's published materials and educational publications, elicited encouragement from their editors and Al Vorspan, who had oversight of UAHC publications, and led to an invitation in 1976 from Rabbi Alexander Schindler, then UAHC President, to edit Reform Judaism, Keeping Posted, and the UAHC's books. Hirt-Manheimer has spent the past 28 years growing Reform Judaism magazine to its current circulation of 310,000, with over an 80% readership and seven out of ten copies passed on to another household.

"I did four of my six years of study at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem," (continued on page 24)
A Vital Partnership: HUC-JIR Alumni Leading the UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM (continued from page 23)

states Andrew Davids, who studied with Israeli rabbinical students who are now leading the Progressive Movement in Israel and abroad. “At times I felt like one of the Nehutai, the 4th century rabbis who traveled between Babylonia and Palestine, trying to build relationships and share each other’s thinking and teachings.” His thesis explored these relations as reflected in the two Talmuds at a time when there were two centers of Jewish life—“one living according to the Jewish calendar as the majority in the Jewish land and speaking the Jewish language, and the other focusing less on land and language and more on Torah, spirituality, interaction with a larger host majority culture, and trying to define its new Jewish understandings of existence in that setting. Seeing these two communities spar in the Talmuds for control and definition of where the center is speaks very much, in my mind, to the present day situation where centers of Jewish life in North America and Israel each contribute different elements to the strengthening of the Jewish people.”

Jan Katzew, C ’83, Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning, published a chapter from his senior thesis on Judah H Alevi and Moses Ibn Ezra in the HUC Annual a year after his graduation. He drew upon his rabbinical studies with Dr. Barry Kogan, Efroymson Professor of Jewish Religious Thought, Dr. Ben-Zion Wacholder, Emeritus Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, and Dr. Ezra Spicehandler, Distinguished Service Professor of Hebrew Literature, when he became a Jerusalem Fellow and pursued his doctorate in moral philosophy at Hebrew University, studies that grounded his expertise in educational philosophy, educational psychology, and Jewish philosophy and informed his work as senior educator at the URJ.

WORKING FOR THE URJ

The pulpit experience, whether as a student intern or a newly ordained rabbi, has been central to many of these URJ leaders’ development as heads of the Reform synagogue movement.

“I loved the congregational rabbinate,” recalls David Saperstein. “My father taught me that there is no job quite like it, anywhere. No job that allows one person to interact so fully, from birth to death, during good times and bad, in shaping the lives of others.” He served during rabbinical school as youth director and then assistant to Rabbi Gunter Hirschberg at Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City, and jumped at Hirschberg’s offer to stay after ordination. “A year later, Al Vorspan called and asked: ‘Would you like to be the Director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C.?’ Someone was actually offering to pay me to do what I would rather do than anything in my life.”

“My first pulpit after ordination was The Temple in Atlanta, Georgia, a community of 1400 families,” says Sue Ann Wasserman, “where I saw how meaningful the classical Reform traditions were for the congregants and I appreciated the great beauty and majesty in worship. Rabbi Alvin Sugarman, together with The Temple’s program director, administrator, and educators, all mentored me in what it meant to be a professional in synagogue life and to live in the South.” She has vivid memories of her student cantor interns during the six years she served as the solo rabbi for the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, a congregation of 250 families in urban New York City. “They taught me a lot about synagogue and worship music, and were so eager to experiment and try new things with the congregation. I don’t think that I could fulfill my current portfolio of worship, ritual, and Jewish living without my experiences working with them—it was invaluable to me.”

Jan Katzew’s initial six years as Rabbi Educator at the Community Synagogue in Port Washington, N ew York, were followed by six years in Chicago with the Board of Jewish Education and the Solomon Schechter Middle School in Northbrook, Illinois, where he was tapped by Eric Yoffie to head the URJ’s Department of Education, which then focused primarily on day schools and congregational schools. Now renamed the Department of Lifelong Jewish Learning, his department has expanded to encompass an early childhood specialist, adult Jewish growth and Jewish education, and fourteen educators in the regions. “We have been able to engage some of the most able Jewish educators in our M ovment as regional educators to serve all congregations, with a special emphasis on serving the smallest, most remote congregations that don’t have access to the scholar- ship or Board of Jewish Education readily available in major urban, federated communities.”

Cantor Alane Katzew, SSM ’81, has spent most of her professional life in congregations, with a two-year stint on the faculty of H UC-JIR/Jerusalem (where she was the first woman cantor in the State of Israel earlier in her career) until becoming Director of Music Programming in the D epartment of Worship, Music, and Religious Living in 2002. She recalls the rather unique experience of being one of the very few clergy couples of her era, “whose example encouraged others that it was possible to successfully blend family life with the demands of being a cantor and marriage to a rabbi who served a separate and distinct Jewish community.” She also recognizes her special role as a cantor on the senior administration of the URJ, where she is a resource about all things musical and an advocate for the cantors and musicians serving URJ congregations.

The path to URJ’s senior leadership for many of these alumni included stints as regional directors of the UAHC, culminating in national positions at the URJ. After assisting Rabbi Harold Saperstein in Lynbrook, N ew York, and serving as the first full-time rabbi in Durham, North Carolina, Eric Yoffie notes, “I was much influenced by Rabbi Jerome Davidson when he was Regional Director of the Northeast Council during my NFTY years. While serving as a regional director may seem like an unusual career goal, it was something I had always thought about and, when the position of Regional Director of the Midwest Council became
### HUC-JIR Alumni Leaders of URJ

#### YOUTH DIVISION

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<tr>
<th>Rabbi Eve Rudin Weiner, N '00</th>
<th>Jonathan Cohen, MAJCS '91</th>
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<tr>
<td>Director of URJ Kutz Camp and NFTY Leadership Center</td>
<td>Director of the URJ Henry S. Jacobs Camp</td>
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<th>Rabbi Ron Klotz, C '77</th>
<th>Rabbi Marc Israel, N '98</th>
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<tr>
<td>Director of the URJ</td>
<td>Director of KESHER-College Education Department</td>
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#### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

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<tr>
<th>Rabbi Sharon L. Sobel, N '89</th>
<th>Rabbi David Wolfman, C '87</th>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Director, Canadian Council for Reform Judaism and ARZA Canada</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Northeast Council</td>
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<th>Rabbi Don Berlin, N '77</th>
<th>Rabbi Steven Mills, C '93</th>
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<td>Acting Regional Director for the URJ Great Lakes Council (until June 30, 2004)</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Northeast Lakes Council</td>
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<th>Rabbi Daniel Rabishaw, C '94</th>
<th>Rabbi Michael Berk, C '80</th>
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<td>Regional Director for the URJ Great Lakes Council</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Pacific Central West Council</td>
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<th>Rabbi Scott Spering, N '76</th>
<th>Rabbi David Fine, C '89</th>
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<td>Regional Director for the URJ Mid Atlantic Council</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Pacific Northwest Council</td>
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<th>Rabbi Lane Steinger, C '73</th>
<th>Rabbi Alan Henkin, C '80; P.h.D</th>
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<td>Regional Director for the URJ Midwest Council</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Council Director of Program, and, since 2000, URJ Vice President</td>
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<th>Rabbi Randi Musnitsky C '93</th>
<th>Rabbi Sue Lew Elwell, C '86</th>
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<td>Regional Director for the URJ New Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Pennsylvania Council</td>
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<th>Rabbi Peter Schaktman, N '89</th>
<th>Rabbi Jody R. Cohen, N '84</th>
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<tr>
<td>Acting Regional Director for the URJ Greater New York Council (until June 30, 2004)</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Southeast Council</td>
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<tr>
<th>Rabbi Eric Stark, N '99</th>
<th>Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky, C '69</th>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Greater New York Council (as of July 1, 2004)</td>
<td>Regional Director for the URJ Southwest Council</td>
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Available in 1980, I applied and was hired by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, a visionary and giant who was my teacher, mentor, and inspiration.

