



NEJS Department Newsletter

Anne Lawrence, NEJS Fixture Retires

As hard as it may have been to imagine NEJS and Lown 211 without Anne, one needed only to look at the numerous pictures of Anne's two



grandsons on her desk and screen saver, not to mention the way her eyes lit up as she talked about little Micah and Oliver, to know that as much as Anne was tuned into keeping the NEJS machine running smoothly, her heart was also

elsewhere. This past December, it finally happened, as Anne retired—after serving 11 years in NEJS and 20 overall at Brandeis—to begin the next stage of her life in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where her daughter, son-in-law, and two grandsons live. But, based on how invested Anne was in her job

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Professor Benjamin Ravid to Retire

After 36 Years in Classroom, NEJS Legend Prepares for Next Stage in Life and Scholarship

Last December, Professor Benjamin Ravid finished teaching his last courses as a NEJS faculty member. After thirty-six and



NEJS Professor Benjamin Ravid

pursuing two very significant—and he admits, very large—scholarly works, whose contributions to his field promise to be of enormous value: One is a comprehensive work on the history of the Jews of Venice, and the other is a primary source reader of documents about the Jews of Venice. In fairness, these two works collectively could be considered the magnum opus of Professor Ravid's scholarly career, but the very humble Professor Ravid sees them in a simpler light, explaining that his objective is to just "leave behind a legacy that is useful to future scholarship."

It is no surprise that Professor Ravid downplays the works' likely impact. A prolific and acclaimed scholar, he remains remarkably understated and approachable, which probably helps explain why Professor Ravid has always been a popular professor with Brandeis students, as well.

In listening to Professor Ravid discuss his scholarship or his teaching, one hears a holistic dedication to the craft and an impressive depth of knowledge. Add to that, that he is the son of the late master scholar of Judaic Studies, Simon Rawidowicz, and one might imagine that he had always intended

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a half years at Brandeis, Professor Ravid is retiring...or at least, he is nominally 'retiring'. For in talking to Professor Ravid about his next steps, it becomes clear just how much of a misnomer it would be to call what he's doing 'retirement'. Professor Ravid's next phase can probably more accurately be thought of as switching to another gear: no teaching or faculty responsibilities, but *more* time for scholarship. And it's a good thing as he plans on

NEJS Alumnus Eitan Fishbane Has First Book Published



Eitan Fishbane, NEJS Ph.D. alumnus and current assistant professor in the Department of Jewish Thought of The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) celebrated the publication of his first book *As Light Before Dawn: The Inner World of a Medieval Kabbalist*. The book, published by Stanford University Press, is based on Fishbane's dissertation. According to Fishbane, compared to his dissertation, the book "is dramatically expanded and rewritten, including analysis of a 450 page medieval manuscript that was not studied in the

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*The NEJS
department newsletter is
issued twice each year.
This edition
was edited
by Ph.D. student
Eric Fleisch*

Three Join NEJS Faculty Fall Semester

Carl El-Tobgui

It is with great pleasure and honor that I have taken up the position of Senior Lecturer in Arabic Studies and Director of the Arabic Language Program here at Brandeis this year. My path to teaching Arabic—and, now, directing an Arabic language program—was a long and, at the outset, somewhat unexpected one. A quintessential language nut, I first came to Arabic as a sophomore at Georgetown, where I eventually graduated with a B.S. in Arabic Language, coupled with a double minor in Arab Studies



and History. After spending a year post graduation studying more Arabic intensively at the CASA program in Cairo, I eventually moved to Montreal, where I began a Master's degree in Islamic Studies at McGill University in 1998, then a Ph.D. in the same field in the year 2000. I originally began teaching Arabic part time as a Ph.D. student at McGill, an experience which I found immensely thrilling and almost indescribably

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Abigail Krasner Balbale

I am teaching Islam: Civilization and Institutions at Brandeis this term. I am also a PhD Candidate in History and Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, where I focus on the political and cultural history of al-Andalus. My dissertation, "Culture and Authority in the Medieval Mediterranean: Islamic Murcia, 1147-1262," examines a succession of Muslim rulers who legitimated their authority using wide-ranging cultural, legal and military tools. More generally, I am interested in the interaction of different ethnic and religious groups in the medieval Islamic world, and in the diffusion of cultural production that accompanied the dissolution of the caliphate.



I graduated from Yale with degrees in Near Eastern Languages and hold an AM in History from Harvard. My first book, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*, which I co-authored with María Rosa Menocal and Jerrilynn Dodds, was published by Yale University Press in 2008. I have previously received a Fulbright Fellowship to Syria and a Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Study, and am currently a Senior Fellow of Humanity in Action.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

Ahmad Al-Jallad is a third year Ph.D. student in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, specializing in Semitic Philology. He is interested in all aspects of historical linguistics, focusing on the Afro-Asiatic phylum, to which Semitic belongs. Ahmad has authored several articles on the



development of modern Arabic dialects, verbal modality, subordination and negation; he is currently working on a monograph on suprasegmental phonology in Afro-Asiatic. Ahmad has TFed most levels of Arabic at Harvard University and Harvard Summer School and, before that, he was a lecturer of Arabic at the University of South Florida.

Young Philanthropists Supporting Cutting-Edge Jewish Work

By Felicia Herman

For the past four years, I have been Executive Director of Natan, an innovative grantmaking foundation in New York that supports non-profits doing work in the Jewish community and in Israel. There are two things that make Natan unusual as a foundation. One is our focus on only supporting organizations with annual operating budgets



under \$1.5 million, which keeps us very focused on start-ups, new ideas and emerging organizations. The second is that our funding comes from young philanthropists, mostly living in New York. Natan is essentially a giving circle, a collective of about 70 people, who

come together out of a desire to have a very hands-on role in their philanthropy while also engaging in philanthropy with a group of like-minded peers.

I never imagined that my career would go in this direction. When I first began my doctoral studies in NEJS in 1994, I was planning on becoming an academic. I loved studying Jewish history, so I figured I would just do that professionally. I definitely hadn't given much thought to the wide world of professional opportunities that were available for people with graduate degrees. And now, years later, I feel both blessed for having been able to get a PhD from NEJS, blessed to have known and learned from my advisors, and very grateful to be able to put my academic background to work outside of academia and on behalf of the contemporary Jewish community.

As I was writing my dissertation, my husband got a job in

'We are living in tumultuous times where an understanding of the American Jewish past can enrich our understanding of what is happening in the present'

New York. We moved there, and I started working at Michael Steinhardt's foundation part-time while I was finishing my dissertation. I found working in the foundation world to be extremely compelling – that it was a different way to engage with the Jewish community, and a different

way to use the analytical skills I had developed during my doctoral training.

Candidly, I also liked the fact that going outside of academia allowed me to have more control over my professional life. I was definitely discouraged by how few jobs there were in Jewish history, and where they were located. To be truly committed to being an academic, I think you need to give yourself over to the system – to go where the jobs are – and we had other priorities. I continued to work at the Steinhardt Foundation for several years learning a tremendous amount about the world of Jewish philanthropy, and then became Executive Director of Natan in 2005.

Throughout my career in the foundation world, I've continually drawn on my graduate training—especially being



Storahtelling (a theater company combining Torah education and the arts), Hazon (an organization providing hands-on environmental education in a Jewish context), and JDub Records (a company supporting innovative Jewish music) are but three of the new and exciting groups Natan supports as core grantees.

able to analyze information, make connections between seemingly disparate facts or ideas, and then put it all together in an accessible, coherent way. Moreover, in the past year or so, I've also found myself drawing on the content of my graduate training more than ever - we are living in tumultuous times where an understanding of the American Jewish past can enrich our understanding of what is happening in the present – and where we might be headed in the future. Once the economy started its precipitous decline, I found myself drawn to Jonathan Sarna's writing about American Judaism in the 1930s, to Beth Wenger's book on New York Jews and the Great Depression, and to other historical works that could help me put the present events in context.

I also found myself drawing on the understanding of

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NEJS Masters Alumni – Where are they now?



Rachel Werner (MA '06): I graduated with a Joint Masters in NEJS and Women's Studies in 2006. My work at Brandeis focused on the role of Jewish women in American popular culture. I enjoyed working closely with Professors Sylvia Barack Fishman and Joyce Antler. I also conducted research for the Hadassah Brandeis Institute and the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.



