

News from the Director

by Richard S. Sarason, PhD, Director, Pines School of Graduate Studies



Dr. Richard S. Sarason

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends of the Pines School of Graduate Studies,

I write these lines as we come off the weekend of Purim, the joyful Jewish holiday when, like Carnival/Mardi Gras that it has come to emulate, everything is turned topsy-turvy. This year, that topsy-turviness also bore a special poignance, since it marked the one-year anniversary of our shutdown at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion on account of COVID. (Last year, Purim fell on March 10, and that is when we closed the campus here in Cincinnati.) Despite the strangeness of the past year, during which our learning community has been entirely online, we have been doing our utmost to maintain both the strength of our learning and the strength of our interpersonal connections as a community. As you will see from Julia Olson's piece in this newsletter, the Graduate Student Association has sponsored numerous opportunities to cultivate both social and academic engagement. So, too, I have reached out to our new students via telephone or Zoom several times throughout the year to compensate for the informal social interactions in physical proximity that we have all been missing this year (though we hope to be able to do some things outside in small groups with proper social distancing once the weather gets better).

I am pleased to share that the College-Institute administration and IT team have devoted a lot of time and attention this year to supporting faculty teaching and student learning online. The library staff has also been working hard to make books and other circulating print

resources available, as well as providing access to more electronic resources. In the meantime, Zoom has allowed us this year to make connections between our alumni and our current graduate students over physical distances. In November, we held a Zoom reception for alumni, students, and faculty in the context of this year's virtual American Academy of Religion-Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting that was very well attended by all constituencies. President Andrew Rehfeld, Provost Andrea Weiss, and Mrs. Joan Pines all brought greetings. Alumni and current students had the opportunity to meet and converse together in breakout rooms. Although we have not been able to host an in-person alum-in-residence this year, we have been holding a number of online professional workshops for our students conducted by alumni. In the fall, Dr. Angela Erisman led a session on how to use a writing template when composing articles. We anticipate additional workshops this semester.

We are now making admissions decisions for next year. I am pleased to report a very healthy yield of good quality applications. Our total number of applicants in fact has gone up from last year; COVID has had no negative effect in this regard.

We anticipate awarding between two and five PhDs in May (some dissertations are completed; others are nearing

An Invitation

Open House
With HUC-JIR President
Dr. Andrew Rehfeld



Dr. Andrew Rehfeld

**Wednesday,
March 17
3-4:30 PM ET**

**Click Here
to Join Us!**

Meeting ID: 992 2013 9258

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completion) and hope to be able to convene an in-person graduation ceremony in October for both this year's and last year's graduates, at which time they will all be hooded. We also will be awarding five MPhils and one MAJS.

Program directors and campus deans have been making informative video presentations to our donors this year. The presentation on the Pines School of Graduate Studies was made in early February and was very well received. It featured video clips of interviews with students in all our graduate programs. A huge shout-out to Chelsea Simon, our alumni program manager and dissertation student, who helped conceive the program and edited the videos.

The College-Institute has been working on a complete revision of its website. The PSGS has been involved in that process, with both alumni and student representatives participating. We also hope to provide more materials (including an annotated catalogue of publications by our alumni) that will be useful to you on the PSGS alumni pages. Hélène Dallaire and Michael Graves will be in touch with you about that.

PSGS alumni have been invited to a virtual open house with President Rehfeld on Wednesday, March 17, from 3:00 to 4:30 PM ET. (Find the link on page 1.) We hope you will all be there for this important opportunity to meet and talk with our president.

I have been gratified to see the number of alumni who have stepped up to the plate this year and made contributions to our scholarship fund—this money goes directly to supporting graduate student living stipends. If you have not yet done so, please consider making a contribution in any amount. We appreciate your generosity and your ongoing concern for the welfare of our current and future students, whom you continue to send our way. Thank you.



Our alumni get-together at the annual AAR-SBL meeting wasn't the same this year, meeting as we had to on November 29 virtually. But at least, we were able to see each other's faces. And this bonus: HUC-JIR President Andrew Rehfeld was able to join us!

Governor's Report

by James E. Bowley, PhD, Governor, HUC-JIR



Dr. James E. Bowley

Greetings, Fellow Alumni, from the Board of Governors!

