Dear Alumni:

As you all are aware, these are difficult times for the Hebrew Union College. The lay and professional leadership of our institution are facing unprecedented challenges. I am sure you join me in wishing them strength and wisdom as they consider the options before them. And I am equally confident that you share in my prayers that our beloved Rhea Hirsch School of Education emerges unscathed and, perhaps even stronger, once the dust settles.

Even amidst the current challenging situation, the important work of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education in preparing the next generation of educational leaders for the Jewish people continues with vigor. In May, 10 new alumni joined our ranks. Some will be continuing their studies and some will be embarking on careers of service to the Jewish people.

Later this month, 13 new DeLeT fellows will begin their journeys to become teacher leaders in Jewish day schools. Later in the summer, we will be granting Certificates in Jewish Day School Teaching to 10 graduating fellows and will be recommending a total of 13 DeLeT graduates to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing for their Preliminary Multiple Subject Teaching Credentials. They will be the first teachers ever to have earned their credentials studying at a Jewish institution. They will go on to teach in Reform, Conservative, community and Orthodox day schools in California and in Canada.

Also this summer, nine new students will be joining the RHISOE and will be starting their studies at our Jerusalem campus. Of these, seven are joint masters students, and two are MAJE students. With the help of alumni, including the Alumni Association Recruitment Working Group, and Debbie Abelson, our very able Director of Recruitment and Admissions, we are already hard at work preparing to welcome an even larger group of students next year.

We are planning several recruitment events for next year, and you will have several opportunities to identify teens and young adults who might be interested in connecting with the RHISOE. Most notable is the fact that the College’s education recruitment weekend, IRSTA (Institute for Religious School Teaching Assistants) will take place on the Los Angeles campus next fall. Keep your eyes open for announcements of this program and plan on nominating your most capable high school juniors and seniors. On January 26, 2010, we will be holding a community Yom Limmud for day school and congregational educators in Northern California. Those of you who will be attending are encouraged to bring along a college-age or post-university young adult who might like to meet us and consider a career in Jewish education. We are also hoping to hold the NATE Interns program at the NATE Kallah in March.

I hope you enjoy time over the summer to “sharpen your saw” (S. Covey): reading, relaxing, traveling and just thinking, so you can return in the fall rejuvenated and ready to do the work of the Jewish people.

Michael
From the Chairperson

Julia Berger ’00

It’s hard to believe that two years have gone by since I wrote my first Tikshoret column as Chairperson of the RHSOE Alumni Association. In that time, we’ve inaugurated a new Educator-in-Residence program to enrich student learning, provided alumni with the opportunity to continue their studies with RHSEO faculty through face-to-face and distance learning, raised money for special projects that support the College, established new working groups to better meet the needs of all our alumni, continued existing programs that welcome new alumni and honor long-time alumni, and reviewed our mission and our policies. None of this would have been possible without the talent and commitment of you, our alumni. I would especially like to thank the Executive Committee and the Working Group Chairs for their dedication, vision, and time. It has been a privilege to work with them and learn from them.

As Judaism teaches, and as I wrote in my first article for Tikshoret, while one is not required to complete the work, neither is one free to abandon it. There is still much work to be done. We find ourselves, today, in uncertain times. This requires us to adapt to a new set of circumstances. Change is never easy. It often brings pain and disorientation, but it can also offer exciting new opportunities.

As I step down as Chairperson, I know the RHSOE Alumni Association will continue to work for our alumni, our students, and the College under the very capable leadership of our new Executive Committee, led by Cindy Reich ’84, Chair, and Ellen Lefkowitz ’99, Vice Chair.

I believe that they, along with our many alumni leaders, have the creativity and skills necessary to lead us to new heights. I look forward to working with them, and all of you, as Past Chairperson over the next two years.

In addition to the election of new officers:

- Cindy Reich ’84 Chair
- Ellen Lefkowitz ’99 Vice Chair
- Julia Berger ’00 Past Chair

The executive team has now expanded to include:

- Julie Vanek ’88 Alumni Representative to the Board of Governors
- Lisa Langer ’94 Representative to the Council of Alumni Associations
- Rachel Margolis ’07 Representative to the Council of Alumni Associations
- Tamara Lawson Schuster ’92 Communications Chair
BOOK REVIEW

Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms
by Will Richardson

Reviewed by Michelle Shapiro Abraham (’96)

Imagine the following...