Upon graduation, I was recruited to work for the Anti-Defamation League's Washington, DC Regional Office as Assistant Regional Director. My portfolio at ADL has included civil rights advocacy, educational programming, and interfaith affairs. I am most proud of launching a Young Professionals Division.



I am currently working on the region's fundraising events, including the nationally known *ADL In Concert Against Hate*, a unique annual event at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in which the National Symphony

**NEJS MA Alumni
Daniel Parmer, Jason
Harris, and Rachel
Werner (top to
bottom)**

Orchestra and narrating celebrity hosts interweave words and music to tell the stories of the honorees—ordinary people who have done extraordinary things to stand up to bigotry, extremism and terrorism.

Joseph Gindi (MA '08): I'm currently working toward a doctorate in religious studies at the University of North Carolina. My focus will be on 20th C. American Jewish culture, investigating questions about the articulation of religious and political meaning. I'll be working under Jonathan Boyarin, and I'm about to begin writing my masters thesis this spring.

Daniel Parmer (MA '08): Since leaving the halls—or rather, stairwells—of NEJS in 2008, I have relocated down the hill in the Heller building to pursue a PhD in Social Policy, concentrating in children, youth, and families. An admittedly nice upgrade in facilities, I find myself spending as much time in Lown as I did while earning my MA. I spend a large portion of my "free" time working at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. After graduating (and marrying fellow Hornstein alumae Jodie Parnes) in 2008 I went to summer camp as part of a team to conduct research on Jewish summer camp staff. Presently I am engaged in analyzing data that were collected from this research and a second survey more recently completed this summer.

During the past year I have been engaged in several projects that seek to combine my interests in the Jewish community and my current program in social policy. In spring 2009 I completed and published the 2008 Berkshire Community Survey for the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. Just prior to that I presented an analysis of the gender differences and similarities in American young adults' Jewish identity post Birthright Israel at the International Conference on Research in Jewish Education in Jerusalem. In both instances I approached my work using the skills and knowledge I learned in the NEJS and Hornstein programs while focusing on the policy implications of the research.

Attempting to navigate through my academic program at the Heller school has not always been easy. My first year of coursework focused on issues of the health and well-being of vulnerable populations in the US, learning about policy implementation, and learning about theories of social justice and social policy—a wide departure from the focus I had taken for the past three years. Integrating my research within this framework has been a struggle, but not without its rewards. I have often turned to my advisors and mentors in the NEJS and Hornstein programs to help find my direction through these uncharted waters. Currently I am exploring possible dissertation topics through an independent study on immigrant and refugee issues among Jewish families from the Former Soviet Union.

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Brandeis dissertation. "

So far the book has received extensive acclaim. Fishbane was awarded with the prestigious Nahum and Anne Glatzer Prize for Outstanding Achievement (a dissertation award for the thesis that was the first basis for the book). Based on how top scholars in the field have regarded the work, it is of little surprise that it won the award.

A press release issued by JTS cites a number of praiseworthy comments by top figures in the field, including this assessment by Professor Lawrence Fine, Irene Kaplan Leiwant Chair of Jewish Studies at Mt.

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Faculty Spotlight

Ravid (continued from page 1)

to pursue the career path he did. But interestingly, Professor Ravid explained that his parents never pushed him to be a scholar of Judaic Studies or anything else for that matter, and that he was just gradually drawn into academia. And when he was, his first interest was general European history. In fact, Professor Ravid, who earned his BA with high distinction from Brandeis in 1957, wrote his honors thesis on the British Reform Bill of 1832.

After finishing his BA at Brandeis, Professor Ravid completed his MA at Harvard, with the intention of specializing in Jewish history. At that point, he spent a year studying at the Hebrew University and then realizing that he would benefit from strengthening his background in Rabbinics, he spent four years at the Jewish Theological Seminary. After completing his Ph. D. qualifying exams at Harvard, Professor Ravid was offered a teaching post at McGill University. And so in 1969, he went to McGill, where he taught the first Jewish history courses ever offered at McGill. Professor Ravid remained there until 1973, taking a leave in 1972-73 to complete his Ph.D. dissertation.

Then NEJS chair Professor Nahum Sarna invited Prof. Ravid to come to Brandeis to offer courses in Jewish history, and specifically broad

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El-Tobgui (cont from page 2)

rewarding—not to my surprise, however, as I had always known that teaching was what I was made to do. My passion for languages, and for Arabic in particular, coupled with my love of teaching turned out to be a dangerous combination indeed, and when my funding at McGill dried up in 2004, I was fortunate enough to be offered a full-time Arabic teaching position at Harvard, where I taught nearly all levels and varieties of Arabic (modern standard, classical and formal spoken) from 2004-2009.

Despite my heavy teaching load over the past five years, I have managed to inch forward on my doctoral dissertation, which I plan to submit to McGill by the end of 2010 or early 2011 at the latest. My research engages the vexing issue—central to the three Abrahamic faiths—of the relationship between human reason and divine revelation. Focusing on the 10-volume *magnum opus* of the 13th/14th-

century thinker Ibn Taymiyya, I investigate the author's attempt to transcend the 'reason vs. revelation' dichotomy altogether by breaking down and systematically reconstituting the very categories in terms of which reason is conceived and debated in medieval Islam. I eventually hope to build a career where I am able to combine my experience in and love of teaching Arabic with continued research, publication and teaching in the field of Islamic Studies as well.

My first year here at Brandeis as director of Arabic has been an exciting one on many levels. Arabic enrollments are up a stunning 40% from this time last year (60% in the 1st-year course alone!). We have added for the first time a new fourth level of instruction in which no fewer than 11 students are enrolled, and we are busy building a website for the program as well. Several of our 4th-year students have already requested a minor in Arabic, something I am keen to see the program offer in the very near future.

My vision for the development of Arabic language studies at Brandeis necessitates a comprehensive rebuilding of the Arabic program from the ground up. At the heart of this project stands the designing and year-by-year progressive implementation of a brand-new curriculum for all four levels of instruction. In concert with my two newly hired part-time colleagues, Mr. Sherif Shabaka and Mr. Ahmad Al-Jallad, I have begun the reconstruction process this year with the introduction of a new textbook, *Ahlan wa Sahlan: Functional Modern Standard Arabic for Beginners*, for Arabic 10a/20b. Hot off the press in a full-color, up-to-date, expanded 2nd edition, *Ahlan wa Sahlan* is perhaps the first Arabic language through the last stages of textbook that, in its overall quality, effectiveness and visual appeal, is fully on a par with the textbooks available for teaching European languages.

A further element central to the goal of invigorating Arabic language studies at Brandeis is to encourage and help students

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Q&A with Joseph Ringel

Joseph Ringel is a sixth year Ph.D. student in the NEJS department. Originally from Allentown, PA, Joseph earned his BA in 2001 and his MA in 2003 from Yeshiva University, and matriculated to Brandeis in 2004. Joseph is in the final stages of his dissertation, entitled: "The Sephardic Rabbinate, Sephardic Yeshivot, and the Shas Educational System". He intends to go on the job market next year. In addition to working on his doctorate, Joseph is close to receiving smicha... and does some jazz drumming on the side. What follows is a Q&A between the NEJS Department Newsletter (NDNL) and Joseph Ringel (JR).

NDNL: What is the subject of your dissertation and how did you arrive at this topic?

JR: I decided to focus my research on the Shas Sephardic religious school system in Israel (which goes through 8th grade) and higher Sephardic yeshivot. My work explores how Sephardic identity is reflected in these schools, and what the schools' philosophies are regarding the proper relationship between the Sephardic community and the broader Jewish and world communities. In doing so, I am seeking to do two things: first, to portray the variation that exists within Sephardic culture, which is too often mistakenly viewed as monolithic, regarding these important issues. Second, to give a new perspective on the Shas movement that takes into account the values being taught within the schools as giving the movement meaning and vibrancy.

NDNL: Initially you were planning to study pre-1948 history of Jewish life in one specific Arab country. Can you talk a little bit about the process by which you decided to change topics?