We just had our February board meeting, which should have been in sunny Los Angeles, but instead was in dark, gloomy La Zoom. (Is anyone else so tired of “virtual” [=fake?] meetings?)

Like all your institutions, I'm sure, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is dealing with the pandemic *and* trying to do its “real work,” too. We are working on a new strategic plan, being driven by our

president, Andrew Rehfeld, and working on many details that involve most everything relating to our beloved College-Institute. I'm glad to say that one of “us,” John Kampen, is playing a major role as a chairperson of the committee looking at our libraries. I cannot stress enough that now is a time to support your HUC-JIR and do it in a very “loud” and public manner by attending the virtual open house with President Andrew Rehfeld on March 17.

Here's hoping for health for all of yours and thanking you in advance for all the support you give to HUC-JIR!

James E. Bowley, PhD ('92), is Professor of Religious Studies and chair of the department at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS.

Virtual Meetings Expand Opportunities to Meet

By Julia Olson, Vice President, Graduate Student Association



Julia Olson

This past year has been a year unlike any other for most of us here at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati. On top of the already difficult work of pursuing a graduate degree, we students were suddenly shifted entirely to online courses, isolating ourselves from the growing pandemic and hoping that staying home would help flatten the

curve. Despite what has been a very trying year, the Pines School of Graduate Studies has provided us with many opportunities to reach out to one another and participate in events meant to bring us closer together even though we may be far apart.

For example, this year the American Academy of Religion-Society of Biblical Literature conference was, like many other conferences during this time, held online. At previous AAR-SBL conferences, there has been an HUC-JIR alumni luncheon, which current students who attend the

conference are invited to join. This year, the opportunity to attend this gathering was made available to all PSGS students, even those who had not registered for and were not virtually attending the conference. This provided an opportunity for many of us, who otherwise would not have had the chance, to converse with the large group of HUC-JIR professors and alumni in attendance.

The event was organized into several different chat rooms, which allowed for the group to be broken up into smaller groups according to categories like our field of interest, physical location, etc. This way, we were able to have more intimate conversations with small groups of people. This was a wonderful opportunity to engage with members of the community who live across the country and throughout the world. I was introduced to many new people and reconnected with other alumni as well. It is likely that, even if we had been meeting in the same room, I might not have had as many opportunities for conversation with the participants as I did online. The online event paved the way for students of all ages and backgrounds to participate in AAR-SBL, which is truly a privilege to experience. The virtual gathering for HUC-JIR alumni and current students is one way that online platforms have expanded opportunities for students.

The Graduate Student Association is also working on ways to bridge the gap between our monthly meetings and to have virtual social events so that we can communicate with each other outside of the classroom. Hara Jun, the president of GSA, has been organizing events such as “Bible and Beer,” in which she invites a student who is in the dissertation phase of their work to talk about their research and to answer questions and offer tips to students who are writing dissertation proposals or going through preparation for comprehensive exams. She was even able to organize one outdoor, in-person (socially distanced) gathering! As a student preparing for comps myself, I am eternally grateful for these opportunities to consult with my fellow students and learn about different studying strategies. Because the events are virtual, the meetings are open to any number of



All get-togethers do not have to be virtual, as GSA's Bible and Beer function hosted outside on the Cincinnati campus on October 22, 2020, shows!

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HUC-JIR students who are living all over the country. There is no way we could have such attendance if these events were in-person. Though the pandemic has forced all our activities online, it has also equalized the opportunity for engagement and opened new pathways for communication that otherwise might not have been possible. I am so grateful to have creative leadership in a time like this, leaders who not only encourage us to keep the lines of communication open but who see opportunities based on the use of virtual platforms.

At the beginning of the academic year, members of the Rabbinical and Graduate Student Associations put together a Shabbaton event, meant to welcome new students and celebrate the beginning of a new semester. The event featured “get to know you” games such as trivia and bingo, while also including learning opportunities like lectures co- led by students and professors. Over the course of two days, we came together virtually at different times to meet new students, to learn together, and to kick off our new semester. Though it would have been wonderful to be physically on campus, we were able to bring the celebration online and engage creatively with one another.

