

Academy for Jewish Religion | CA

Serving as a bridge between the pillars of Judaism

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AJR, CA is a transdenominational, pluralistic institution dedicated to the training of rabbis, cantors, and chaplains. Our mission is to develop religious leaders steeped in Torah wisdom and tradition, and capable of transforming Jewish communities into places where all Jews can grow toward wholeness and well-being.



News briefs from...

The Rabbinical School

Dr. Clara Zillberstein, the new “Sabina J. Teubal Lecturer in Jewish Women’s Studies,” is teaching “Biblical Archetypes: The Women of Tanach.” Steve Breuer, the former Executive Director of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, is teaching a course on “Synagogue Management.”

The Cantorial School

Cantor Jay Frailich has joined the faculty as Professor of Liturgical Studies. Since 1974, Cantor Frailich has served as the Cantor of University Synagogue; a Reform congregation with over 500 member families in Brentwood.

The Chaplaincy Program

Under the guidance of Rabbi Rochelle Robins, the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) course is flourishing. By taking the CPE course, our students gain units required for working in specific hospitals such as UCLA Medical Center, Mattel Children’s Hospital and Providence St. Joseph Medical Center.

Now More Than Ever

In a poll conducted by Gallup and USA Today in late September, seventy-three percent of those surveyed said “U.S. financial troubles will get worse before they get better. They expect their taxes to go up, and many worry about affording retirement or maintaining their standard of living. Nearly half worry about their homes losing value.” The current anxiety prevalent among so many makes what we are doing here at the Academy all the more important.

One of our major priorities is to make certain that our graduates are well equipped to help those they serve, in both good times and bad. Reflecting that philosophy, AJR, CA rabbinical, cantorial and chaplaincy students receive significant training in spiritual counseling through such courses as “Art of Counseling,” “Crisis Intervention,” “Job,” “Spirituality and Torah,” “Laws of Bikkur Cholim and Lifecycle,” and “Clinical Pastoral Education.” As a result, they are better able to provide those who come to them for help with greater internal resources to deal with adversity; to counter feelings of anxiety and anguish; and to give those who are in pain a greater sense of G-d’s presence being with them.

The ability of spiritual leaders to bring a sense of healing and restoring the spirit of those who are suffering is always important and, in these difficult times, even more so. With that in mind, the Academy will continue to provide the Jewish community with spiritual leaders who are able to do just that.

Jacob Zigelboim, MD
Chair, Board of Directors

Rabbi Stan Levy, JD
Vice Chair, Board of Directors

Tamar Frankiel, PhD
Dean, Academic Affairs

Hazzan Eva Robbins, '04
Director, Admissions and Recruitment

Rabbi Mel Gottlieb, PhD
President and CEO
Dean, Rabbinical School and Chaplaincy Program

Hazzan Nathan Lam
Dean, Cantorial School

Cantor Perryne Anker
Assistant Dean, Cantorial School

Rabbi Lynn Brody
Director, Placement and Internships

Alumni Making an Impact

The Academy is tremendously proud of the impact that our Alumni are making nationwide. In this issue, we profile two dynamic and accomplished individuals whose work is bringing a deeper understanding of Judaism to Jews and non-Jews alike.



Rabbi Julia Watts Belser, PhD, '07

Current Position:

Assistant Professor of Judaism in the Religious Studies department at Missouri State University, in Springfield, MO.

Making an Impact:

Teaching and developing new courses for approximately 120 undergraduate and graduate

students, including “Judaism: History, Culture & Religion,” “Paths of World Religions,” “Religion and the Environment,” and “Midrash, Talmud and the Jewish Bible.”



Cantor Judy Greenfeld, '04

Current Position:

Founder and Spiritual leader of the Nachshon Minyan in Encino, CA.

Making an Impact:

Actively reaching out to the unaffiliated in the San Fernando Valley with Shabbat and holiday services, a new monthly yoga service, weekly

adult Torah Study classes, a children’s Hebrew School, B’nei Mitzvah classes and the “Sermons for the Soul” lecture series.

Weekly “D’var Torah” Just a Click Away

On Friday, October 24th, the entire AJR, CA email list received the first of a weekly email with a link to our new website page: “Parsha of the Week.” By clicking the link, www.ajrca.org/parsha_of_the_week.shtml, people have the opportunity to read a D’var Torah (literally meaning “a word of Torah”), or a brief discourse, on the weekly Torah portion. Each D’var Torah is being written by an AJR, CA-affiliated faculty member, administrator or alumni.

In announcing this new project, AJR, CA President, Rabbi Mel Gottlieb said “It is our hope that you, the dear members of our AJR, CA family, will find the teachings and insights in each D’var Torah to be personally meaningful and relevant. May this add to the beauty of your Shabbat!”

If you would like to receive the weekly email, please contact the Academy at office@ajrca.org.



Board of Directors Welcomes Three New Members

The Academy is fortunate to be led by a group of highly accomplished men and women who work tirelessly to further our mission. The most recent individuals to have been elected to join the Board exemplify professional excellence and civic commitment.

Michael Berger, Esq. is one of California’s preeminent appellate lawyers and is Co-Chair of Manatt, Phelps and Phillip’s Appellate Practice Group. Named by *Los Angeles Magazine* and *Law & Politics* magazine as one of Southern California’s “Super lawyers” and among the “Best Attorneys in Southern California,” he also serves as Vice President and member of the Board of Directors of the Malibu Jewish Center and Synagogue.

Rabbi Laura Owens, '08 received her ordination from AJR, CA’s Rabbinical School and now serves as the Associate Rabbi of Congregation B’nai Horin in Los Angeles. Prior to the rabbinate, she spent most of her adult life as an actress and was one of the Artistic Directors of the award-winning MET Theatre for almost twenty years. Actively involved in many worthwhile organizations, she was honored by The Wellness Community in 2007 as the recipient of their “Human Spirit Award.”