- Logging on each day to your RSS feed and finding out about new articles on your favorite websites without having to actually visit each of the sites.

- Creating a blog for each student that is a “virtual portfolio” where their best work and insights are posted on the web using video, music, pictures, and text.

- Having your students take a photo of a holiday celebration, upload it to a website, and create an interactive Jewish tool. When the computer cursor is dragged over the picture, things like “This is a sukkah, click here to learn more about it,” pops-up linking to your students’ writings, pictures and ideas. Then, sharing the site with “pen pals” in Israel who add their own thoughts on each holiday celebration.

If you are anything like me before I read Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and other Powerful Web Tools for the Classroom by Will Richardson (Corwin Press; 2nd edition, 2008), you probably read this list and thought, “where is the tech guy who knows how to do this and how do I hire him?” For most of us, this level of web creation seems far beyond our capabilities. However Richardson, with his easy writing style and “how-to” approach, makes the web accessible for educators of all types.

Now, I feel obligated to offer a warning here. Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and other Powerful Web Tools for the Classroom is not a book you sit quietly and read while highlighting interesting ideas. The book itself is quite short, (only 140 pages) but it took me weeks to complete. By the end of the book, I had visited countless websites and oohed and aahed while scribbling down notes on how to adapt the models to Jewish learning; and I tried my hand at setting up my webpage, my own blog <sholomnirs.blogspot.com>, and manipulating photos on flickr when I should have been working on report cards.

Will Richardson, the author, writes in his introduction,

On many levels it seems we are falling more in danger of being irrelevant to our students’ lives. And so this remains the central message of this book: In order for us to prepare our students for what is without question a future filled with networked learning spaces, we must first experience those environments for ourselves. We must become connected and engaged in learning these new ways if we are to fully understand the pedagogies of using these tools with our students.

While Richardson is writing for secular educators, his message rings true for us as well. We, as Jewish educators, must remain relevant to our students’ lives if we expect Judaism to remain relevant. Richardson does a wonderful job of simplifying the web tools and making them accessible. He does everything from explaining how to make the web “safe” for our students, to supplying specific directions on how to navigate and create (“go to this site and click here…”). In addition to his text, he also supplies website addresses that have been created by teachers and students so you can see what it all looks like in action. In his last chapter, Richardson writes that the classroom of the Read/Write web is one “one of seamless transfer of information, collaborative, individualized learning, and active participation of all members… these technologies are demanding that we reexamine the way we think about content and curriculum and they are nurturing new, important shifts in how to best teach students.” In his book Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and other Powerful Web Tools for the Classroom Will Richardson gives us “practically-computer-illiterate” types the tools to do just that.

So, this summer when the office is quiet, sit down in front of your computer with Richardson’s book in hand and bring yourself in to the 21st century!
Learning from Experience: A New Course at the RHSOE

by Isa Aron, PhD

Going on a quadmester system has given our campus greater flexibility in planning and offering new courses. For example, the Teaching Seminar now begins in August with a 4-day intensive (5 hours each day) that focuses on the lesson planning skills students will need before they begin teaching.

Additionally, in the Fall of 2008, I began teaching a new course one quadmester (half a semester) in duration: “Learning from Experience.”

The best way to explain this course is to quote the Enduring Understandings that I worked out together with the other RHSOE faculty:

• There are a variety of ways to define and conceptualize the process of education. Two that are particularly useful for Jewish education are instruction and enculturation.

• Enculturation, which is broader than instruction, denotes the process by which newcomers are inducted into a culture. Culture, in this formulation, is conceived of very broadly, and includes: knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices and values (KASPV). A culture is strong when there are a range of well-placed veterans to initiate newcomers; and when veterans are themselves well-enculturated. Within a strong culture, the transmission of attitudes, practices, and values does not require any deliberate, self-conscious processes. In its most unselfconscious form, the newcomer simply “absorbs” the APV (as well as a great deal of K and S) as s/he encounters them. In this process, anyone and everyone is a “teacher,” and no particular learning sequence is better than any other. For example, a community that values reading, and in which all adults read for pleasure, in most cases will transmit a love of reading to its children; in many cases, the children will also learn how to read on their own. Conversely, when the culture is weak, the transmission of attitudes, practices, and beliefs is not automatic, and there a much thinner context to situate and support new knowledge and skills. Such is, of course, the case of non-Orthodox Jewish culture in North America.