JR: I did start the program at Brandeis with the intention to focus on the history of Jews in the Islamic world (which includes, but is not limited to, the Arab world). From there I slowly moved to more contemporary



NEJS Ph.D. candidate Joseph Ringel, unfortunately doesn't have much time for his jazz drumming right now, as he heads down the homestretch of the dissertation process.

issues regarding the history of the Jews of Middle Eastern origin in Israel. I was always interested in contemporary Sephardic rabbinic thought, as well as contemporary issues regarding Israel, in addition to the history of Jews in the Islamic world, so the

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News from the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education

The Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education hosts and participates in events throughout the year that strive to raise the level of public discourse about Jewish and general education. The brown bag lunch series provides a forum for Center researchers and their colleagues to informally share their research and engage participants in discussion. During the spring semester, the Center has already hosted three seminars, and has one more forthcoming, scheduled for May 17th from 11am-1pm.

Additionally, the semester before featured four fascinating presentations. In October, Senior Research Assistant Eran Tamir presented emerging findings centering around the question, "Why do Jewish Day School teachers from the DeLeT program choose to become teachers?"

In November, Dr. Annette Koren and Dr. Amy Sales offered a "sneak preview" of JData.com, a website for accessing information and ideas from organizations dedicated to Jewish education for children and youth, aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of Jewish educational research and the value of information available to educational organizations, their funders, and the community.

One week later, in a seminar co-sponsored by the Committee for the Support of Teaching, Dr. Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon of Northwestern University, spoke about her work teaching teachers to lead interpretive discussions in their classrooms. She shared video excerpts from data she collected for her latest book, and also led an interpretive discussion for seminar participants, outlining steps for preparing to leading such discussions.

Dr. Aubrey Scheopner of Boston College discussed findings from her recent study on teacher attrition among early career teachers in Catholic schools in a presentation entitled "Exodus: Exploring the Phenomenon of Early Teachers' Leaving in Catholic Schools".

News from the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

Last October, the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies released *Generation Birthright Israel: The Impact of an Israel Experience on Jewish Identity and Choices* at a special research briefing at Brandeis House in New York City.

The report is the first long-term study of Taglit-Birthright Israel alumni to document the program's impact on early participants and their decisions and attitudes regarding marriage, community, and connection to Israel.

The response to *Generation Birthright Israel* has been quite positive. The report has received press coverage in the *Wall Street Journal* as well as Jewish and Israeli news outlets. The discussion on the blogosphere suggests the report has begun to provoke important conversations about Jewish education, identity, and philanthropy.

Miller & Baskin Serve as this Year's NEJS UDRs

Sara Miller

My name is Sara Miller. I am from the Washington, DC area (Northern VA). At Brandeis, I'm majoring in NEJS and minoring in music.

Within NEJS, I particularly enjoy studying contemporary and American studies of Judaism and the Jewish people.

As the NEJS UDR, I look to involve

the greater NEJS community in programming—not just a core group of majors. I hope to show people that anyone can be a NEJS major or minor! I also hope that anyone who has a question about the department feels comfortable to ask me.

According to the NEJS website:

Undergraduate departmental representatives serve as a resource and representative for fellow majors and minors and potential majors and minors, and bring student concerns and/or ideas to the department/program faculty.



Shevy Baskin

My name is Shevy Baskin, and I'm from New Jersey. Before coming to Brandeis, I spent a year in Jerusalem, volunteering and studying Judaic studies.



The Jewish community has always been an important part of my life, and at Brandeis it has been no different. I was quickly drawn into the Brandeis Jewish community

as well as the warm and engaging NEJS community. I loved the teachers, who gave me new perspectives on Jewish life. I'm studying sociology and NEJS, and I think the two disciplines work well together in studying Jews and Jewish society. I wanted to be a NEJS UDR because I love the department and think that it has such an open and caring faculty, and an especially passionate student body. I'm hoping as an UDR I can share with other students all the opportunities they can have as NEJS majors or minors.

Fishbane (Cont from Page 5)

Holyoke College "Eitan Fishbane's work is marked by extraordinary erudition, sophisticated methodologies, and a richly textured, nuanced analysis of this important contemplative mystic. This superb book is a distinguished contribution to the study of medieval Jewish mysticism."



Fishbane, while at NEJS, studied under Professor Arthur Green. Now at JTS, he teaches courses in literature and history of Jewish mysticism, from medieval Kabbalah to modern Hasidism. He also at work on his second book, entitled *Mystical Drama and Narrative Form: The Literary Craft of the Zohar*. The NEJS Department Newsletter would like to congratulate our own Dr. Eitan Fishbane on this wonderful accomplishment.

TITLE:

As Light Before Dawn: The Inner World of a Medieval Kabbalist

AUTHOR:

Eitan Fishbane

PUBLISHED BY:

Stanford University Press

PUBLICATION DATE:

2009

Hebrew Dept Embraces Technology

When Guy Antebi first joined the faculty at Brandeis in 2004, students in Hebrew classes encountered a much different experience than do today's students. At that time,



Guy Antebi has been instrumental in building out an online bank of resources for Hebrew students

resources simply did not exist. Today thanks in large part to the work of Guy, and the vision he and Hebrew Program Director Vardit Ringvald have shared, students have a much different experience. Through Omega, the virtual library of online Hebrew material developed by Guy, students enrolled in Hebrew classes now have access to a rich library of documents, music and video files, appropriate for the each level of study.

While the technological components of the Hebrew experience at Brandeis have indeed come a long way during the past 6 years, from another perspective the system does not offer students nearly what is possible for the whole learning process. Vardit explains that programs at some other universities have been able to offer their students impressive online interfaces that help them with their speaking, reading, and writing, as well as allow them to use the web to build communities of interconnected Hebrew learners collaborating with one another

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resources for students included books and whatever additional publications and a/v materials professors could provide their students with in class. Complementary online

MA Alumni *(Cont from Page 4)*

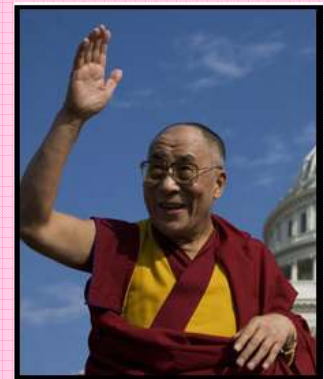
Jason Harris (MA '08): I am currently working as Congressman Alcee Hastings's (D-FL) Legislative Director in Washington, DC. Fortunately, as I often assist the Congressman with Middle East, Israel, and Jewish community issues, I am able to cross paths with the various Jewish political and social advocacy organizations here in Washington. Since I'm not working directly for the Jewish community, it's a "sneaky" way to stay connected, and to keep abreast of major issues confronting the Jewish community.

As Legislative Director I am responsible for covering a broad sweep of domestic and foreign policy issues, including developing legislation and helping move bills through the House of Representatives. This affords me the opportunity to see up close how our government works, and to participate in a small way in the history that gets made here on Capitol Hill. It can be an exciting job – there's nothing like going to work one day and meeting the Dalai Lama!

My NEJS studies have definitely come in handy, especially with the Obama administration's efforts on the peace process, as well as new developments within the Jewish community, such as the rise of J Street. The courses I took with, to name two professors, Jonathan Sarna and Ilan Troen, gave me insight into the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the American Jewish community that have greatly enhanced my understanding of current events in the Middle East. So, too, have I found myself rereading materials from Shai Feldman's course on arms control in the Middle East to improve my perspective on issues regarding Iran and nuclear weapons. And I would be lying if I said I didn't miss Benjamin Ravid's classes on medieval and Italian Jewish history – they were among my favorite courses at NEJS and I encourage all students to take them!

Rebecca Hartman (MA '08): Since 2007, I have worked for the New Israel Fund (NIF), a progressive, pro-Israel organization that is committed to equality and democracy for all Israelis. I enjoy working for an organization that changes Israeli lives and communities for the better on a daily basis, and I appreciate the many opportunities that my job allows to meet strong, creative leaders in Israeli civil society.

