

FROM YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Helena Miller • Helena.miller@ujia.org

In our last Newsletter, Lisa Grant wrote of the NRJE as a “virtual” organisation. And indeed, for most of us, the only time the NRJE seems “real” is in June each year, when we come



together face-to-face as a strong community of researchers, generating new knowledge to strengthen Jewish Education. For all of us though, the real work takes place throughout the year, through our

teaching, writing and publishing. In this newsletter, you will read some of the initiatives that Network members are involved in, both individually and with their institutions.

This Fall Newsletter, coming as it does at Rosh Hashanah, gives us an opportunity to stop and reflect on the past year and look forward to the next. For me, after 18 years at Leo Baeck College (although not in the same role for all that time!) I shall be moving to a new job after the chagim, as Director of Research and Evaluation at UJIA, measuring the impact of their UK and Israel Education programmes, improving practice through evidence-based research, and contributing to the strategy of the UJIA in the UK and in Israel. For many of us this new year will bring challenges and changes of one sort or the other. Please use the Newsletter as a way of telling your colleagues about your professional life - your work, your writing and your activities. Let's try to strengthen this “virtual” organisation even further by learning about, and supporting each other throughout the year and not only in June.

Shana tova.

ARTICLES FOR THE SPRING NEWSLETTER SHOULD REACH ME BY 7TH MARCH 2008

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EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION

Lisa Grant • Lgrant54@gmail.com

One of the best things about the annual NRJE conference is the richness of conversation that takes place, both in formal sessions and among colleagues at meals and break times. The range of papers and panels sparked lively exchanges on a range of significant issues in Jewish education as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter. For me, the through-line of the conference was on Israel education, with several sessions exploring questions about purposes and processes of Israel trips and other educational programs. This topic stood out because it is an area of particular interest and activity for me. Based on the favorable reports from our participants, I imagine many others found conversation partners on a range of research questions and challenges.



Another way that we continue these conversations about research is by engaging with colleagues in related fields. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find an invitation to join the ASSJ – Association for the Social Scientific Study of Judaism. There is already considerable overlap among our memberships and our research interests and we hope that a closer relationship between the two organizations will help each of us to grow.

Of course, we also extend our conversations in writing through the *Journal of Jewish Education*. The rich quality of material presented in the Journal's pages inspires individual thinking, but the addition of periodic invitations to a broad audience to reflect in writing about someone else's research has created another forum where we can extend our thinking through continuing

conversations about "big ideas" in Jewish education. The most recent issue (Vol. 73, No. 2) builds a conversation around informal education. An earlier volume (Vo. 71, No. 2) did the same by inviting reflections from a variety of perspectives on *Visions of Jewish Education* (Fox, Scheffler, and Marom).

Our community of researchers and thoughtful practitioners is an international one and we benefit greatly by extending the conversation beyond North American borders as well. We have several loyal NRJE members from the UK and Israel who make the long trek each year to join us on this side of the Atlantic and we are greatly enriched by their participation. Many of us delighted in the participation of colleagues from Mexico at the 2005 conference at Brandeis. Simply put, we all gain from this cross-cultural exchange with colleagues who share similar interests and commitments.

Next year, the membership of the NRJE will have the opportunity to extend the conversation further by participating in a conference sponsored by our colleagues in the Israel Network for Research in Jewish Education. This conference will take place in early January, 2009 at both the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Oranim College in Tivon. You will be hearing much more about it in the coming months. While we certainly want your continued participation at the NRJE conferences at Siegal College in Cleveland in 2008 and Yeshiva University in New York in 2009, we also urge you to consider attending the Israeli conference that will take place mid-way between. The field of researchers in Jewish education is a small one. We grow through collaboration and intellectual exchange in writing and conversation. We hope you can be part of this conversation in multiple ways and venues, to further our knowledge and inform the field.

MESSAGE FROM THE 2007 PROGRAM CHAIR

Ofra Backenroth • ofbackenroth@jtsa.edu

This year, the 21st Annual Conference of the Network for Research in Jewish Education, was hosted by the American Jewish University in sunny Los Angeles. It was a small, intimate, and lively conference. The conference featured wonderful variety of papers, spotlight presentation and consultation over coffee, presented by academics, practitioners, and graduate students. Several presenters were new to the Network, and many were colleagues who return to the conference year after year. For many participants, especially for graduate students, the opportunity to network and meet other researchers in a relaxed and accepting environment was the highlight of the conference. This year we added a doctoral student session to the regular program. The "regular" Graduate students' network session was lead by Rebecca Shargel and Diane Schuster and was well attended by new and not so new participants. A second graduate students' session was chaired by Hanah Bor. The session was titled *On the*

Other Side of PhD: Planning and Pursuing your Career in which a panel presented three general career trajectories—1) School/administration/teaching, 2) Academic and, 3) Researcher/consultant. The panelists responded to questions exploring their professional journeys, including goals, motivations, expectations, surprises and joys and challenges of the job hunt. There were nine consultations over coffee presented by graduate students as well as university professors looking for comments and responses to their relatively new research projects. Among the highlight of the conference was a paper presented by Miriam Heller Stern "*Your Children—Will They Be Yours?*" in which Miriam discussed the question of Jewish Survival and the reshaping of American Jewish education from 1916 to 1944. Opening her session with a visual from a 1927 pamphlet for Jewish parents and donors, Miriam described the historical obsession with Jewish education as the magic bullet for Jewish survival in America.