• Instruction, on the other hand, is the deliberate, formalized process of handing over elements of the culture by those designated as “teachers” to those designated as “students.” In complex societies such as our own, enculturation may not be sufficient to transmit extensive knowledge and elaborate skills. For these, a more self-conscious and formalized process of instruction is necessary, as well as a designated place, like a school. In this process, the “teachers” determine the knowledge and skills to be learned, and the most efficient way to transmit them.

• Enculturation and instruction are not antithetical. Rather, it is helpful to think of them as a series of nested processes. Enculturation is the broadest framework; but when the culture is complex, there is a need for instruction as well. However, the knowledge and skills transmitted through instruction will only “stick” when they are appreciated and utilized on a regular basis. To create an environment that appreciates and utilizes K and S, successful teachers often use the techniques of enculturation. This type of education often goes by the name of experiential education.

• John Dewey was among the first to argue that all learning should be grounded in experience. Following Dewey, “progressive education” is the approach that attempts to create experiences for learners using the arts, inquiry, and various simulations.

• Not all experience, however, is educational. Dewey, and subsequent theorists, enumerated a number of principles as the hallmark for educational experiences:

  — the experience should whet the students’ appetites for additional experiences;

  — it should bring the student into meaningful interaction with the environment, rather than proceeding in isolation;

  — the students should have an opportunity to reflect on the experience, and its significance.

continued on page 5
We will use these criteria and 6-10 others suggested by various educators, to consider the educative various programs are.

- Because so much of Jewish education centers on attitudes, practices and belief, American Jews have, for at least a century, been cognizant of the insufficiency of the schooling/instructional paradigm, and have sought to supplement it with a variety of experiential settings, most notably summer camps, retreats, Israel trips and family education. These are usually grouped together under the category of “informal education.” These settings and formats have attempted to simulate the kind of enculturation that otherwise might have taken place naturally.

- More recently, many have argued that Jewish schools themselves need to be seen primarily as agents of enculturation, transmitting attitudes, practices, and beliefs, in addition to knowledge and skills. Because of this, experiential education modalities have increasingly been incorporated into Jewish schools.

- Most recently, new experiential education settings/modalities have sprouted up, including museums, the wilderness, service learning, and online learning.

The course focuses on three essential questions:

1. What factors make experiential education as educative as possible?
2. To what extent is experiential learning best for all students?
3. What is the appropriate mix of instruction and enculturation in various Jewish educational settings?

I taught the course for the first time during the November-December quadmester of 2008. The students and I all enjoyed it a great deal. The students worked in pairs to do presentations on settings such as camp, retreats, and service learning. They were asked to investigate a range of options for each setting, and to consider what was educative and mis-educative in each permutation. At the end of the course, we had a guest lecture (via e-learning) by Professor Joseph Reimer, director of the Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University. It was a great finish to a wonderful quad.

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**Mazel Tov!**

Congratulations to Sharon Amster Brown (’00) and her husband, Adam, on the birth of their son, Levi Saul.

Mazal Tov to Jennifer Clayman (’01) and Rabbi John Fishman on the birth of a healthy baby boy, who arrived March 31, 2009.

Mazal Tov to Cheri Ellowitz (’82) on the graduation of her daughter, Talya Silver, from The University of California at Davis.

Madelyn Mishkin Katz (’84) happily announces that she passed her Final Orals at UCLA and has earned her Ed.D.! Her dissertation topic was “Defining Leadership for the Reform Rabbinate,” which brought out some very interesting and valuable findings from LA ordinees (2002-2007) regarding how they experience leadership in their rabbinate.

Congratulations to Nina Price (’02) on her acceptance to next year’s Jerusalem Fellows program.

Lali Ray, (MAJE ’78), recently reached the age of wisdom, 80 years young and still going strong. She was joined in celebration with family and friends from all over the world and from many parts of the United States. The grand occasion took place in Minneapolis on June 14. Our fellow alum, Janice Alper created a wonderful and imaginative page of Talmud to celebrate this event. If you wish to share this piece, please contact Debbie Niederman at <dniederman@huc.edu> and she will send you copy.