Despite the many challenges that full-time education in a pandemic world has presented, the HUC-JIR community has managed to overcome them and to foster meaningful interactions through our online platforms. It would be so easy to feel totally alone and isolated during all of this, confined to seeing our friends and professors only during class time. However, the HUC-JIR community has risen to the challenge and allowed for spaces of socialization that are a huge relief in a time of such uncertainty. I look forward to every online gathering as a chance to see my friends, to share updates about our lives, and to plan for the future when we will once again be together. I am so grateful for the creativity of my colleagues here at HUC-JIR, because it is that creativity that has generated so many spaces for us to be together virtually.

Your Support is Needed


Alumni support is *vital* for funding student fellowships. Our spendable annual endowment income does not fully cover the aggregate cost of tuition that the Pines School of Graduate Studies pays to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion each year. Additionally, student stipends are funded entirely out of annual fundraising and contributions. Our goal is to accept more qualified PhD students to the PSGS, but without generous alumni support the number of students that we can fund remains limited.

Please consider a gift specifically designated to the PSGS Scholarship Fund, which supports PhD student stipends. Help us to invest in our current and future students, just as we have invested in each one of you. Every dollar that you contribute goes *directly* to student financial support. You can donate by mail (your check must specify that this is a gift to the PSGS Scholarship Fund) or online at <https://donate.huc.edu/cngrad>.

Graduate student tuition and candidacy fees are supported by endowed scholarship funds that are earmarked for this purpose. A PSGS scholarship endowment fund has been established in honor of Dr. Richard Sarason, the director of PSGS, and we are making good progress in raising its principal. If you wish additionally to contribute to this fund, you should make out a separate check and specify the Sarason Endowed Scholarship Fund on the memo line. You can also contribute to this fund online at <https://donate.huc.edu/cngrad>, but you *must specify* the Sarason Endowed Scholarship Fund in the comment box. For questions, contact Shelly Goldfarb, PSGS Administrative Assistant, at 513.487.3230 or gradschool@huc.edu.

We need your support!

by Michael Graves, PhD, Co-President, PSGS Alumni Association



Last November, H  l  ne Dallaire,
president of the PSGS Alumni
Association, invited me to serve as
co-president to help support her in
her work. As I am deeply thankful for
my experience as a graduate student
at HUC-JIR, I was honored to accept.
I will now be serving alongside
H  l  ne in this role. If you have ideas,
concerns related to the work of the Pines
Studies Alumni Association, please
reach out either to H  l  ne ([helenedallaire@
huc.edu](mailto:helenedallaire@huc.edu)) or to me ([michael.graves@wheaton.
edu](mailto:michael.graves@wheaton.edu)). We are both grateful for the
part of this community.

One distinctive aspect of the PSGS for which I am especially thankful is its combination of *Wissenschaft* (an academic approach to understanding) and Jewish learning (broadly construed). I learned at HUC-JIR to apply critical scholarship to historical, philological, and religious

Three important items that were mentioned in the fall 2020 newsletter remain in development. These are:

- (1) We would like to expand the leadership of the PSGS Alumni Association. This would include adding members to the PSGS Alumni Association executive team and giving alumni opportunities to serve on working groups (e.g., recruitment, continuing education, fundraising). Please let us know if you are interested.
- (2) We have plans to update and develop the PSGS Alumni Association mentorship program. This would involve connecting you (our alumni) with current students, to encourage them in their academic progress and be a dialogue partner on subjects such as publishing a journal article. Now that so many of us are on Zoom, it will be easier to stay connected! As we are organizing this initiative, please let us know if you are interested in coming alongside one of our current graduate students.
- (3) We want to encourage alumni to stay connected by helping to organize PSGS alumni engagement events regionally. Perhaps you would like to help organize a gathering of PSGS alumni in your area? If so, please contact Shelly Goldfarb (sgoldfarb@huc.edu) or Chelsea Simon (csimon@huc.edu) for a list of HUC-JIR alumni in your area.
- (4) The Alumni Association continues its work towards developing an annotated bibliography of all publications by PSGS alumni. Graduates of the PSGS are prolific writers. Our goal is to develop a bank of resources (publications) to adopt as textbooks, to integrate into personal research, and to recommend to scholars in our respective fields. We will eventually send you a request

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for an annotated list (one or two sentences) of your publications to be added to our PSGS bibliography.