Elliott Kleinman became the Regional Director for the Northeast Lakes Council after serving as the assistant rabbi at Temple Sholom in Chicago, under Rabbi Frederick Schwartz’s mentorship. Two years ago, he was named Director of Program and works with the URJ program departments in building sacred community in congregations; a task that involves the URJ departments of Synagogue Management, Outreach and Synagogue Community, Jewish Family Concerns, Worship, Music and Religious Living, and the Commission on Social Action. He is also responsible for the program at the Biennial conventions.

Richard Address joined the Union in 1978 as the Regional Director of the Pennsylvania Council, after several years of serving young congregations in California. “In the 1980s, I was asked to develop committees having to do with aspects of the family: older adults, bioethics, and the caring community program. By the 1990s, it had become clear to the regional directors working directly with congregations that the needs of families were shifting.” He was asked to head the newly created Department of Jewish Family Concerns in 1997.

“I’ve been on the Union staff continuously since 1975,” says Daniel Freander, who has served as a Camp Program Director, Regional Youth Director, Assistant Director of NFTY, Director of the Commissions on Music and Religious Living, Regional Director for the New Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council, National Director of Program, and, since 2000, URJ Vice President. During the 1970s, he and Cantor Jeff Klepper wrote and performed the music that provides much of the core repertoire for religious schools, camps, and synagogues today. His other achievements include the revitalization of Transcontinental Music Publications, the last surviving publisher of Jewish choral and synagogue music, thus ensuring a creative outlet for new music to be disseminated and the programmatic transformation of the URJ Biennial conventions, which currently attract over 5,000 lay leaders and Reform Movement professionals.

Lennard Thal’s career took a slightly different route. After a three-year student internship with Rabbi Charles Kroloff, he was tapped as Associate Dean of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, a position he held from 1973 to 1982 – pivotal years in the development of HUC-JIR’s rabbinical, education, and Jewish communal service programs amidst the burgeoning of West Coast Jewry. For the next 14 years, he served as Regional Director of the Pacific Southwest Council, encompassing Southern California, Southern Nevada, all of Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas, and represented the Reform Movement to the second largest Jewish community in North America. “Serving as a regional director enabled me to relate as a rabbi in multiple ways, working closely with professional staff and lay leaders of some 70 congregations during a period of exponential growth in the number of Reform synagogues in the region.” Thal’s keen interest in the growth of congregational lay leadership and board development for the URJ during those years is central to his current responsibilities: as URJ’s Senior Vice President he serves as Chief Development Officer and bears primary responsibility for the functioning of the URJ’s Board of Trustees.

Dale Glasser’s path to directing synagogue management at the URJ grew out of the combination of both his educational and professional background and his pro bono practical hands-on experience. “Working professionally in the Jewish community with Jewish Big Brothers and later as Associate Executive Director of the Jewish Community Centers in Los Angeles,” he (continued on page 30)
Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz at 80: A Jewish Spiritual Journey at HUC-JIR

(continued from page 9)

school during World War II, it was my turn to serve my country,” he explained. For two years, he served as a navy chaplain at Bainbridge, Maryland, the boot camp for large numbers of Jewish servicemen from the Eastern seaboard, and simultaneously completed his Doctor of Hebrew Letters degree in Rabbinic Literature, with distinction, in 1952.

Although Borowitz sought a Midwestern pulpit after his military service, Rabbi Jack Rudin of Temple Beth El in Great Neck (a representative on the newly organized CCAR-HUC-UAH C Placement Commission) suggested a neighboring young community in Port Washington, New York. Pleased by this Long Island town’s resemblance to Columbus, Borowitz became the founding rabbi of The Community Synagogue and spent four wonderful years building that congregation. At the same time, he was invited to teach at the HUC-JIR’s New York School of Education – first at its satellite program in Great Neck (offering certification for Jewish educators teaching in Jewish religious schools) and soon after at the main campus in Manhattan.

Borowitz was appointed Associate Director of Education for Reform Judaism at the UAH C and, a year later, succeeded Dr. Emanuel Gamoran in 1957 as National Director upon Gamoran’s retirement. He earned his Ed. D. at Columbia’s Teacher’s College in 1958, after having already completed all but his dissertation in the Ph.D. program in philosophy of religion at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, thanks to the GI Bill’s tuition and stipend assistance. Borowitz recognized the priority of generating materials to help teachers in the classroom while at the UAH C, where “I got a chance to develop my lifelong love for publishing” while editing books, curricula, and educational periodicals.

It was in 1962 that Dr. Paul M. Steinberg, then Dean of HUC-JIR/New York, offered Borowitz a full-time, tenured faculty position as Professor of Education and Lecturer in Jewish Religious Thought. He taught education, midrash, literature, and religious thought courses and was a catalyst for change in the spiritual life of the campus, as well. Borowitz instigated the establishment of a daily service, which HUC-JIR had not had before and which has become a forum for students’ religious growth ever since.

While not by nature a politically minded person, Borowitz has nonetheless taken powerful stands at critical moments. Inspired by his own father, who racially integrated the first factory in Columbus, Borowitz felt compelled to join Albert Vorspan and Rabbis Balfour Brickner, Israel Dresner, Daniel Fogel, Jerrold Goldstein, Joel Goor, Joseph Hertzog, Norman Hirsch, Leon Jick, Richard Levy, Eugene Lipman, Michael Robinson, B.T. Rubenstein, M urray Saltzman, Allen Secher, and Clyde Sills on a historic trip to St. Augustine, Florida, in response to Martin Luther King’s appeal to the CCAR conference in 1964.

“We stayed overnight in African-American homes and participated in a civil rights demonstration the following day, when fifteen of us were arrested for praying as an integrated group in front of Monson’s Restaurant and three of us were arrested for sitting down with black youngsters at the Chimes Restaurant. While in a segregated holding pen at St. John’s County Jail, we talked about why we were there, and I was asked to write it up. I took notes on scraps of paper that are now preserved in the American Jewish Archives. The ensuing document, Why We Went: A Joint Letter from the Rabbis Arrested in St. Augustine, June 19, 1964, became a front page story in The New York Times.”

Throughout the decades, Borowitz has witnessed the transformation of HUC-JIR, the Reform Movement, and American Judaism. “In my earliest years of teaching at HUC-JIR I was faced with a prevailing agnostic community on campus, which didn’t believe in the literal details of the Bible and tradition, felt that science and culture explained the world much better, and that involvement with God would require an involvement with commandments,” Borowitz recalls.

“This coincided with the move into the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s and the realization that the neighborhood wouldn’t keep Jews Jewish and they had to do something about it – resulting in the synagogue boom. What’s more, this was a time when there was talk of the death of God and a kind of faux Jewish existentialism.”

“By the 1970s, I began to clarify my intellectual path, whose formulation coalesced by the 1980s through teaching, writing, and meetings with others who were similarly searching.” He vividly remembers two turning points in his intellectual journey. “The first, in the early 1960s, occurred while I was giving a lecture in Florida about different intellectual points of view about God and how one might think about God as a mortal person. A man asked, ‘Would you mind saying a few words about how you lived that or how we might live that?’ And that was a signal to me that something had changed – that there were some people who were now ready to take on belief and apply it to their lives.”

The next turning point was during a study retreat in California, in the early 1980s, where Borowitz was able to talk about belief questions with people who were not just intellectually curious, but interested in applying it to their lives. “A man talked about his personal experience with God, in having some intimacy of the reality of God, something he didn’t fully understand but had contact with and a deep sense of. I realized then that the move toward religious belief was becoming personal and being taken into individual experience.”

At HUC-JIR, Borowitz was discovering this phenomenon amongst the students, as well. The Vietnam War years of the late 1960s and early 1970s had had a transformative impact on the student body. “The students entered the programs with a desire to change the world, and to do so through the Jewish community. They demonstrated a greater commitment to Jewish religious life and by the 1980s students began to talk about their personal relationship to God – a student sermon in the synagogue included mention of belief in God. Here it was, after twenty years
of teaching, I thought to myself, maybe the time has come. And, of course, that was the beginning of a new wave that has led to the interest in spirituality in the 1990s and the call for courses in philosophy and medieval mysticism, reinforced by the significant influence of Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman’s landmark work in Jewish liturgy.