Micol Zimmerman (’08) and Rabbi Danny Burkeman were married on May 3rd in Dallas, TX. Micol and Danny first met three and a half years ago in their Reform theology class at HUC in Jerusalem. They are moving to London to work at the West London Synagogue of British Jews.

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**Zichronam Livracha**

With sadness we report the death of our colleague, friend and fellow alum Lesley Chapman (’95) who died on April 7. We are grateful to Professor, Dr. William Cutter, who led an azkara and study conference call on May 18th in her memory.

Our hearts go out to the family of Julia Berger (’00). Her father, Howard Phillips, was hit by a car on June 4 and he died on the way to the hospital. May his memory be for a blessing.
Connecting Up with ECE

by Tamara Lustgarten Gropper (’94)

It’s funny where life takes you. One minute you’re folding the latest load in the seemingly infinite quantity of laundry your children produce, and the next you’re on the phone with Dr. Rob Weinberg, Director of the Experiment in Congregational Education discussing the possibility of coming on board as a consultant in a new initiative called the RE-IMAGINE Project of New York. At least that’s how it happened for me. I have the great fortune of being one in a long list of RHSOE alumni tapped to share their experience and skills with an organization that seeks to challenge the core assumptions of what congregational education can be and then provides the tools and support required to turn that vision into a reality.

The success of the ECE depends upon the willingness of ECE staff and the congregations with whom they work to, quite literally, experiment, to test out new possibilities emerging within the field. So it is no coincidence that many RHSOE alumni find themselves drawn to ECE-related work. We bring with us a culture of reflection and innovation, of scholarship and rich experience in the field. We have been speaking the language of educational leadership from our first days at the college, and we understand the importance of integrating current research from the world of secular education and organizational change with our own.

In the beginning, the ECE worked with two cohorts of seven congregations each in varied locations around the country. Next came work with several congregations in Kansas City followed by the DrEAMRS Consortium, the San Francisco based Innovative Models of the Religious School, and The RE-IMAGINE Project of New York. In all, 79 congregations across the denominations have participated in ECE projects and initiatives directly, with a far greater number benefiting indirectly from the learning derived from ongoing assessment and evaluation of the same. Currently the ECE is involved in the New York metropolitan area with LOMED (Learner Outcomes and Measurement for Effective educational Design), The RE-IMAGINE Project of Los Angeles, Congregational Education for the 21st Century in Washington, DC, and is experimenting with working on an individual basis with two California congregations interested in RE IMAGINing their educational offerings. ECE Director, Dr. Rob Weinberg, Assistant Director, Amy Asin, and Senior Advisor, Dr. Isa Aron, speak around the country on a wide variety of issues related to ongoing innovation in a Jewish educational context. And the work goes on with new initiatives being created to meet each newly identified educational or organizational need.

Fortunately for all of us, this work doesn’t occur in a vacuum. As Isa Aron describes it, “The ECE and its success have served as a proof-text that congregational education can change in significant ways.” Rob, Amy and Cyd Weissman, former director of the RE-IMAGINE Project of NY, have all been guest speakers in courses at the RHSOE, sharing what they have learned from the real-time experiences of congregations engaged in the work of the ECE. Cyd Weissman led a seminar for the clinical faculty based on the New York area Professional Learning Pilot, and Amy Asin led the Sara S. Lee Colloquium for students and clinical faculty based on the ECE and its work at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills (of which she is a past-president). These examples represent the evolving relationship between the ECE and its institutional home, the RHSOE. As Dr. Michael Zeldin explains, “My vision of the RHSOE includes that all the parts of the school communicate and benefit from the others. This means that the ECE would be cross-fertilizing with the faculty and students in the MA, with the Tartak and with the alumni.”

After working with the ECE for five and a half years, I have to admit that my life still involves folding laundry. But I remain deeply grateful to have been given the opportunity to expand my professional horizons as a member of a team of consultants working to build capacity within congregations hungry for far-reaching and enduring change in their congregational cultures and in the learning experiences they provide to all their members.
From the Alumni Affairs Coordinator

Deborah Niederman ('93)

It has been a wonderful and challenging year for the RHSOE Alumni Association. As we all know, the College-Institute has faced unprecedented budgetary challenges this year. Despite these challenges, the RHSOE Alumni Association continues to serve as a model and inspiration for the College-Institute, our commitment to the College.