I finished my coursework at Brandeis in 2007, eventually receiving a dual Masters degree in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and Jewish Communal Service. My interests in graduate school focused primarily on Jewish education, Jewish identity, and Israel, particularly on American Jewish attitudes towards and relationships with Israel. While I enjoyed my coursework and fieldwork (which I spent at Gann Academy, a pluralist day school in Waltham, MA), I equally enjoyed my time doing research for professors – particularly working with Sylvia Barack Fishman on Jewish identity, Joseph Reimer on experiential Jewish education, and Theodore Sasson on the relationship of American Jews towards Israel. Of all of my Brandeis experiences,



Jason Harris has found it much more likely that he might randomly bump into the Dalai Lama (pictured above) wandering the halls of the Congressional office building than he ever did wandering the halls of Lown.

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Lawrence (cont from pg 1)

it couldn't be easy to just walk away, regardless of what things might lie on the horizon. This was very clear when I had the chance to sit down with Anne

before she retired to hear some of her reflections on her time at Brandeis.

Anne's migration from Boston to the Midwest this winter was not her first. A Boston native, Anne moved to Milwaukee in 1967 after college with her then husband. And there she had and raised her family before moving back to Boston in 1989. Throughout her career in Milwaukee, Anne had had some connection to education. She even had hoped to go back to school at some point

To get a doctorate in Psychology (her undergrad major), but according to Anne, "Life got in the way!" When she returned to Boston, she sought a position in an educational environment, and when she saw an opening listed for a position in the Brandeis Dean of Colleges office, she applied and was hired. "I figured if I couldn't actually be a professor then, I could at least work with them," she explained with a smile.

Anne worked for two years under Associate Dean Elaine Wong, where she really learned the ropes of Brandeis's culture and systems. For the next seven years after, Anne worked in a variety of university departments, most notably spending four years in the English department. Then in 1998, she was approached to apply for a vacancy that opened up as Department Administrator for NEJS. Anne jumped at the opportunity. "I knew it would be challenging to work in such a complex department with a large faculty representing a number of different

fields, but I saw it as an honor to be the Department Administrator at one of the university's premier programs," she said. Clearly she got the job, and here she's been ever since.

The NEJS office environment when



Following Anne's retirement, former NEJS Department Coordinator Joanne Arnish (right) was hired to be the new Department Administrator. Jean Mannion (left) was brought in to be the NEJS Department Coordinator.

memos and put hard copies in every faculty member's mailbox). There were no answering machines. And as hard as this is to believe, the NEJS office did not have M&M dispensers. Though just a beneficiary of the new technological innovations over the last 11 years, Anne was actually *the* force behind the institutionalization of the NEJS M&M dispensers; they are, in fact one of Anne's most tangible legacies. Anne collected many, many M&M dispensers, which she jokingly referred to as a gallery, and always made sure they stayed filled.

This is, of course, little surprise based on Anne's proclivity for always seeming to add just the right touch to the office environment. In addition to her deep commitment to doing her job well throughout her tenure, Anne always saw to it that the department office remained a calm and homey center, amidst all of the chaos and stresses surrounding the busy students and faculty circulating through Lown on a daily basis. "One of my goals

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News from the Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and Leadership

The Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and Leadership concluded the inaugural class of its fundraiser education series, *Development at the Core*, in November. Participants included executive directors and directors of development from Jewish federations, day schools, camps, Hillel foundations, and other educational organizations.

The five sessions over a nine-month period took participants through a sequence of steps that resulted in an annual development plan for their organizations.

The program will resume with a new cohort in the coming year. Faculty for *Development at the Core* include Amy L. Sales, director of the Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and Leadership and associate professor in Hornstein; The Jewish Professional Leadership Program; David A. Mersky, founder and managing director of Mersky, Jaffe & Associates, Inc. and lecturer in Jewish philanthropy and fundraising in Hornstein; The Jewish Professional Leadership Program; and Reuven R. Kimelman, professor of classical rabbinic literature in the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies

El-Tobgui

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take advantage of the many study abroad opportunities now available for North American students of Arabic. To this end, an Arabic Study Abroad Information Fair is currently being organized with the goal of making our students aware of the various opportunities they have to pursue intensive Arabic language studies abroad—either in the summer or during the semester—and to guide them in choosing the program best suited to their needs and particular interests.

All in all, things are very exciting right now on the Arabic language front here at Brandeis, with vigorous development and expansion in all directions—a success based first and foremost on the enthusiasm and the dedication of what I have come to realize is a commendably hardworking, not to mention gifted, section of the Brandeis student population. I look forward to seeing the Arabic program at Brandeis continue to blossom and come fully into its own over the next several years.

Ravid

(continued from page 5)

introductory courses for undergraduates of the type that he had been giving at McGill, and the rest is history.

Over his 36 years in NEJS, Professor Ravid has taught such background courses in Judaic Studies many times over. For many years, it has been divided into two halves – one semester covering Jewish history from the post-biblical era until 1492, and one from 1492 to the present. Professor Ravid considers it crucial that NEJS majors, regardless of their areas of concentration, become steeped in the background of medieval and modern Jewish history. “It is impossible to fully understand things without this context,” he explained. Professor Ravid noted that for many years, the enrollments in these classes were very high, attracting many non-NEJS majors as well as NEJS majors and minors down to the end. In addition to these courses, some of the other courses Professor Ravid taught include: the Italian Jewish Experience, Jews in Europe until 1750, and Anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, a course that explored the historical developments of the three related but theoretically distinct phenomena.

While teaching a full course load, Professor Ravid has also published extensively throughout his career. Fascinatingly, his work has spanned two completely different worlds – one involving the history of the Jews of Venice, with emphasis on their legal status, economic activities as merchants and moneylenders, and residential quarters in the ghetto, and the other using modern Hebrew and German and focusing on contemporary 20th century themes involving the life, activities and thought of his late father, Professor Simon Rawidowicz, one of the leading Jewish thinkers of his time, who was the first Chair of the NEJS Department and Lown Professor until his untimely death in 1957..... . In fact, though Professor Ravid’s area of specialization has been Italian Jewry, he also made his mark early on by editing and publishing some of the disparate and unpublished work of his late father.

When the final set of numbered page proofs of Rawidowicz’s classic Hebrew two-volume work *Babylon and Jerusalem, Towards a Philosophy of Israel’s Wholeness* arrived in the mail less than forty-eight hours after his passing, without realizing it Professor Ravid embarked upon what was to

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in their language skill development. Vardit, who has long directed the Hebrew program according to the philosophy that immersion is the ideal method for foreign language instruction, sees a rich online experience as part and parcel of a proper Hebrew learning experience in this day and age. By this vision, the enhanced technological components offered by some of the Hebrew programs at other universities, who are leading the way in the integration of technology, should not be regarded as bells and whistles, but rather as essential components of a Hebrew educational immersion experience.

So what does exist? Certainly much more than when Guy came to Brandeis, and indeed, more and more all the time. Guy, who holds a degree in Education Technology, has undertaken a meticulous process over the last few years of gathering resources from his colleagues in the department, searching for resources available on the web, and lots and

lots of digitizing, downloading, storing, and categorizing. Guy’s efforts have resulted in Omega containing the wealth of resources it now does.

Vardit explains that the chief barrier to realizing full technological potential in Hebrew education at Brandeis is simply a matter of what is and what is not currently available through the university. LTS simply does not have the systems and server capacity necessary to accommodate the most cutting-edge online Hebrew technology. Vardit explains that while LTS staff has been great in helping her and Guy figure out how to make the most of the available technology, it can only go so far. At this point, though their “vision is not yet fulfilled,” they have done the best they possibly could have done with the technology available to them. A lot of what is now available to students, Vardit says, “we have had to put together with our own hands.” “We have come a long way,” she continued, “but we still have a long way to go.”

Anne Lawrence Departs After 11 Years as NEJS Administrator

(continued from page 9)

was to try and make the office a friendlier and more accessible environment," Anne explained. "And for that, the little things mattered." Whether it was loaning students a stapler or an umbrella on a rainy day, Anne tried to add whatever little touches she could think of to make Lown 211 as homey as possible.

Being there in small and big ways for students throughout the years was one of the most rewarding aspects of the job for Anne. From welcoming them at the department orientation with her annual creative 'What the NEJS Department can do for you' talk, to seeing them off in their caps and gowns, Anne took a lot of pleasure in watching students grow as they moved through their careers in NEJS.