It was in 1970 that Borowitz founded Shma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility. “Why don’t we have a magazine where people can apply Judaism to current issues? Liberal, political, conservative, secular, orthodox – we were going to talk as a Jewish community where everyone was going to have their say, in short pieces, preferably dealing with one issue at a time, encompassing differing points of view and written by a broad range of contributors throughout North America. For 23 years, as its publisher and editor; and on religious belief, to a book like Jewish Moral Virtues, co-authored by Frances Weinman Schwartz, addressed to lay learners.” His titles include A New Jewish Theology in the Making, How Can a Jew Speak of Faith Today?, Choosing a Sex Ethic, The Masks Jews Wear, Contemporary Christologies: A Jewish Response, Choices in Modern Jewish Thought, Liberal Judaism, Reform Judaism Today, Studies in the Meaning of Judaism, Judaism After Modernity, and Exploring Jewish Ethics: Papers on Covenant Responsibility. The book that stands as the central statement on his theology is Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew, in which he identifies the dialectical themes of covenant and self, God and community, that he has emphasized throughout his theoretical writings. (See page 9)

Why We Went: A Joint Letter from the Rabbis Arrested in St. Augustine, June 19, 1964

We came because we could not stand silently by our brother’s blood….We came as Jews who remember the millions of faceless people who stood quietly, watching the smoke rise from Hitler’s crematoria. We came because we know that, second only to silence, the greatest danger to man is loss of faith in man’s capacity to act….We believe in man’s ability to fulfill God’s commands with God’s help….In obeying him, we become ourselves; in following His will we fulfill ourselves. He has guided, sustained, and strengthened us in a way we could not manage on our own…. These words were first written at 3:00 a.m. in the sweltering heat of a sleepless night…scratched on the back of the pages of a mimeographed report of the bloody assaults of the Ku Klux Klan in St. Augustine…. In the battle against racism, we have participated here in only a skirmish. But the total effect of such demonstrations has created a Revolution; and the conscience of the nation has been aroused as never before. The Civil Rights Bill will become law and much more progress will be attained because this national conscience has been touched in this and other places in the struggle….Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who freest the captives.

then as Senior Editor from 1993 to 1997, this publication’s office was my briefcase and contributors were not paid. In fact, the only honorarium of $25, saying ‘With me this is a matter of honor for the Jewish writer.’”

As a writer of numerous articles for journals including Commentary, Judaism, and The Journal of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and author of seventeen books to date, Borowitz notes, “I’ve been very concerned to be able to speak to many levels of readers, from a children’s textbook, Explaining Reform Judaism, written with Naomi Patz, and a book for confirmation class students

Borowitz’s authority has extended to drafting the Reform Movement’s 1976 platform – as chair of the committee. This document acknowledges the significant changes in the Reform Movement since its founding Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 and the 1937 Columbus Platform. H is book, Reform Judaism Today, is a commentary on this document, which positioned Reform Judaism at the center of American Jewish life. He also wrote the comprehensive article on Judaism for the Encyclopedia of Religion.

In summing up his sixty years of contribution to Jewish learning, Borowitz points to his seminal role in creating and shaping the field of contemporary Jewish religious thought and showing that it is a worthy academic enterprise. “The dividing line between the two streams of thought in Jewish theology, the rationalist and the non-rationalist, is that for the rationalists, human thinking determines the content of religion. For the non-rationalists, God has input into our religious situation. What I’ve tried to do is to rethink where the individual person in the relationship with God stands and is socially constituted, as part of the Jewish community.”

“For teachers of a prior generation and for many in the community, ethics came first and religion rode on that, which resulted in extraordinary human activism. But the trouble is that most people began to think that that was all there was to Judaism or the religious life we need today. From the 1950s to the 21st century, we went from a situation where ethics seemed more certain than religious belief. But it turned out that the foundation for ethics – why people should be concerned about ethics, why it should have a compelling claim on their lives – had collapsed. That gave rise, on the right, to fundamentalism and, in the center and on the left, to the extraordinary search by people in recent decades for a new foundation for their lives. It has given rise to interest in meditation, mysticism, and Kabbalah – the very opposite of the former rationalist belief in knowledge and science. This has also given rise to the greater interest in liturgy, participation, and feeling and the conclusion that religious life has to be the foundation for ethical understanding and thinking. Now we go back to God’s input, to a greater interest in the practice of Judaism as a foundation to the kind of lives we ought to lead. Instead of talking about the Prophets, people today talk about relationship with God.”

In surveying HUC-JIR’s evolution over six decades, Borowitz points to the shift from non-Zionism to Zionism and the establishment of the Year-In-Israel Program and its conversion of students into people with a living relationship to the Hebrew language. He also notes the College’s role as a pioneer during the 1940s in the development of a
Journey at HUC-JIR

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relationship between psychiatry and religion and, with the rise of Jewish studies at universities in the 1960s, the displacement of the rabbi as the model of local scholar towards an enhanced role as pastoral counselor.

Borowitz praises his colleagues on the faculty. “One of the marvelous things about our school is our highly variegated faculty offering differing expertise, personalities, and points of view. As a scholar, one can’t think of oneself as learned if one doesn’t continue to be a student and a growing person. The hallmark of contemporary academic life harks back to the Talmudic argument – listening, critiquing, and, when possible, teaching with one another.”

Most recently, Borowitz has worked with one of HUC-JIR’s youngest faculty scholars with expertise in cultural criticism, Dr. Wendy Zierler (see page 16). They team-teach “Religion, Ethics, and Jewish Thought” in which film, television, and literature serve as touchstones for theological and moral conversation. This innovative course poses challenging questions: What religious or theological function can be performed by popular culture? To what extent can film, television, and contemporary literature provide occasions of transcendence, divine encounter, and religious/ethical exploration? What role can contemporary Jewish literature and film play in a curriculum of sacred study? As part of their assignments, students are required to select a work and show how they would apply this learning experience in a congregational or adult education setting.

Borowitz derives inspiration from his students, for whom he tries to be a role model “by trying to be a good Jew – somebody who cares deeply and thinks very hard about Judaism and practices it as best he can.” He sees the realities of the world in what his students say, what they ask, and what they want to know. “Our students are a leading indicator of the Jewish community. They tend to be somewhat ahead of where the thoughtful, caring part of the Jewish community is going.”

As one of the foremost Jewish thinkers of the 20th – 21st centuries, Borowitz has been recognized by numerous honors, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture in 1996 and the publication of Jewish Spiritual Journeys - a collection of twenty essays written by colleagues and former students in celebration of his 70th birthday. He has received honorary doctorates from Lafayette College, Colgate University, and Gratz University.

Borowitz is the only Jew to have served as the President of the American Theological Society and is Vice President and Life Trustee of the Jewish Publication Society. He inaugurated the List Professorship of Jewish Studies at Harvard University in 1982 and has served as visiting professor of religion at Columbia, Princeton, State University of New York at Stony Brook, City College of the City University of New York, Drew University, Temple University, Teacher’s College of Columbia University, JTS, and Woodstock College (The Jesuit Graduate School of Theology).

Borowitz’s enduring inspiration can be found in the work and lives of his disciples. Rabbi Ellenson, his former student, recalls, “When, as a second-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR in New York, I attended Eugene Borowitz’s lectures on ‘Modern Jewish Religious Thought,’ I was given a vocabulary to name and define the religious struggle I was then experiencing. Rabbi Borowitz said clearly and simply, ‘The problem of modern Jewish thought is one of how we affirm the best of what the modern world has taught us while simultaneously maintaining our commitment to the conventional tradition that is at the base of genuine Jewish belief and practice. In a sentence – how can we simultaneously be ‘modern’ and ‘authentically Jewish?’’ It is the challenge of defining and understanding this dialectical interplay that lies at the heart of modern Jewish thought, and Eugene Borowitz has been foremost among Jewish thinkers of his generation in explicating the nature and directions of the multiple responses that have been offered to meet this challenge.”