Marvin Rapaport, MD is a Board certified Clinical Professor of Dermatology at UCLA Medical Center as well as an Attending Chief, Dermatology Division at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. An accomplished author and lecturer, he was part of the clinical faculty teaching in the “Doctoring Program” at UCLA; a program which aims to teach medical students how to address the complex medical, psychological, cultural and spiritual challenges associated with the experience of illness.

New Appointments

Reflecting the caliber and reputation of our graduates, a number of AJR, CA alumni have recently assumed new leadership positions nationwide. Rabbi Jeffrey Lipschultz, '07 now serves as the Rabbi of Beth Judah Temple, a Conservative synagogue in Wildwood, NJ. Rabbi Cheryl Weiner, PhD, '07 is the new Director of Education for the Reform Congregation Beth El in Berkeley, CA. Rabbi and Cantor Osnat Margalith, '07, '08 is now the spiritual leader of

Temple Beth Sholom, a Conservative synagogue in Chula Vista, CA. Rabbi Diane Elliot, '06 has become the spiritual leader of the Aquarian Minyan in Berkeley, CA which is affiliated with the Jewish Renewal movement. Rabbi Lynn Brody, '05 is now AJR, CA's Director of Placement and Internships and Rabbi Paula Marcus, '04 has been promoted from Assistant to Associate Rabbi of Temple Beth El, a Reform congregation in Aptos, California.



Authors and Honors

In recent months, several Academy-affiliated individuals have been published or received recognition for their achievements. AJR, CA President, Rabbi Mel Gottlieb, PhD authored a chapter entitled "The Hebrew Letters" in the recently published book *Illuminating Letters* edited by Elizabeth Fergus-Jean (Art and Psyche Press, 2008) and Rabbi Paul Shleffar, '06 authored *Kol Elimelech: Chasidic Wisdom for Our Time* (AuthorHouse, 2008). In addition, Chaplain D'vorah Epstein, '06 was chosen from over 2300 employees to receive "The Mission Spirit Award" by Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, CA. Mazal Tov to all!



Accreditation Organization Visits AJR, CA Campus

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States. Having already passed the "eligibility" and "capacity preparatory" phases of the accreditation process, Academy representatives recently participated in a series of on-campus meetings with WASC officials, a requirement of the third or "educational effectiveness" phase of the four-part process. During these meetings, held on October 26th to 28th, the WASC officials met with the Academy's Administration as

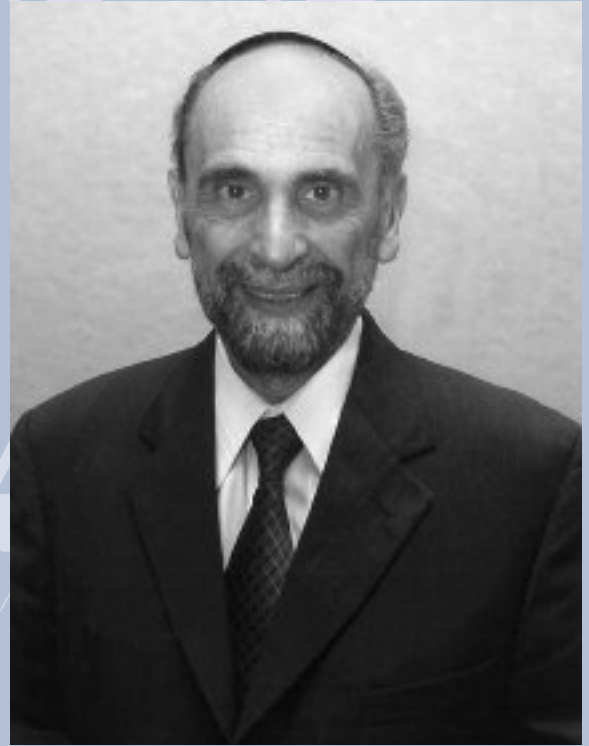
well as select members of the faculty, students and Board of Directors. In summarizing the meetings, AJR, CA President Rabbi Mel Gottlieb said, "It was very positive with the WASC officials noting our enthusiasm, hard work and substantive progress addressing the issues raised during their previous visit in 2006. I would like to thank everyone involved, with particular recognition and deep appreciation to Dr. Tamar Frankiel who has worked tirelessly as the Academy's liaison to WASC." The official decision on "educational effectiveness" will be given in February 2009.

If you know of an institution/organization that is interested in hiring an AJR, CA Rabbinic, Cantorial or Chaplaincy student intern or graduate, please contact Rabbi Lynn Brody, Director of Placement and Internships, at 310-824-1586.

AJR, CA LAUNCHES FACULTY LECTURE SERIES

"Unsurpassed," "inspiring," "supportive," and "respectful." In a survey of AJR, CA students and alumni, these were the most common terms used by respondents in describing their teachers. The Academy is indeed fortunate to have attracted an illustrious, committed and passionate faculty and, in an effort to highlight that fact, it recently held the first of a three-part Faculty Lecture Series that was open to the Los Angeles Jewish community. On November 18th, Rabbi Elijah Schochet, PhD, spoke on the topic "Who Shall Live and Who Shall Die: Jewish Medical Ethics in the 21st Century." Acclaimed author of 7 books, renowned scholar and AJR, CA Professor of Rabbinics, Rabbi Schochet served for 39 years as the Rabbi of Shomrei Torah Synagogue in West Hills, CA.

The second and third lectures in the Faculty series are scheduled for February and May 2009 with more information to follow.



phone: 310.824.1586 | email: office@ajrca.org | www.ajrca.org



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The Yitzhak Rabin Hillel Center for Jewish Life at UCLA
574 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024