Students weren't the only ones Anne saw through their NEJS lifecycles: she witnessed four professors serve as chair on her watch (Professors Sarna, Brettler, Wright, and the beginning of Professor Fishman's term). Anne explained how much she enjoyed working under the leadership of all four. "They are all so different," she said, but explained how she found working with their varied styles and philosophies gratifying. In general, she noted that the faculty members in the department to a person "are inspiring." One of the biggest regrets she had while on the job is that the myriad duties she had kept her from getting to see faculty in action in the classroom as much as she would have wanted to.

Yet, it was just this myriad of duties that kept the job continually challenging and exciting for Anne. When I asked Anne to tell me about a

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Anne's daughter Abbie (left), a Brandeis alumna herself, was on hand to celebrate at her mother's retirement party in December. The packed crowd heard tribute speeches by Abbie, Professor Fishman, and others, while enjoying ice cream sundaes.

Ringel

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move was more of a slow progression than a sudden realization. I should add that this move in no way means that I am no longer interested in pre-1948 history of Jews in Islamic countries, which is a

subject that I am still very passionate about. In fact, this history is very relevant to my topic, since, on the one hand, I can show how various Sephardic educators/rabbis and institutions are trying to recreate the religious practices that existed within the Old Country, and on the other hand, I can show how and why other institutions/rabbis have also created new aspects of Sephardic identity that did not exist before. Indeed, certain Sephardic rabbis use historical arguments as a way to criticize these innovations.

NDNL: What sources are you primarily drawing upon?

JR: My research is composed of two parts: textual analysis and fieldwork. I use libraries in order to access certain rabbinic texts that are taught within the schools, and I spend much of my time at the library of Shas' Pedagogical Center in Jerusalem, which houses pedagogical guides, workbooks, rabbinic texts, syllabi, and school textbooks that are meant for use in the Shas schools. My fieldwork involves traveling to different schools and higher yeshivot, where I interview administrators, have informal conversations with teachers, and sit in on classes.

NDNL: How have religious divisions in Israel society (between Orthodox and secular, or shades in between) and differences between Israeli society and American Jewish society in this regard shaped your research? Has living in Israel influenced or changed your perspective on your research topic in this regard or in any other respect?

JR: I am not an expert in all the distinctions between American and Israeli Judaism, nor am I an expert on the secular religious divide in Israel, so what I am about to say is based on my own subjective intuitions after leaving the US and living here for the year. I would not say that these distinctions have shaped my research, but they have helped me understand certain aspects of Israeli culture:

For instance, despite the fact that Shas institutions are run by Orthodox rabbis, many Shas followers and activists are in fact not Orthodox, and yet they identify with an Orthodox movement. From an elite Sephardic rabbinic perspective, the distinction between a non-observant Sephardi and an observant one is a difference in degree, not in kind, i.e. those who are less observant are not non-observant, but only partly observant, since they are not considered to be ideologically

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opposed to religion. Therefore, there are non-Orthodox Sephardim who attend synagogue and say kiddush on Friday night but also go to the beach on Shabbat afternoon. Such people are often referred to as "traditional" ("masorati"), rather than "religious" or "Haredi." They negotiate their own relationship with Judaism that is not consistent with Orthodoxy but at the same time not opposed to it. In some respects, then, Israeli Sephardic culture resembles American Judaism in that not everyone is consistent in their observance, but differs from it in that among Israeli Sephardim, there are no strong non-Orthodox movements that would serve as a barrier between Orthodoxy and the Sephardic population at large. A person who does not follow an Orthodox lifestyle or philosophy would still willingly attend an Orthodox synagogue (in some places in America, especially outside of NY, this is still the case). This lack of ideological opposition to Orthodoxy among large numbers of Sephardim allows Shas to successfully tap into the greater Sephardic community, and helps explain how an Orthodox movement can make a claim to represent all Sephardim. It seems that for many Sephardim, being Sephardic often means observing Sephardic religious traditions; for many American Jews, being Jewish does not always translate into observing Jewish traditions.

It is likewise widely held that Sephardic culture in Israel is different than Israeli Ashkenazi culture in that strong secularist

movements did in fact develop among large numbers of Israeli Ashkenazim, which would prevent many non-Orthodox Ashkenazim from identifying with a popular religious movement or culture, despite the fact that even many secular Ashkenazim do observe certain Jewish rituals. (In my neighborhood, there seem to be a number of non-orthodox traditional Ashkenazim, and I have wondered if this represents a new trend in Israeli culture, or if it is due to the fact that many of these people are *olim* from America and therefore simply reflect the American Jewish reality).

Living in Israel has allowed me to formulate some of these distinctions, and it is clear that I would not be able to explore Sephardic religious culture without being here. I have also been exposed to various differences between American and Israeli Orthodoxy, and to nuances within the Israeli Orthodox communities. But I would not say that my current stay significantly changed my attitudes toward my subject. I already became familiar with some of these distinctions when I lived here 10 years ago.

NDNL: I recall that you received a degree and were pursuing rabbinical training at Yeshiva University prior to and concurrently with your studies at Brandeis. Are you still pursuing this, and how does this other aspect of your studies influence your current research?

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News from the National Center for Jewish Film

- More than 45 NCJF films (restored classics & new independent films) were screened worldwide in public exhibition over the summer. Highlights include four NCJF-restored Yiddish features which were a centerpiece of the International Yiddish Theater Festival of Montreal; and a special screening of the NCJF-restored silent film HIS PEOPLE with live musical accompaniment at the Rochester Jewish Film Festival.
- In July, for the 19th consecutive year, NCJF premiered the Center's most recent Yiddish feature film restoration—NCJF's 38th—at the Jerusalem International Film Festival. BAR MITZVAH, a 1935 American-made, musical drama starring Yiddish theater superstar Boris Thomashefsky in his only film performance, enjoyed three sold-out performances. NCJF also premiered the new documentary by German director Michael Verhoeven, which garnered one of the festival's top prizes.
- In August, Sharon Pucker Rivo was a scholar in residence at the Everett Jewish Center in Chautauqua, NY.
- NCJF released for distribution two new feature films and six new documentaries, including CAMERA OBSCURA, an inventive period drama by Argentinean filmmaker Maria Victoria Menis which is slated to screen at film festivals throughout the country.
- The NCJF archive has acquired new materials, including several unique home movie collections. A number of films are in the lab undergoing restoration, including YIDDLE WITH HIS FIDDLE, which will soon have complete new subtitles.
- The first film completed under NCJF's Fiscal Sponsorship program, AHEAD OF TIME, a feature-length documentary about journalist Ruth Gruber, had its premiere at the Toronto Film Festival. YOU-HOO MRS GOLDBERG, which includes a great deal of NCJF archival film material, was released theatrically.

Links for Upcoming Events in Related Programs

Members of the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies play key roles in a number of centers and institutes at Brandeis that support scholarly research, programming and training in a wide range of fields and disciplines.

For information on each program and any upcoming events it may be sponsoring, please see the links provided. (Additionally, for more on the Fisher-Bernstein Institute, see page 9; the Tauber Institute, see page 14; Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, see page 16; the Mandel Center, see page 6; the National Center for Jewish Film, see page 12; the Cohen Center, see page 7.



HADASSAH-BRANDEIS INSTITUTE

Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

<http://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/>

**Maurice & Marilyn Cohen
Center for Modern Jewish Studies**

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

<http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/index.html>

Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education

<http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/>



Crown Center for Middle East Studies

<http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/>

Fisher-Bernstein Institute

Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and
Leadership

<http://www.brandeis.edu/fbi/>



**The National Center
For Jewish Film**

The National Center for Jewish Film

<http://www.brandeis.edu/jewishfilm/>



hornstein
THE JEWISH PROFESSIONAL
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM **Brandeis**

Hornstein: The Jewish Professional Leadership
Program at Brandeis

<http://www.brandeis.edu/hornstein/>

**The Tauber Institute
for the Study of European Jewry**

Tauber Institute for the Study of

European Jewry

<http://www.brandeis.edu/tauber/>



Schusterman Center for Israel Studies

<http://www.brandeis.edu/israelcenter/>

Ringel (continued from pg. 12)

JR: I am still pursuing rabbinic ordination at YU. My background in rabbinic studies contributes greatly to my analysis of the texts being used in the Sephardic higher yeshivot and the Shas school system. Which Sephardic rabbis are represented in the texts, and which ones are ignored, and why? And even for those who are represented, how are they represented? For instance, some may be represented as important personalities, but their legal decisions and their philosophy may not be followed. Only someone with experience in rabbinic literature can assess these questions, as they require extensive knowledge of rabbinic texts, which I am trying to master to the best of my ability. My training allows me to explore the tensions and internal divisions within the Sephardic religious community in general and within Shas culture in particular, and enables me to show what strategies Sephardic Shas schools and higher Sephardic yeshivot use to ameliorate these tensions.