Now marking his 80th year, Borowitz’s research and publication are still going strong. He has just published two articles in Conservative Judaism and Judaism, respectively. He has completed a book on the linguistic logic of rabbinic theology, which is in the final stage of consideration by an academic publisher and publisher and is developing new projects with former students: another book with Frances Weinman Schwartz and a publication for Rabbi Ellenson. Borowitz expressed his hopes for the Jewish future when he received the National Jewish Book Award in the field of Jewish Thought in 1974 for The Masks of Judaism and said, “We need to guide Jews in the difficult task of maintaining an intense loyalty to Jewish tradition, that is, of living by a deeply Jewish faith, while freely assessing the virtues of the various modern ways of interpreting it – and within this continuous dialectic process to find the personal and conceptual integrity of what it means to be a modern Jew.”

“As rabbi, scholar, professor, and moreh derekh,” says Rabbi Ellenson, “we honor Dr. Borowitz’s passion, commitment, and love for God and the Jewish people, and express thanks for all he has taught and will continue to teach. May the passion and the intellect with which Rabbi Borowitz has challenged and directed the Jewish community continue unabated for years to come, and may he go on, from strength to strength!”
HUC-JIR’S Wexner Graduate Fellows

(continued from page 7)

Fellows, guiding them in decision-making with regard to courses and careers.

Wexner Graduate Fellowship alumni can also be found on the HUC-JIR faculty, including Dr. Alyssa Gray, Assistant Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at HUC-JIR/NY and Dr. Jonathan Krasner, Assistant Professor of American Jewish History at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati.

Dr. Aaron Panken, Dean of HUC-JIR/New York and a Wexner Fellowship alumnus, continues to be involved with the Program as a member of its faculty. He teaches professional skills development at the Wexner Graduate Fellowship Institute. For the past five years he has also worked with the Director of the Alumni Institute in teaching a session that transitions the Fellows to the next level as Wexner Graduate Fellowship alumni. “As a Wexner Fellow, I was given a set of resources I would not normally have access to,” explains Panken. “The combination of learning tools, peer mentorship, and the network of people I was exposed to are resources I still utilize today.” Recently, Panken, along with his Wexner classmate, Rabbi Dov Weiss from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, brought together their Reform and Orthodox students for dinner and dialogue. It was a rare opportunity for both groups of students to discuss issues that affect their respective movements and to learn more about each other.

In this and so many ways, HUC-JIR’s Wexner Graduate Fellows bring the enrichment of the Program back into the fabric of student life and learning on campus. Together with their classmates, they are builders of the Reform Movement and the Jewish People.

And Rachel Stole the Idols
The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Women’s Writing

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At this point in the poem, the speaker steals the poetic/prophetic language of Ezekiel 8:2-4 as a means of expressing her own vision of inspiration. Suddenly, the poet speaker sees a huge flame that takes hold of her hair, sets her on fire, and carries her aloft. The poem reaches its climax as she is sevenfold as bright as the (male-gendered) sun, an allusion to Ezekiel 30:26, where the prophet foresees that “on the day that the Lord binds up the breach of his people, and heals the stroke of their wound,” the light will be “sevenfold, as the light of seven days.” As in the case of the Ezekiel reference, this biblical allusion endows Bat-Mirim’s vision with a prophetic importance. More precisely, Bat-Mirim’s speaker seizes upon the language of prophecy as a means of giving voice to her countertraditional poetic vision. David Jacobson reads this poem as transforming “Ezekiel’s vision of a fiery God who causes the prophet to view Israel’s evil into a vision of a cruel sun-god who implants an evil fiery passion within the speaker and shouts at her.” According to Jacobson, in these early poems Bat-Mirim “conveys her longing to discover the image of a divine being who could serve as a positive alternative to the cruel uncaring image of the shouting, bursting sun-god.” Contrary to Jacobson’s reading, I would argue that Bat-Mirim is championing herself over the sun-god and celebrating her superior form of illumination, even as she seems to apologize for it. Yes, the poem describes an explosive daytime encounter between the speaker and the screaming sun, but the speaker bravely and proudly announces that in her inspired state she is sevenfold as bright as the sun. The speaker relishes rather than rails against this poetic confrontation.

The combination of audacity and trepidation evident in these early poems by Bat-Mirim is a widespread feature of early Hebrew women’s writing both in the Diaspora and the Land of Israel. These women knew well that they were treasuring on territory previously off-limits to them. It was their unprecedented task to cross into these spaces, seize the language, and transform it into something new, even as it echoes or borrows from tradition. On occasion, they faltered in this task, but more often than not they triumphed.

In Memoriam

Muriel Berman
Loving mother of Nancy Berman, Director Emerita of the HUC-JIR Skirball Museum, whose devotion to Jewish learning and the arts endures as a source of inspiration.

Jane Evans
Cherished honorary alumna of HUC-JIR and Director Emerita of the Women of Reform Judaism, whose visionary leadership advanced human rights and whose love for the arts beautified the HUC-JIR/New York campus.

JoAnn Morrison
Beloved friend of HUC-JIR, whose devotion to HUC-JIR/Jerusalem, which she shared with her husband, David, found expression in generous support for its programs and the establishment of its Hallel Community Choir.

Peggy Weil Steine
Dedicated member of the Cincinnati Board of Overseers and the Board of Governors and, together with her husband, David Steine, z”l, a generous supporter of HUC-JIR.

Laurence A. Tisch
Esteemed friend of the College-Institute; beloved father of Andrew Tisch, a member of the President’s Council; and beloved father-in-law of Bonnie Tisch, a member of the Board of Governors, whose visionary philanthropy and leadership to strengthen Judaism were recognized by HUC-JIR’s Award for Distinguished Jewish Service.
A Vital Partnership: HUC-JIR Alumni Leading the UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM
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recalls, “was augmented by my involvement as a lay person sitting on the Los Angeles Federation Board and as President of my congregation, Kol Tikvah in Woodland Hills, California.”

CONTINUING ALUMNI EDUCATION AT HUC-JIR
Lifelong learning is intrinsic to those alumni’s ongoing achievements, as alumni return to HUC-JIR for continuing education and doctoral degrees. Daniel Freelande points to Dr. Lawrence Hoffman, Friedman Professor of Liturgy, Worship, and Ritual, as an enduring influence on his Jewish thinking. “For 17 years, I and 20 other alumni meet three times a year for an alumni study program with Dr. Hoffman, with whom I’ve worked on Synagogue 2000 and the Navy Chaplain training program.”

Several alumni have returned to HUC-JIR/New York for the Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling program to gain enhanced skills for their chaplaincy work. “I was in the first year of the newly-established program, in a group of eighteen Reform rabbis and Christian clergy,” says Deborah Hirsch. “The counseling skills I developed were particularly helpful during my years as a regional director. In assisting a congregation in transition, it is often helpful to view it as large family

system engaged in a congregational lifecycle event.” “Entering the Doctor of Ministry program was the most important decision of my professional rabbinate,” adds Richard Address. “If it were up to me, after you’ve been out working as clergy for ten years you should go back for this additional training.”

MENTORING AND RECRUITING THE NEXT GENERATION
As visiting faculty, mentors, and fieldwork supervisors, these alumni provide significant training to current HUC-JIR students, who are placed in internships throughout the URJ during the school year and summers. These students have hands-on responsibility in developing resource materials and programs that filter into the lives of millions of Reform Jews. “Internships at URJ, our congregations, and our movements’ summer camps are part of the vital partnership between the URJ and HUC-JIR and reinforce the value of that partnership,” affirms Daniel Freelande.

During his thirty years heading the RAC, David Saperstein notes, “nearly 20,000 high school students have graduated our L’Taken seminars and our college programs, leading some towards HUC-JIR. Nearly a hundred Eisendrath legislative assistants have gone on to become Reform rabbis. That we helped produce the next generation of committed lay and professional leaders is symbolized today by the former Eisendrath LA’s who serve as the current President of the CAR, the Director of the Commission on Social Action, and the Chair of the Commission on Social Action. Some 800 Reform rabbis have gone through our rabbinical student training programs, have as numerous education and cantorial students.”