This year we marked many accomplishments; our Day of Learning in November, with fellow alumni present at both the NY and LA campus represented our largest professional development gathering ever. With great pride we announced in May that Julie Vanek ('88) was appointed the first ever non-rabbinic alum to the HUC-JIR Board of Governors and we are delighted to announce that we have also appointed our first-ever alum to the LA Campus Board of Overseers, Melissa Buyer ('00).

We have continued to expand our association and its work with your assistance. Through regular review of our mission statement we continually add new working groups and revise our work in order to best serve the needs of our alumni. This year we add another, with the Web-Site Working Group, which will be chaired by Michelle Shapiro Abraham ('96). Watch for announcements about regular updates and additions to our alumni web-site. As always, if you wish to be involved in any of these important projects or have ideas for other projects, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our executive. Our Sustaining Alumni Education Working Group has expanded to welcome the Kallah working group. The goal is to work together to provide comprehensive annual plans and opportunities for alumni learning. Our Membership Working Group is splitting into two with the creation of the Membership Services Working Group and the Membership Outreach Working Group. We are once again undertaking the task of creating and completing an alumni survey which will help us better understand and serve our alumni.

In order to welcome more alumni into our leadership and to create more leadership develop opportunities, we are expanding our executive to include two new representatives to the HUC-JIR Council of Alumni Associations (Lisa Langer and Rachel Margolis) and have added the position of Communications Chair which will be held by Tamara Lawson Schuster.

Despite the challenges that the College-Institute faces, we continue to plan with great enthusiasm for the upcoming year. In October we will welcome our first ever Dr. William Cutter Educator in Residence, fellow alum Dr. Debby Kerdeman to the LA Campus. Our newly expanded Sustaining Alumni Education Working Group is developing a full year of learning opportunities. Watch for details. We are thrilled that our Social Media Working Group will be offering webinars for those new to social media and those who are anxious to learn ways that this technology can enhance our professional practice.

I hope this newsletter finds you relaxing and enjoying the summer. We look forward to another event-filled year working, learning and growing together.
**RABBI BARRY MICHAEL LUTZ**  
**DOCTOR OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, honors causa**  
Innovative educator  
- Who has been blessed to serve Temple Ahavat Shalom, Northridge, California, first as Director of Education, and now as its rabbi, for the past twenty-five years  
- Who has successfully combined his skills as an educator with that of his rabbinic training to create a meaningful educational experience as well as a warm and welcoming environment to his congregants  
- Who has been nationally recognized as an educator by leading boards and councils earning him the respect and admiration of his colleagues  
- Whose bonds of loyalty to his alma mater has found expression as a member of the clinical faculty of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education  
- And whose personal passion for Torah, connection to God and Kedusha has enriched his life

**CYNTHIA F. REICH**  
**DOCTOR OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, honors causa**  
Gifted educator  
- Whose devotion to the ideals of Tikkun Olam have directed the course of her life  
- Whose dedication to the community-at-large and especially to Jewish education and continuity has found expression as a Jewish educational consultant  
- Who as a compassionate day school principal listened, coached and encouraged teachers and parents  
- And who as co-chair of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education Alumni Association shows her abiding commitment to her alma mater

**LORI B. SAGARIN**  
**DOCTOR OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, honors causa**  
Committed educator  
- Who as Director of Congregational Learning at Temple Beth Israel, Skokie, Illinois, for more than a decade, has shared the meaning and message of Judaism  
- Who is a vibrant member of the Reform movement, as she serves on various educational commissions and advisory boards, including her alma mater, and as president of the National Association of Temple Educators  
- And who has been awarded the title, Reform Jewish Educator, a reflection of the high esteem in which she is held by her colleagues in the Reform movement

**We welcome the newest alumni joining our ranks:**  
- Rachel Ackerman  
- Melissa (Missy) Bell  
- Matthew (Matt) Kahn  
- Luisa Moss  
- Jordana (Jordi) Schuster  
- Laura Siegel  
- Jake Singer-Beilin  
- Rebekah Stern  
- Emily Walsh  
- Julia Atlas Weisz

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**RHSOE Executive Committee 2009-2011/5769**

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