My pursuit of rabbinical studies also relates to my research in a very practical way. When I ask for permission to visit a school, for instance, I tell them that in addition to



Rav Ovadia Yofef (above) is the spiritual leader of the Shas movement. Joseph Ringel's dissertation examines how Sephardic identity is reflected in the Shas Sephardic religious school system and higher Sephardic yeshivot in Israel.

pursuing doctoral work at Brandeis, I am also pursuing rabbinic ordination at YU. This helps create openness and trust, since, in a religious sense, I am one of "them," even if I may not agree with them on every issue. Of course, they are not naive; they know that as a doctoral student, my work will be critical, but it will be critical in a meaningful and constructive sense, not in a polemical sense. In fact, it

is my rabbinic training that makes me attuned to the nuances within the Orthodox community, and allows me to avoid the trap of polemics into which other authors who are not as knowledgeable about religion have fallen.

NDNL: "On a lighter note, I understand that you are a jazz drummer. Can you talk a little about your experience with this? Have you been able to find time to play while you have been working on your dissertation?"

JR: Huh, I guess my reputation is spreading! I started drumming when I was in 7th grade, and by ninth grade I was practicing both rock and jazz techniques. My drum teacher (Carl Hittner) encouraged me to listen to some of the major jazz drummers (like Buddy Rich). When I was an undergrad at Yeshiva University (YU) I joined the jazz ensemble – the highlight was the concert we played in my senior year, when our professor/instructor (we called him "Bart," short for his last name "Bartholomew") was able to get Bob Kindred, the famous saxophonist, to play with us. Since then, I played a little bit with a band of ours over the summers during my early years at Brandeis, but I haven't found the time to jam while writing my dissertation. I do plan on getting back to it when I finish, though!

News from the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry

The Tauber Institute Series is dedicated to publishing compelling and innovative approaches to the study of modern European Jewish history, thought, culture and society. Several exciting new works have been recently published as part of the Tauber series, including:

- **Jewish Dimensions in Modern Visual Culture: Antisemitism, Assimilation, Affirmation**

By Rose-Carol Washton Long, Matthew Baigell, Milly Heyd
A fascinating look at key aspects of visual culture in modern Jewish history
<http://webtest.brandeis.edu/tauber/publications/dimensions.html>

- **Best of Times, Worst of Times: Memoirs of a Political Education**

By Walter Laqueur
Walter Laqueur has been writing and teaching for over six decades, primarily in the fields of twentieth-century history and politics. In this engaging memoir, Laqueur focuses on the political and historical events that have shaped his thinking and inspired his intellectual work.

- **Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions**

Eugene M. Avrutin, Valerii Dymshits, Alexander Lvov, Harriet Murav, Alla Sokolova, editors
From 1912 to 1914, S. An-sky and the photographer Solomon Iudovin gathered materials and took photographs of Jewish daily life in pre-Revolutionary Russia's Pale of Settlement. Photographing the Jewish Nation offers English-language readers their first look at over 170 extraordinary, recently rediscovered photographs from their expeditions.
<http://webtest.brandeis.edu/tauber/publications/photographing.html>

- **Cadaverland: Inventing a Pathology of Catastrophe for Holocaust Survival**

[The Limits of Medical Knowledge and Historical Memory in France] By Michael Dorland
A powerful look at how French medical science apprehended and described Holocaust survival.
<http://webtest.brandeis.edu/tauber/publications/cadaverland.html>

Heading Innovative Fund Brings Thrills and Challenges

(continued from page 3)

Jewish communal organizations that I had developed from my dissertation more than ever before. My dissertation examined the relationship between the American Jewish community and the film industry in the '20s, '30s, and '40s, and looked at how communal organizations and leaders tried to shape the content of, or how they responded to, films that were relevant to Jews or Jewish issues. The main lesson I have used from that work is that Jewish communal institutions are always evolving – that the communal infrastructure we have today did not come from Sinai, but has evolved to fit the changing needs of the community. Part of my commitment to the work that we do at Natan with startups and emerging organizations comes

from this understanding: like any organism, the Jewish community cannot stay static but must evolve and change to meet the needs of the time and to create new vision for the future. In my dissertation, I certainly watched new organizations come into being, and I see exactly the same thing happening now.

The day-to-day work I do as Executive Director is challenging and fascinating. We have always had a small staff – anywhere from 1-3 people. So that basically means that I'm responsible for just about everything. And that work breaks down into three general areas: working with our grantees, working with our members (i.e. our funders), and the administration and operations of the organization.

Natan currently makes annual grants in areas, which requires a tremendous amount of administrative coordination. But this part of our work is also exhilarating: the social entrepreneurs in our sphere of the Jewish world are some



NEJS Ph.D. alumnus Felicia Herman joined Natan as Executive Director in 2005.

of the most passionate, driven, and creative people in the Jewish community today; and the work they are their organizations are doing is substantive, inspiring work that is making meaningful change in the world. Because I also see Natan as a kind of a clearinghouse for information about the sometimes-opaque world of Jewish philanthropy, I am also constantly meeting with people and organizations even if Natan does not or cannot support them. I like to offer guidance there wherever I can, and to ease what is always a challenging path toward financial sustainability.

Natan currently makes annual grants in areas, which requires a tremendous amount of administrative coordination. But this part of our work is also exhilarating: the social entrepreneurs in our sphere of the Jewish world are some of the most passionate, driven, and creative people in the Jewish community today; and the work they are their organizations are doing is substantive, inspiring work that is making meaningful change in the world. Because I also see Natan as a kind of a clearinghouse for information about the sometimes-opaque world of Jewish

philanthropy, I am also constantly meeting with people and organizations even if Natan does not or cannot support them. I like to offer guidance there wherever I can, and to ease what is always a challenging path toward financial sustainability.

The other core element of what I do is work with our membership, the 70+ people who give to Natan and are the heart of our work. Natan's purpose is to inspire young people to become philanthropic, and specifically to inspire them to give to Jewish and Israeli nonprofits. We hold frequent events for our members that touch on various issues relating to our philanthropy, but the core of our work is the grantmaking process, over which our members have complete control.

It's my job to keep that process running smoothly, to offer information, ideas, or advice when necessary, and also to reach out to new people who might be interested in joining us in our work.

Because Natan is still pretty small, I'm able to get to know all of our members and, hopefully, to create a philanthropic experience that is compelling to them. Our members tend to be accomplished, successful professionals working in the financial sector, and it's a real pleasure to be able to work with them to try to solve the problems of – and create new vision for – the Jewish community and Israel. It's also a group of people who want to do philanthropy together with their peers, which is somewhat rare in the philanthropic world – givers who want to learn together and make decisions through consensus and partnership. That's a very exciting element of what Natan does, and it will be interesting to see how that experience plays out for our members as they become involved with

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Natan (continued from page 15)

other philanthropic endeavors later in their lives.

My advice for graduate students contemplating careers outside of academia is to think about the skills you're developing in graduate school, rather than just the information you're learning. Being able to digest large quantities of information very quickly; analytical and writing skills; oral presentation skills; making complex ideas accessible to new audiences; and even simply having *sitzfleisch*, being organized, and being able to focus on minute details and tasks and understanding their importance to the larger project.

It's also extremely important to get out into the world to meet people. In my experience, people get jobs through networks and connections. The more connections you can make to people in fields you're interested in going into, the

better. Going to conferences and events; talking to people at parties about what they do for a living; even just calling up interesting professionals and asking for informational interviews – all of these are ways of learning about the multitude of professional options in the world and of meeting the people who might one day think of you and refer you to a job.