URJ leaders return to teach at HUC-JIR or to serve on the Board of Governors, Boards of Overseers, and advisory and admission committees. Jan Katzav has taught the introductory Jewish education course for rabbinical, cantorial, and education students, as well as classes in moral education and Jewish-Christian relations and related educational issues. Richard Address brings family concern initiatives back to HUC-JIR’s classrooms, where he teaches courses on the changing shape of the Jewish family and finding your family through sacred text. Dale Glasser has served as a fieldwork instructor, supervised interns, and conducted admission interviews.

Furthermore, many of these alumni have directly influenced a large number of students to apply to HUC-JIR’s programs and are grateful to welcome them as full-fledged colleagues. They recognize the need to strengthen HUC-JIR’s recruitment to guarantee the next generation of leadership for Reform Jewry. In supervising the URJ’s youth programs for college students, junior and high school students, and related programs, Andrew Davids feels that he is able to fulfill one of the primary responsibilities of Jewish leaders: to raise up disciples.

“Through these programs, Reform youth and young adults are introduced to HUC-JIR faculty and alumni, who model for them a career path that is meaningful, challenging, and rewarding, and are encouraged to bring their talents and passion to the leadership of the Movement,” he says. “We are an important link in that chain, since we know that 70-80% of HUC-JIR students are graduates of our youth and camping programs.” Serious teaching, learning, and relationship building are key. “When HUC-JIR faculty teach these young people, those who are thinking about going to HUC-JIR say, ‘This is exactly what I want and I want more of it’ while those who have not thought about HUC-JIR suddenly wake up and say, ‘I didn’t realize what going to HUC-JIR could be about.’” All of these initiatives are reinforced by the URJ Youth Division’s robust Internet presence, where Jewish learning is placed in the medium that is most utilized by the new generation; a learning page co-sponsored by HUC-JIR goes out to 19,000 college students on a regular basis. Another incubator for future HUC-JIR students is the new Carmel ‘bridge’ program for 18-year-olds at the Lokey International Academy of Jewish Studies and Hafa University, beginning this fall, when 25 students from North America and Great Britain will study and work with HUC-JIR’s Israeli rabbinical alumni.

Elliott Kleinman encourages prospective students to apply, but tells them “do it not just because you want to learn at HUC-JIR, but because you want to do the work when you complete your studies.” Deborah Hirsch urges them “to trust your ability, to acknowledge that there will be challenges and not to let them defeat you, to utilize your own understanding of Jewish values and tap into your own internal strength and spiritual understanding, so that you may move forward, bring people closer, and overcome barriers and prejudices.”

SHAPING THE FUTURE
Eric Yoffie has established the current cadre of charismatic, visionary, and creative leadership heading up the URJ’s departments. Through their URJ portfolios, these alumni are implementing

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A Promise Fulfilled: The Year-In-Israel Program

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student in the Year-In-Israel Program, but completed his studies in the Israeli Rabbinical Program and served in local Israeli congregations before being appointed Dean of HUC-JIR/Jerusalem in 1998. The expansion of the Israeli Rabbinical Program is a priority for him. Today, there are 30 students enrolled in the Israeli program and interaction between the Diaspora and Israeli students is now expressed through joint worship services, study opportunities, seminars, and friendships. The Jerusalem School has become a true forum for creating professional and personal relationships for Reform leadership worldwide.

Nava Hefetz, an Israeli rabbinical student, stresses, “The relationship between the students is reciprocal. We share a common mission and we have a lot to learn from each other. We also don’t have many opportunities to interact with our peers in North America. This is the only time that we can develop lasting relationships.”

The Program facilitates the integration of academic studies with daily life in Jerusalem. “I have been living in Jerusalem for over five months now, and I am surprised that it already feels like home” says rabbinical student Ana Bonnheim. “Maybe it’s because I’m learning how to do all of the routine things – how to pay my phone bill in Hebrew, how to automatically say ’sicha’ when I bump into somebody instead of ‘excuse me,’ how to dive into an ancient text in a foreign language.” Rabbi Shaul Feinberg, Associate Dean, believes that “physical contact with the soil of the land and with the people who live on it translates an abstract notion of peoplehood into reality.”

Masters in Jewish Education student Mara Michaels in an Old City shop.

The obvious tensions of living in a society coping with the onslaught of terror can take its toll. Students are restricted at times as to where they can go and what they can do. The HUC-JIR administration and faculty see safety and support for students as the number one priority.

Living in Jerusalem and participating in Israeli society, students learn to look beyond the headlines. “The first few words I learned as I explored Jerusalem’s streets and media on my own were words of tension and tragedy: bitachon, neshek, hefetz hashod, pigua, matzav kasheh (security, weapon, suspicious package, attack, critical condition),” recalls rabbinical student Josh Strom. “But Israel has a second vocabulary as well. This is the language we learn as we live our lives: to ask for nana (mint) in your water in a restaurant on Emek Refaim, to ask your cab driver tish-tameh b’monet (use the meter), to play Rosh, K’taim, Bevakim, Ezbaot (Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes) with the Ethiopian children at the merkaz klitah (absorption center), to ana hamtini (please hold) when you have a question about your phone bill. Sometimes, this language has no words, but instead weaves itself into a melody, a prayer, or a moment.”

Students often encounter traditional Jewish prayer and practice for the first time in Israel. In their introductory courses, students learn the basic history, development, and liturgical rubrics of Jewish prayer. Rabbi Rachel Sabath-Bel Hachaim, a lecturer in liturgy, encourages her students to encounter as many different religio-cultural practices as possible in the richness of Jerusalem’s neighborhoods. She says that the students “gain powerful insights into the idea of collective responsibility among all Jews, deepened knowledge of the prayer and text life of the Jewish people, and an intense appreciation for the potential impact of their profession.”

The year that students spend in Israel brings a new perspective to their lives as Jewish professionals. Not only are they involved with the diverse communities in Israel, but they use this year as a springboard to learn and work with emerging Jewish communities worldwide. For example, twenty North American and two Israeli students traveled to communities throughout the Former Soviet Union to conduct Passover seders this year. Their experiences in Israel have informed and enriched their abilities to transmit Jewish culture and learning.

Summing up this exceptional first year of study, rabbinical student Daniel Schwartz says that “living in a Jewish society where Hebrew is the spoken language, businesses close on Shabbat, roads are empty on Yom Kippur, school is in session on Sunday, and we are able to travel to places that we are studying in our Bible class, has been a wonderful experience that would be impossible to duplicate in our home communities.”
Marc Bregman, The Tanhumah-Yadammedenu Literature Studies in the Evolution of the Versions (Gorgias Press). This volume includes a survey of previous research on this important genre of midrashic literature, a catalogue of some 200 textual witnesses, and a synoptic analysis of four versions of midrashic material to the triennial lection beginning with Exodus 7:8.

Dr. Gerald Bubis and Dr. Steven Windmueler, United Jewish Communities - A Merged Organization In Progress (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs). A study of the merger of the United Jewish Appeal, United Israel Appeal, and the Council of Jewish Federations.

Norman H. Cohen, Hineini in Our Lives: Learning H'ow to Respond to Others through Fourteen Biblical Texts and Personal Stories (Jewish Lights). An exploration into each time the word hineini appears in the Bible, showing what these stories reveal about us as parents, spouses, children, siblings, lovers, and friends and including inspiring contributions by authors and spiritual teachers who share personal reflections.

William Cutter, ed., Mikdash M'at - Small Sanctuary (Behrman House Books). This siddur for Shabbat morning offers accessible commentary for each prayer, allowing worshipers to explore the meaning of the prayer and its place in the service.

Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, ed., Parashat Pinchas Legacy of Law, Leadership, and Land, WRJ Women Commentary On The Torah (WRJ). The story of the four daughters of Zelophehad, with Hebrew and English texts alternating with commentaries, offering a preview of the forthcoming complete Commentary.

Marcia Falk, trans., The Spectacular Difference: Selected Poems of Zelda (H U C Press). The power of Zelda's poetry lies in its ability to blend classical Jewish texts and folklore, fable, myth, and fairy tale.