More Ongoing and Upcoming News

Progress continues to be made on reconfiguring the PSGS website as part of HUC-JIR's global reconstruction of its website. Our hope is that the new website will include enhanced resources that will be useful for our students and alumni and also help promote publications by our alumni and other alumni-related endeavors. The Alumni Association Leadership Council met in January to discuss matters pertaining to HUC-JIR as a whole. We received an update on institutional strategic planning and were able to provide

feedback. Issues in recruitment and enrollment were also discussed. Aspects of these conversations especially relevant to the Graduate School will be taken up in the PSGS Alumni Association meeting in late March. Lastly, on March 17, 3:00-4:30 PM ET, there will be an open house where PSGS alumni will have the opportunity to engage in conversation with HUC-JIR President Andrew Rehfeld. Along with having received an announcement for this event with the Zoom link, you will find a link on page 1. *We highly encourage PSGS alumni to join us in this important conversation.*

Michael Graves, PhD ('06), is the Armerding Professor of Biblical Studies at Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL.

Presentations, Publications & Other News

PRESENTATIONS

Conference on Categories and Boundaries in Second Temple Jewish Literature: Sponsored by the Midlands 4 Cities (Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham) Doctoral Training Partnership

R. Thomas Murphy | "Scribes, Authority, and the Intertexture of the Admonition of CD: A Case Study."

PUBLICATIONS

Lawrence A. Englander | *The Prince of Healers*. Historical fiction based on the life of Maimonides. Library and Archives Canada and Amazon, 2021.

Blake Hearson | *Go Now to Shiloh: A Biblical Theology of Sacred Space*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020.

Audrey Korotkin | "T'filah Zakah: A Yom Kippur Eve Self-Evaluation from Head to Toe." *CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly* 66/4 (Fall 2019). Pg. 193-206.

David Musgrave | Editor, with John Young, and Daniel H. Fletcher. *Living and Active Word: A Symposium by the Faculty of the Turner School of Theology, Amridge University*. Montgomery, AL: Amridge University Press, 2020.

"Introduction" and "Making Application of Biblical Hebrew" in *Living and Active Word*. Pg. 1-2, 33-48.

Benjamin J. Noonan | "High-Handed Sin and the Promised Land: The Rhetorical Relationship between Law and Narrative in Numbers 15." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 45.1 (2020). Pg. 79-92.

"The Patriarchs' Altar-Building as Anticipation of the Israelite Conquest" in *For Us, But Not to Us: Essays on Creation, Covenant, and Context in Honor of John H. Walton*. Edited by Adam E. Miglio, Caryn A. Reeder, Joshua T. Walton, and Kenneth C. Way. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020. Pg. 254-275.

"Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: A Lexicon of Language Contact" in *The Ancient Near East Today: Current News about the Ancient Near East* 8.6/2 (June 2020). <http://www.asor.org/anetoday/2020/06/loanwords-hebrew-bible>.

Kerry M. Olitzky | *Avi and Ahmed Play Football in Jerusalem's Sacher Park*. London: Dixi Books, 2020.

David L. Turner | "His Glorious Throne: Israel and the Gentiles in Mission and Judgment in the Gospel of Matthew" in *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel*. Edited by Anders Runesson and Daniel Gurtner. ECL 27. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020. Pg. 135-68.

Interpreting the Gospels and Acts. Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019.

"Israel's Last Prophet: Matt 23:29-36 and the Intertextual Basis of Matthew's Rejected Prophet Christology" in *New Studies in Textual Interplay*. Edited by C. A. Evans et al. LNTS 632. London: T&T Clark, 2021. Pg. 75-93.

Gary P. Zola and Mark A. Raider | *New Perspectives in American Jewish History: A Documentary Tribute to Jonathan D. Sarna*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2021.

NEWS

Kerry M. Olitzky designed and crafted a mezuzah that has been installed in the Holocaust Center at Wagner College, Staten Island, NY.



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