Finally, I would also say that Jewish communal organizations could really use more smart, dedicated people with advanced degrees. And not just advanced degrees in Jewish communal service – but also historians, sociologists, anthropologists, cultural experts (and lawyers, MBAs, MPPs, MPAs, and specialists in new technologies) – people who could bring to Jewish communal work skills, bodies of knowledge, and new ways of thinking that could enrich organizations and the community as a whole.

Lawrence (continued from page 11)

typical day, she replied chuckling, "no two days were alike. There was no end to the requests, inquiries, communications that might come my way from students, faculty, or administrators." In fact, despite such an intense pace for 11 years, Anne marveled that she still consistently encountered new questions to stump her. She explained that the job is just so broad, that it was "impossible to know everything." Anne felt that this variety, as well as the opportunity to have behind-the-scenes impact on all kinds of things, as what made the job remain challenging and consistently very rewarding for her.

The mood of Anne's packed retirement party was celebratory, but bittersweet. Indeed, it was appropriately so, in encapsulating how faculty and students

felt when the news came down that Anne was retiring. As glad as people were to celebrate Anne's countless contributions and see her off into the next stage of her life, the NEJS community will clearly miss Anne's high level of professionalism, her expert knowledge of all the intricacies of university and department procedures, and her consistently cheery disposition amidst everything. Anne too experienced a big mixture of feelings. As excited as she was for the chance to be near her family and experience the vibrant Ann Arbor cultural scene and rich lifelong learning programs, it was still hard to leave. "Brandeis has been a second home for me," she said. "After all the years, all the built up friendships and relationships from all over the university, it will be hard to say goodbye." It is safe to say that I echo the opinion of the entire NEJS community in saying that we feel the same way.

News from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

Hadassah-Brandeis Institute has been pleased to host Andi Arnovitz this semester.

In *Tear/Repair (kriah/ichooi)*, HBI Artist-in-Residence Andi Arnovitz creates a new body of work, a series of paper coats for Jewish women who have impacted history and changed the world. These coats are an extension of Arnovitz's "Garments of Faith" series, which also will be on view. Each of these garments, fabricated from torn or intact papers, scrolls, and book pages, represents injustices for Jewish women. The works address challenges throughout history to the present, from halachic and spiritual issues, to those of co-existence, and above all, issues related to gender.

Tear/Repair (*kriah/ichooi*) by Andi Arnovitz started running on February 23rd and continues until April 26th

MA Alumni (Cont from Pg 8)

I found the availability and ability to form close connections with professors to be of most value.

Yair Fuxman (MA '06): It's nice to be included in the NEJS newsletter, though what I ended up doing is not related to NEJS at all! I got back to Israel two years ago. I'm currently working as the clinical research coordinator for a small start-up that does sleep diagnostics. The big news is we got published in a peer-reviewed journal; I posted a link on my Facebook profile. I was hoping I'd get the Nobel peace prize this year, but Obama's speeches were better than mine!

Ravid

(cont from pg 10)

become a life-long occupation with his father's writings. First, together with his mother, Dr. Esther Eugenie Klee-Rawidowicz, who served as Instructor and then Assistant Professor of German at Brandeis from 1958-1967, he saw that book through the last stages of publication. After that, Professor Ravid edited two volumes of his father's Hebrew articles in Jewish philosophy and Hebrew literature that had appeared in various scholarly journals and books, the first devoted to the medieval period (1969) and the second to the modern (1971).

Next, Professor Ravid co-edited with Yehudah Friedlander in 1983 a Hebrew

work entitled *Sihotai 'im Bialik* (My Conversations with Bialik). Professor Ravid explained that his father had always intended to publish his diary of conversations with Hayyim Nahman Bialik because of its historical importance. Through this editing partnership, Ravid drew on his skills as historian and Friedlander on his skills as literary expert to provide the necessary annotation to the text, although they were aware that Rawidowicz might have expanded or rewritten it here and there.

Then in 1986, Professor Ravid achieved what he considers his most important accomplishment in connection with his father's writing. Starting in 1931, Rawidowicz had developed a new theory of the relationship between the Jews of Eretz Yisrael and those of the Diaspora and the unity of the Jewish people; for details see the entry on him in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Since he had expressed his views almost entirely in Hebrew, with a very few essays in Yiddish and in English, by the late 1900s, his views were relatively unknown. Prof. Ravid took some of the English essays, arranged for four to be translated from Yiddish and translated two himself from the Hebrew. The resulting book, first published under the title *Israel: The Ever-Dying People* in 1986 and subsequently reissued in paperback under the title *State of Israel, Diaspora and Jewish Continuity* in the 1998, contributed to a revived interest in the personality, writings and ideology of Rawidowicz.

Simultaneously, Professor Ravid engaged in his own primary area of interest—Venetian Jewry. Some of his more notable works in this field include *Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth Century Venice: The Background and Context of the Discorso of Simone Luzzatto* (1978), *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (co-edited with Robert C. Davis, 2001), and *Studies on the Jews of Venice, 1382-1797* (2003), containing a selection of nine of his over forty articles on the Jews of Venice. And as noted earlier, the best is probably yet to come in the form of his currently in-progress work on the history of the Jews of Venice. Professor Ravid explained that he plans on approaching this project from two distinct thematic approaches—a



NEJS Professor Benjamin Ravid is retiring this year after 36 years in the department.

Jewish perspective and a Venetian perspective. Viewing the subject from the context of Jewish history, Professor Ravid explains that the Jewish experience in Venice can be understood as an excellent historical case study of how Jews survived in the medieval and early-modern diaspora and contributes to the on-going revision of the much-criticized lachrymose conception of Jewish history. Interestingly, from another angle, an examination of Jewish life in Venice can shed light on the history of Venice itself. Professor Ravid explains that by reconstructing how the Venetian government treated its Jews, one can further nuance the conflict between the 'myth of Venice' that praised Venice

and especially its sense of justice and fidelity to the laws as representing an ideal state and the 'anti-myth of Venice' that stressed the negative nature of the Venetian government as despotic, arbitrary and corrupt.

The second major scholarly project on Professor Ravid's agenda is a primary source reader of documents of and about the Jews of Venice. Throughout his years of studying Venetian Jewry, Professor Ravid has come across abundant documents that shed light on their experiences. Since he has collected far more than can be included in one volume, Professor Ravid expects it to be a big challenge to decide what to include and what to leave out. Additionally, he has the question of whether to publish the documents in Italian or English.

In a way, it is rather fitting that Professor Ravid taught for exactly 36 years—as 36 is double chai, or double life—Professor Ravid's career can be thought of in a number of ways as a 'double life'. Academic and teacher. Scholar of early modern Italian Jewry and compiler and editor of the work of his esteemed late father Simon Rawidowicz. And now with his retirement, Professor Ravid is moving through a new career gateway, from active faculty into the next phase of his scholarship. While Professor Ravid indeed plans on devoting much of his time to scholarship, he also expects to devote more of his time to some of his other interests as well—his favorites being opera and travel. But also, he's delighted that he will have greater flexibility to spend time with his wife Jane, their children, and their grandson. In reflecting on his retirement, Professor Ravid says that he will really miss his interactions with students. But even though he will no longer be teaching, Professor Ravid will still be around. As an active scholar with library privileges and no plans to move away, NEJS looks to be fortunate enough to keep Benjamin Ravid, one of its great teachers and friends a close part of the NEJS community now and in the future.

NEJS Courses For Fall 2010

IMES 104a: Islam: Civilization and Institutions Carl Sharif El-Tobgui (MWTh 1-2)
Islamic civilization from its origins to the current state of affairs. Topics include the Qur'an, tradition, law, theology, politics, Islam and other religions, modern developments, women in Islam, and Islam and Middle-Eastern politics.

NEJS 10a: Biblical Hebrew Grammar and Texts Marc Brettler (MW 2-3:30)
Biblical Hebrew grammar and survey of the major genres of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Torah, history, prophecy, psalms, wisdom). Texts are read in Hebrew; the course is taught in English. Emphasis on literary and grammatical aspects of the texts.