Louis H. Feldman, "Remember Amalek!" Vengeance, Zealotry, and Group Destruction in the Bible According to Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus (H U C Press). An understanding of how three ancient Jewish commentators on the Bible wrestled with this divine command and its provision that an entire people must be punished for all time.

Dr. Edward Goldman and Dr. Richard S. Sarason, eds., Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 73. This volume includes scholarly articles focusing on diverse areas of Judaic, biblical, and semitic studies, including "The Righteous Teacher in the Pesharite Commentaries" by Dr. Ben Zion Wacholder, Professor Emeritus of Talmud and Rabbinics.


Dr. Adriane Leeven and Dr. Yaffa Weisman, eds. The Lord Has a Taste for Clowning (The Skirball Cultural Center, H U C-JIR/Los Angeles). A collection of poems by Dr. Stanley F. Chyet, Professor Emeritus of American Jewish History, z"l.

Dr. Carol Ochs, Reaching Godward: Voices from Jewish Spiritual Guidance (UAHC Press). Case studies that show how the familiar landmarks of the spiritual way find unique expression in the life journeys of sixteen people.

Dr. Stephen M. Passamanek, Police Ethics and the Jewish Tradition (Charles C. Thomas Ltd.). An examination of Jewish sources relating to specific problems in modern police ethics. (See page 12)

Julie Pelc, ed., and Tobin Belzer, Joining the Sisterhood: Young Jewish Women Write Their Lives (S UN Y Press). A collection of poems, essays, and stories from young women – orthodox, secular, Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Mizrahi. (See page 7)

Jean Bloch Rosensaat and Tuvia M endelson, eds., The Art of Aging (H U C-JIR M useum and JDC-Eshel). An exhibition catalog with essays by Laura Kruger, Ayana Friedman, and Yitzhak Brick. (See page 31)

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, Happiness in Premodern Judaism: Virtue, Knowledge, and Well-Being (H U C Press). An analysis of Jewish discourse on "happiness" from antiquity to the seventeenth century, with emphasis on the reception of Aristotelian ethics in medieval Jewish philosophy.

Dr. Wendy Zierler, And Rachel Stole The Idols: The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Women's Writing (Wayne State University Press). An analysis of the first three generations of modern Hebrew women writers and the implications of women's belated entry into the realm of Hebrew letters. (See page 16)

Dr. Gary P. Zola, ed., The Dynamics of American Jewish History: Jacob Rader Marcus's Essays on American Jewry (Brandeis University Press). A unique collection of significant unpublished essays on the American Jewish experience by the founder of H U C-JIR's American Jewish Archives.

Books may be purchased at the HUC-JIR College Bookstore - (513) 221-4651, by contacting the publishers directly, or by visiting our faculty and administration web-pages at http://huc.edu/faculty/faculty
Admission: Free; photo ID required for entrance.

Jewish Fathers: A Legacy of Love

Yiddish playwrights, directors, acting companies, evokes the creativity of some of the greatest Eastern European Jewish of early 20th century. Inspired by the rich heritage of early 20th century Eastern European Jewish theater, this exhibition evokes the creativity of some of the greatest Yiddish playwrights, directors, acting companies, and performers of the classical Jewish stage.

Lloyd Wolf, the award-winning photographer, follows the success of Jewish Mothers with a view of the relationships between fathers and offspring connected by affection, wisdom, and humor.

Living in the Moment: Contemporary Artists Celebrate Jewish Time

A hands-on learning and research facility for the study of Archaeology and Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern history and culture. The artifacts at The Archaeology Center, spanning the 2nd to 1st millennia B.C.E., were discovered at HUC-JIR’s excavations in Israel.

For information on HUC-JIR’s traveling exhibitions, please call (212) 824-2218.
an intensification of Jewish life within Reform synagogues. “I became President of the URJ at a time when Reform Jews were ready to move in new directions,” he notes. “My task was to prod the Movement along the path it was already traveling and to strengthen the internal foundations of our Movement: channeling the religious energy of Reform Jews who want to learn and study, creating a serious Reform educational system for Jews who care about Torah study that is directed at adults no less than children, expanding our camp system and improving our congregational nursery school network, and revitalizing Jewish worship with prayer that is nurturing, satisfying, and mystical. And to do all of this without abandoning our traditional commitments to tikvah olam and inclusivity that welcomes the stranger, the intermarried, and those who are on the margins of our community.”

“Worship is a huge issue for the Movement,” asserts Daniel Freeland. “How do we help people from a variety of backgrounds to feel comfortable in Reform worship? More than half of our congregants did not grow up in Reform congregations and come with different expectations. How do we serve multiple generations with one service?”

To fulfill these goals, Sue Ann Wasserman’s department generates resources that enable ritual committees to learn more about liturgy, so that they can be better partners with their clergy, and to explore experimentation, change, and growth in vitalizing the worship experience. “How do you bring a congregation as a whole into a discussion about worship and what it means to the community and to the individual?” she asks. “To spark that discussion, we have produced a video so that people can see components of worship in different congregations done differently. What happens when you light the Sabbath candles in the center of the congregation and everyone joins in the singing or when you light them on the bema and one person says it alone?”

Shaliach Kehillah, co-sponsored by HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, offers annual retreats for laity to develop a variety of synagogue and worship leadership skills, a program which she hopes will use the resources of the other state-side campuses, so that laity can learn in the context of HUC-JIR’s Rhea Hirsch and New York Schools of Education and School of Sacred Music. The department also organizes Chadeish T’filatenu, a worship retreat just for rabbis and cantors, often attended by teams of clergy; participants experience a variety of worship styles and learn new worship leadership skills that they can bring back to their congregations.

Music and its intersection with worship is one specific focus of that department, which has just issued a curriculum for adults and older youths, entitled “Divrei Shir:” in cooperation with the American Conference of Cantors Alane Katzew explains, “This survey of the origins and development of Reform synagogue music will enrich congregants’ understanding of the role of music in a community and encourage them to develop a broader repertoire embracing the breadth and depth of Jewish music.”

“We are part of a concerted effort to raise the standard of learning in the Reform Movement,” says Jan Katzew, whose department’s educational initiatives target all generations of Reform Jews. “The ultimate goal is to instill in Reform Jewry common understandings, values, and a recognition of Reform’s authenticity – an authenticity that did not start in Germany in 1810 but in the book of Deuteronomy. We have to demonstrate that in the free marketplace of ideas we have compelling, cogent, beautiful, powerful, worthy, and holy ideas.” He is focusing on the youngest of Reform Jews, with Nancy Bissell, YSOE ’92, tapped as the first full-time director of early childhood education. His department recently sponsored the fourth annual conference for 80 early childhood directors from throughout North America who are educating the 25,000 youngsters who will one day become members and leaders of the Reform Movement. The CHAI curriculum, a national initiative providing materials and resources for students, faculty, parents, families, education committees, and synagogue boards, relies on the education faculty of HUC-JIR as readers to ensure that the materials have integrity and utility. In addition, over 16,000 people now receive a daily email of “Ten Minutes of Torah” with a different focus for each day of the week: the weekly Torah portion, social justice, Israel, ethics, and the Jewish world.

Andrew Davids sees a growing interest on the part of young adults, whether teenagers or college students, to be more informed about Reform Judaism so that they may ground their own choices about ritual and practice in serious, liberal Jewish learning. “Our best kids are hungry for things beyond the simple Bible stories from Genesis. They’re hungry for Mitzvah, Talmud, Jewish mysticism, and philosophy. Our Movement must respond in an effective way, or our most serious youngsters will look elsewhere.” He also points to the fact that these young people are interested in relationships, “where someone further along the path is willing to build an authentic, personal connection and bring to the conversation the keys to accessing texts and traditions in a thoughtful, Reform way. They are passionate, committed generation, but we have to give them the means to anchor their energy toward building a vibrant Jewish community – Hebrew and Jewish literacy, and a commitment to Israel and ethical behavior – so that living Jewish lives is how they choose to change the world.”