NEJS 25a: Introduction to Talmud Reuven Kimelman (TF 12-1:30)
An introduction to Treatise Sanhedrin, on the subject of judicial procedure and capital punishment. Attention is paid to modes of argument, literary form, and development of the Talmudic text. No previous study of Talmud is presupposed.

NEJS 29a: Feminist Sexual Ethics in Judaism, Christianity and Islam
Bernadette Brooten (MWTh 1-2)
Analyzes a variety of feminist critiques of religious texts and traditions and proposed innovations in theology and religious law. Examines biblical, rabbinic, and Qur'anic texts. Explores relation to U.S. law and to the social, natural, and medical sciences.

NEJS 101a: Elementary Akkadian Molly Demarco (MW 5-6:30)
Introduction to Akkadian grammar and lexicon and cuneiform script. For beginning students of Akkadian.

NEJS 103a: The Early History of God David Wright (MWTh 10-11)
A study of the development of the conceptions about deity in the Levant before the appearance of ancient Israel and the development of these conceptions in Israelite/biblical religion, including the origins of monotheism.

NEJS 106a: Northwest Semitic Inscriptions David Wright TBD
A study of Phoenician, Hebrew, Edomite, and Moabite inscriptions. Issues of epigraphy, historical grammar, dialectology, and historical reconstruction are examined.

NEJS 106b: Elementary Ugaritic David Wright (MWTh 11-12)
An introduction to the language with study of various texts.

NEJS 122a: Magic and Witchcraft in the Ancient Near East T. Abusch (MW 3:30-5)
Examines magical literature, rituals, and beliefs in the ancient Near East, especially Mesopotamia. Topics such as demonology, illness, prayer, and exorcism are covered; special attention is paid to witchcraft. This course is organized around the close reading of ancient texts.

NEJS 134b: Secular-isms: Yiddish Culture in the Modern World
Ellen Kellman (MWTh 11-12)
This course examines the rise of modern Yiddish secular culture in Eastern Europe and North America with a particular focus on the literature produced. Music, criticism, journalism, drama, film and painting are also studied.

NEJS 137a: The Destruction of European Jewry Antony Polonsky (MWTh 12-1)
Why did the Jews become the subject of genocidal hatred? A systematic examination of the anti-Jewish genocide planned and executed by Nazi Germany and the Jewish and general responses to it.

NEJS 140b: The Jews in Europe to 1791 Chaeran Freeze (TF 12-1:30)
Considers the following topics: church, crusades, state, economy, society, and the Jews; religious and intellectual life, family and community; England, France, and the Germanic lands; Spain, Spanish exile, and Iberian Diaspora; Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation; Eastern Europe and Hasidism; the return to the West; and the Enlightenment and emancipation.

NEJS 142b: Secular-Jews: Lives and Choices from 1750 to the Present
Antony Polonsky (MWTh 10-11)
A survey of the lives of Jews who since 1750 have seen their identity in new ways, either as individuals without religious faith but still identified as Jews or as adherents of ideologies which provided alternative definitions of Jewish identity.

NEJS 146a: World Jewry since 1945 Jonathan Sarna (MW 5-6:30)
Examines the post war Jewish world with special attention to Jewish communities beyond Israel and the United States. Topics include demography, the emergence of new centers, anti-Semitism, identity, and assimilation.

NEJS 162b: It Couldn't Happen Here: Three American Anti-Semitic Episodes
Jonathan Sarna (MW 2-3:30)
A close examination of three American anti-Semitic episodes: U.S. Grant's expulsion of the Jews during the Civil War, the Leo Frank case, and the publication of Henry Ford's *The International Jew*. What do these episodes teach us about anti-Semitic prejudice, about Jews, and about America as a whole?

NEJS 170b: Jewish Education in Modern America Sharon Feiman-Nemser (T 9-12)
An examination of Jewish education from the perspective of learners and teachers. Through fieldwork, reflection, readings, and discussions, students gain a deeper understanding of changing purposes, practices, and outcomes of Jewish education in different times and settings.

NEJS 182a: Jewish Life in Film and Fiction Sylvia Barack-Fishman (T 4:30-7:30)
Film and fiction are windows through which we can view transformations in American Jewish life. Course concentrates on cinematic and literary depictions of religious, socioeconomic, and cultural change over the past half-century through films and fiction, which help to shape shifting definitions of the American Jew. (Film shown M 6:30-9:30 pm)

NEJS 183b: Exhibiting Religion Ellen Smith (T 1:30-4:30)
Focuses on the theory, history, and different cultural practices of exhibiting religion and religious material in the modern world. It considers museum and other public exhibition venues; public/private displays of religion. Includes readings, lectures, class discussions, practicums, field trips, and a final project.

NEJS 185a: Conflict and Consensus in Israeli Society Ilan Troen (MW 3:30-5)
Focuses on key issues in shaping the Israeli experience, including Zionist colonization; immigrant absorption; uses of collective memory of the ancient past and of the Holocaust; political proposals for resolving the conflict; the 1948 war and responsibility for the refugee problems; and whether or how Israel can be both democratic and Jewish. Parallel narratives and comparative perspectives will be extensively used. Course conducted as a seminar.

NEJS 193a: Societies in Conflict: Exploring the Middle East through Authentic Materials
Vardit Ringvald & Ahmad Al-Jallad (MW 2-3:30)
Upper-level language course for advanced learners of Hebrew and Arabic to deepen their understanding of the relationship between conflicting societies, Arab and Israeli, through implementation of their knowledge of the languages.

NEJS 200a: Akkadian Literary Texts I Tzvi Abusch (MW 5-6:30)
In this course students will read and analyze selected Akkadian texts that are commonly referred to as 'historical', such as chronicles, royal inscriptions, and historical-literary compositions. Texts in various scripts and dialects will be studied.

NEJS 192b Jewish Political Thought Yuval Jobani (TTh 5-6:30)
Explores political thought of Jewish people from biblical times to the present, and re-evaluates this tradition from the viewpoint of modern political-philosophical discourse. Exploration of various issues pertaining to politics in Jewish thought such as authority, law, obligation and community will include selections from the Bible and Talmud, midrashic literature, legal responsa, treatises, and pamphlets.

NEJS 210a: Exodus: A Study in Method Marc Brettler (MWTh 12-1)
An examination of the Hebrew text of Exodus in relation to the methodologies of modern biblical scholarship. Particular attention to source criticism, form criticism, and the text in its ancient environment.

NEJS 253a: Zionism and its Critics: Contested Visions of Jewish Nationalism
Eugene Sheppard (T 1:30-4:30)
The development of Jewish nationalist visions into historical context and the different strands of cultural, religious, and political Zionism.

YDSH 10a: Beginning Yiddish Ellen Kellman (MWTh 1-2, Th 2-3)
The first of a four-seminar sequence, this course introduces basic Yiddish grammar and develops reading, writing, and conversational skills.

YDSH 30a: Intermediate Yiddish Ellen Kellman (MWTh 10-11, MW 9:30-10:00)
Third in a four-semester sequence, students continue to develop reading skills as they sample texts from Yiddish prose fiction, folklore, and memoir literature. More contextualized grammatical instruction than previous courses.

OTHER COURSES TAUGHT BY NEJS FACULTY:

FYS 18a: Understanding Evil and Human Destiny Reuven Kimelman (TF 10:30-12)
Introduction to Western classics that deal with the impact of evil on human destiny. Suffering, justice, and death are studied in their relationship with God, the world, and history.

FYS 28b: The Jewish Family: Past and Present Chaeran Freeze (TF 10:30-12)
Examines the transformation of the Jewish family in four different settings (Europe, America, North Africa, and the Middle East) from medieval to modern times, focusing primarily on the internal dynamics of family life and interaction with majority cultures.

CROSS LISTED COURSES:

BISC 2b: Genes, Culture, History: A Case Study Lawrence Wanhg (TTh 5-6:30)

FA 153a: Israeli Art and Visual Culture: Forging Identities Between East and West
Gannit Ankori (MWTh 11-12)

FREN 147a: Jewish Identities in France since 1945 Edward Kaplan (MW 2-3:30)

SOC 124b: Israeli Society Sammy Smooha (TF 1:30-3)