“The mission of the Department of Jewish Family Concerns, the only department of its kind in any synagogue movement, is to develop, monitor, and implement programs that address what is happening right now in families within congregations,” explains Richard Address. HUC-JIR student interns assist in the development of programs and resources regarding bio-ethics, organ-donation, mental health awareness, special needs bnei mitzvah, self-destructive behaviors, eating disorders, gay and lesbian inclusion, and other issues.

A new initiative, ‘Sacred Aging,’ provides resources dealing with the revolution in longevity.
impacting every Reform congregation, where 50% of the membership is 50 years of age and older. “As the boomer generation ages, there are issues of care-giving, ethical decision-making at the end of life, and the question of how best to utilize the dynamic potential of this age group within the congregation. The ultimate goal is a cultural shift to transform synagogues into a system of extended spiritual families in a caring congregation.”

Dale Glasser’s department provides consultation and resources for synagogue administration and management, including publications covering everything from board and leadership training and crisis intervention to legal and financial issues. With the National Association of Temple Administrators, he has just issued a temple management manual, fully indexed, that comes with a CD-ROM with forms that can be downloaded. “Coming out of my training at HUC-JIR and the double masters program, a lot of the work I do with congregations is to understand institutions from a systems perspective,” he explains. Furthermore, “it is enormously gratifying to be a non-rabbi in the URJ leadership, a largely rabbincally-centered organization, to be in, a sense, a lay person, and to represent synagogue management from a Jewish perspective. All of our materials are grounded in text and Jewish concepts in focusing, for example, on what makes synagogue leadership different from being a leader in other non-profit organizations.”

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch’s Zionist mission is to strengthen North American Reform Jews’ relationship with the state of Israel, to represent the Reform Movement in national and international Jewish and Zionist bodies, and to advance the growth of the Reform Movement in Israel. The challenges of reaching younger Reform Jews, many born after 1967 and lacking knowledge of Israel’s historical struggle for statehood, are immense. He attests to HUC-JIR’s Year-In-Israel Program (see page 4) for revolutionizing the Reform Movement and for “allowing the students to become intellectually and emotionally attached to Israel with a deep knowledge of her people and society and a concern with the relationship between world Jewry and Israel” – an attachment and concern that is later transmitted to their future congregational settings. He stresses the importance of continuing these bonds, formed early in their rabbincical education, throughout their careers and through their support of ARZA as a key instrumentality of the Reform Movement’s relationship with Israel. “On a broad level, we’ve found that the stronger your Jewish education, the stronger will be your relationship with Israel. By and large, the attachment of Reform Jews to Israel is a product of their overall sense of Jewish identity. I am proud of bringing Israel closer to the hearts and minds of Reform Jews and Reform Jews closer to Israel.”

As part of this goal, Elliott Kleinman points to a new initiative, growing out of the 2003 Biennial Convention, of working with HUC-JIR in Jerusalem to strengthen the Israeli rabbincical program and to develop new roles for the graduates after their ordination, “so that the liberal, pluralistic Reform Movement in Israel can foster new congregations, communities, and educational programs.”

The spirit of diversity and innovation continues to mark Aron Hirt-Manheimer’s editorial work for Reform Judaism magazine, which examines what it means to be a Reform Jew today and whose readers spend an average of 64 minutes with it – more than Time, Newsweek, The Economist, and The New Yorker. His mission is “to continually challenge myself, not to become complacent, so that each issue is full of exploration and surprise, and offering new points of view.”

David Saperstein expresses one urgent wish: “Our rabbis (and often our cantors) are the social justice professionals in most synagogues; they will need the programming and community relations skills to build strong programs. Rabbis will preach and teach throughout their careers on the great social issues of the day and they will need access to sources of primary texts, Jewish legal perspectives, and the rich lessons of the history of the Jewish people whose social welfare institutions as far back as two millenia have been one of our richest treasures. Often in smaller communities, they serve as the leading Jewish community relations professional in the community. Leaders of churches and racial and ethnic minorities will turn to them to build coalitions; elected officials and media will turn to them, as well. They need the training and skills to know how to respond effectively – and appropriately. There is more that HUC-JIR can do to provide such training – and more that the RAC and HUC-JIR can do in tandem in the form of continuing education. Together we can train the current and coming generations of our community’s leaders to carry on our most precious prophetic tradition – at a time the world needs such a voice more than ever before.”

A VITAL PARTNERSHIP

The alumni leaders of the URJ agree that the future of the Reform Movement depends on the alliance of the URJ, HUC-JIR, the CCAR, and all the other professional arms and affiliates in a Movement-wide effort supporting a common cause. They look to the College-Institute as the essential partner for obvious reasons. “The study of Torah and text is the primary building block of the URJ’s program and is at the heart of our aspiration to be a holy people,” says Eric Yoffie. “The great teachers of Torah in our Movement are to be found at HUC-JIR, which is responsible for training the rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal professionals and conveying to them the enthusiasm for sacred text, without which no educational effort can succeed. If the College-Institute succeeds, we succeed.”

Lennard Thal points to three key objectives. “The most recent National Jewish Population Survey tells us that we are the fastest growing religious stream within the Jewish community in America,” he notes. “We must ensure that our congregations and their professional leaders respond to the essential needs of those who choose to affiliate with the Reform Movement since I remain convinced that the synagogue is at the very center of Jewish life and the Jewish future.” As a Movement that is deeply committed to Jewish values and social justice, he adds, “we have an important message to convey to the larger Jewish community through the important work of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C.” As for Israel, “I would love to see in the decade ahead a much deeper sense of connec-
Rabbinical Alumni in the Academy – Part II

HUC-JIR continues to recognize the scholarship and achievement of rabbinical alumni teaching in colleges and universities.

Herbert Bronstein, C ’57, teaches Comparative Religion in the Religion Department of Lake Forest College, has lectured and taught History and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Rochester, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and HUC-JIR, and has been a Visiting Scholar at the Post Graduate Centre for Jewish Studies at Oxford University.

Steven Leonard Jacobs, C ’74, is the Aaron Aronov Endowed Chair of Judaic Studies and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Alabama and has taught at Spring Hill College, Birmingham-Southern College, Samford University, and Calhoun Community College.

Leon A. Jick, C ’54, is Professor Emeritus at Brandeis University, where he has served as the Helen and Irving Schneider Professor of American Jewish Studies, Director of the Lown Graduate Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies (where he inaugurated the Ellenson Program for Jewish Community Service), Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Associate Dean of Faculty, and has been a visiting professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin.

Lance J. Sussman, C ’80 is Professor of American Jewish History at Gratz College, and the Community Coordinator for the University of Pennsylvania’s Lectures in Judaic Studies at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, and has served as Associate Professor of American Jewish History and Chair of the Judaic Studies Department at Binghamton University.

A Vital Partnership: HUC-JIR Alumni Leading the Union for Reform Judaism (continued from page 35)

tion between the North American Reform Movement and the growing Progressive Movement in Israel and elsewhere around the globe – a connection that would demonstrate unequivocally that we are truly ‘joined at the hip’ and that we can and must draw strength from each other.”

These distinguished alumni point to Rabbi Ellenson’s leadership as a key invigorating element. “David Ellenson is an outstanding scholar, devoted Jew, champion of Jewish peoplehood who has provided a model of inspired leadership, menschlichkeit, serious study, and deep Jewish commitment that is being felt in every corner of our Movement,” describes Eric Yoffie. “The URJ takes strength from his energy and Jewish devotion. He is present as partner and friend strengthens the sense of collectivity and mutual respect that are at the heart of Reform community-building.”

“The Jewish community is ‘voting with its feet’ – flocking to the Reform Movement as the expression of Jewish faith and values that most closely reflects their own,” notes Marla Feldman. “I hope our Movement and our commitment to social justice will continue to inspire and resonate for the modern Jew. The rabbis who are trained at HUC-JIR bring alive this vibrant, dynamic Jewish choice for millions of our members. Our congregations could not thrive without well-trained, multi-talented clergy leading them, nor could our clergy succeed without the solid foundation of healthy congregations to support them.” This symbiotic relationship is reflected in the URJ/HUC-JIR partnership, which benefits the Movement as a whole. “We hope to share with HUC-JIR the trends that are emerging within our congregations and help identify the professional skills that are needed today and that may not have been required a generation ago,” adds Sue Ann Wasserman.

As a former member of the HUC-JIR Admissions Committee in New York, Deborah Hirsch acknowledges that “the composition of the current student body appears to include not only men and women entering the rabbinate as a second career, but also individuals whose Jewish foundation is not rooted in the Reform Movement – a phenomenon that is also seen in our congregations and the National Jewish Population Survey demographics.” As 21st century Reform Judaism evolves it is imperative that congregational lay and professional leadership partner with one another and with the support mechanism of the Union for Reform Judaism and its affiliate organizations. Our mission is to engage Reform congregations, synagogue members, and those religious seekers to Judaism in a vibrant, enriching and transforming Jewish experience – a Reform Judaism rooted in the ethics, core values, and social consciousness that have defined and redefined our Movement since its creation.”

Daniel Freelander stresses, “There is a real challenge to maintain the integrity of the Movement, which must be sustained by students trained in the authenticity and ethos of Reform when they become the leaders of communities.” Ammiel Hirsch adds, “The synagogue is the preeminent institution in Jewish life that can provide the kind of intellectual stimulation and lifelong emotional attachment that can create and sustain Jews and perpetuate Judaism. HUC-JIR trains the spiritual leaders of the Reform synagogue. In a real sense, the future vitality of American Jewry rests on the shoulders of Reform rabbis.”

Looking to the future, Aron Hirt-Mahnheimer expresses the urgency of the cause. “We Reform Jews and the Jewish people are in the business of survival, survival not just to survive, but survival because we have a moral message that must be articulated in every generation, in word and deed, and because we have a special destiny as Jews.” Elliott Kleinman sums it up in saying, “The strengthening of congregations with gifted professionals, with a learned laity, with programs and services that invigorate Reform Judaism, all of this happens when HUC-JIR, the URJ, and all the arms of the Movement are working together – that’s when we are at our best.”
### Alumni Honored at Founders’ Day 2004

#### Cincinnati, March 14, 2004

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa</th>
<th>Rabbi Jeffrey A. Summit</th>
<th>Executive Director</th>
<th>Hillel Foundation at Tufts University, Medford, MA</th>
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<td>Rabbi T. Gershon Blackmore</td>
<td>Congregation Ner Shalom</td>
<td>Woodbridge, VA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Bruce Stanley Diamond</td>
<td>Temple Beth-El, Fort Myers, FL</td>
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<td>Rabbi Garson Herzfeld</td>
<td>Beth El Congregation, Winchester, VA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Yossi J. Liebowitz</td>
<td>Congregation B’nai Israel, Spartanburg, SC</td>
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<td>Rabbi Ben Alan Romer</td>
<td>Temple of Israel, Wilmington, NC</td>
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<td>Rabbi James L. Sagarin, RJE</td>
<td>Temple B’nai Israel, Kankakee, IL</td>
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#### Los Angeles, May 17, 2004

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<tr>
<th>Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa</th>
<th>Robin Estelle Moss</th>
<th>Clinical Director</th>
<th>Jewish Family Service, Seattle, WA</th>
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<td>Rabbi Neil Commiss-Daniels</td>
<td>Beth Shir Sholom, Santa Monica, CA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Douglas Kahn</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Jewish Community Relations Council, San Francisco, CA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Robert Douglas Levy</td>
<td>Temple Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, CA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Michael D. Mayersohn</td>
<td>Educator, Consultant, Seal Beach, CA</td>
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<td>Rabbi John Leon Rosove</td>
<td>Temple Israel of Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Michal (Mikki) Bourne</td>
<td>Temple Sholom, New Milford, CT</td>
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<td>Cantor Jeffrey A. Summit</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
<td>Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo, Getzville, NY</td>
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#### New York, March 21, 2004

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<tr>
<th>Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa</th>
<th>Rabbi Bonnie Steinberg</th>
<th>Director of Religious Life</th>
<th>The Jewish Home and Hospital, Bronx, NY</th>
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<td>Rabbi Daniel S Alexander</td>
<td>Congregation Beth Israel</td>
<td>Charlottesville, VA</td>
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<td>Rabbi Michal (Mikki) Bourne</td>
<td>Lifecycle Specialist Community Interfaith and Jewish Projects, San Francisco, CA</td>
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<td>Rabbi David Weinblatt</td>
<td>Rabbi David Allen Whitman</td>
<td>North Shore Synagogue, Syosset, NY</td>
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<td>Rabbi Irvin Manuel Wise</td>
<td>Adath Israel Congregation, Cincinnati, OH</td>
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<td>Doctor of Music, honoris causa</td>
<td>Rabbi Daniel Hillel Freeland</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Union for Reform Judaism, New York, NY</td>
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<td>Cantor Merrill Fisher</td>
<td>Akron, OH</td>
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<td>Cantor Janice Lowenstein Roger</td>
<td>Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, Indianapolis, IN</td>
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<tr>
<th>Doctor of Jewish Communal Service, honoris causa</th>
<th>Rabbi Michal (Mikki) Bourne</th>
<th>Temple Sholom, New Milford, CT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Edward L. Cushman</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Hebrew Free Loan Association, San Francisco, CA</td>
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<td>Eugene Lewis DuBow</td>
<td>Consultant, New York, NY</td>
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<td>Shoshana Hirsh</td>
<td>Director of Administration</td>
<td>Jewish Student Union, Los Angeles, CA</td>
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<td>Gene Barry Kaufman</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Sinai Memorial Chapel, San Francisco, CA</td>
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<td>Robin Estelle Moss</td>
<td>Clinical Director</td>
<td>Jewish Family Service, Seattle, WA</td>
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<td>Richard H. Meyer</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Milwaukee Jewish Federation, Inc., Milwaukee, WI</td>
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<td>Paula Simon</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Jewish Community Relations Council, Milwaukee, WI</td>
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<td>Linda Singer-Berk</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Director</td>
<td>Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, Providence, RI</td>
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<td>Marcia Cohn Spiegel</td>
<td>Writer, Lecturer, Rolling Hills Estates, CA</td>
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<td>Alan Marshal Templer</td>
<td>Fundraiser, Northbridge, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lois Nagy Weinsaft</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>International Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of Jewish Religious Education, honoris causa</td>
<td>Barbara Binder Kadden, RJE</td>
<td>Regional Educator</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Rabbi Jay H. Rosenbaum</th>
<th>Rabbi Seth David Phillips</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbi Charles A. Schiffman</td>
<td>Executive Vice President</td>
<td>Jewish Federation of Portland, Portland, OR</td>
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<td>Rabbi Jay H. Rosenbaum</td>
<td>Temple Israel, Lawrence, NY</td>
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<td>Rabbi Jeffrey Martin Silberman</td>
<td>Director, Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education</td>
<td>Norwalk Hospital, Norwalk, CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbi Albert Isaac Slomovitz</td>
<td>North Fulton Jewish Center, Alpharetta, GA</td>
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Founders' Day Album

New York

Honorary Doctor of Jewish Religious Education degree recipients

Honorary Doctor of Jewish Communal Service degree recipients

Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree recipients

Cincinnati

Honorary Doctor of Divinity and Doctor of Music degree recipients

Founders' Day Kallah

West Coast alumni convened for a day of learning in Los Angeles with Dr. Gary P. Zola, Director of HUC-JIR's Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

Mazel Tov to our centenarian rabbinical alumnus!

It's been 77 years since Melbourne Harris was ordained at HUC in Cincinnati in 1927. Harris, who recently celebrated his 100th birthday, has performed more than 1,800 weddings, led congregations in San Francisco, CA, Peoria, IL, and Cleveland, OH, and served as a civilian chaplain during WWII before joining his family's business. We wish Rabbi Harris continued strength and fulfillment.

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
Brookdale Center, One West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012-1186

Wishing you a joyful Shavuot.