She underscored a familiar warning to the Jewish community: unless they provided their children with a modernized Jewish education, they ran the risk of losing their children. In addition, the conference featured a few spotlight sessions. Many participated in *The case of cases: Exploring alternatives in the design of engaging Jewish educational research* presented by Alex Pomson. The presenter explored the tension between applied educational research of case studies and the translation of research findings into the world of practice. The audience was invited to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the different formats for presenting this study.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a forum for discussion about the major issues in the field of Jewish education in a warm and supportive environment. This accepting yet intellectually rigorous and provocative atmosphere is one of the strengths of the conference.

We hope you'll join us next year.

NOTES FROM A FIRST-TIMER

Vicky Gilpin • Gilpin_vicky@hotmail.com

The beautiful view from the LA campus of the newly-renamed American Jewish University, some excellent kosher meals, and a schedule filled with more interesting discussions than one person could join were reason enough for attending the NRJE 2007 conference. However, a primary theme of the three days was the awareness of collegiality within the field of research in Jewish education. The graduate student discussion and new member orientation meeting served to emphasize the NRJE's goal of creating a space for scholarly exchange and connections unhindered by geography, but the discussions and interactions among the participants reinforced this concept.

The atmosphere was inviting and filled with scholarly rigor, as passionate conversations about research in Jewish education were held with some of the only other people in the world willing to have passionate conversations about research in Jewish education. The excitement during idea exchanges indicated that most participants eagerly anticipate the conference for the intellectual as well as social gains. Being able to cogently discuss the intricacies of aspects of Jewish education among peers, people who understand the specifics of Jewish education without a preliminary twenty-minute context-setting overture, is a rare gift to be treasured.

Distinguished scholars and soon-to-be-distinguished graduate students conversed throughout the conference as colleagues. Never did I feel the hint that graduate students' thoughts were considered as lesser contributions or unworthy for addition into the discussions. In fact, had I not known some of the published scholars by their works and some graduate students by the early introduction session, I would never have "guessed" at years of experience in the field based solely on verbal interaction; everyone brought insights into the discussions that further developed the concepts. Even the emphasis on the obligatory conference nametags was on first names sans titles. Interaction between scholars as colleagues was enhanced by the lack of distinction; all participants appeared to be accessible for questions and comments about their works.

Other conferences I have attended have focused on finished works. The prominence of works-in-progress enhanced the feeling that the NRJE conference achieves the ideal imagined for successful department meetings, scholarly interaction, or networking prospects. The accessibility of each scholar's work, whether the dissertation of a new researcher or a book from a

foremost researcher in the field, created an environment of collegiality that bordered on utopian. The opportunity to absorb varying perspectives from scholars in Jewish education caused my usually aggressive academic style to mellow into a beneficial mode of active listening. My normal pit-bull approach to intellectual stimuli was sated, even saturated, by information.

I benefited from talking to graduate students at brick-and-mortar Jewish education programs or universities, as I am working through an online education program without a department in Jewish studies and have had to "teach myself" the Jewish educational aspects. This conference allowed me to talk to others about sources, methodology, and upcoming works in a way unavailable in my educational situation. In addition, this experience allowed me to expand on online education with people interested in the technological future of

Jewish education.

Also of note was the possibility for cooperative

studies initiated by the NRJE face-to-face connection; as much a fan as I am of online learning, I recognize the benefits of standing in room and informally chatting about future research studies and mutual academic interests.

As well as providing a space for interaction among researchers and discussions of future and ongoing projects, the NRJE conference demonstrated areas for future focus. As one of the few representatives from between the coasts, I feel that there is a need for more researchers in the middle of the country to become involved in the conversation and wonder whether many are merely unaware that a conversation is taking place. It is also necessary to ensure that practitioners in Jewish education outside of the research community are connected to the vast resources of information compiled by members of NRJE; researchers are not the only people who can benefit from knowing about the best research in the field. In addition, I have clarified some of my personal professional goals after meeting so many amazing people involved in Jewish education; I hope to continue to advocate for a connection between Jews in miniscule Jewish communities in the Midwest (and I have a feeling my region offices will be hearing from me when I have this dissertation under my belt). Finally, the conference demonstrated the continued need for researchers to have the safe discourse and intellectual camaraderie provided by the NRJE for the future benefit of Jewish education. I hope to see everyone in Cleveland!

The accessibility of each scholar's work ... created an environment of collegiality that bordered on utopian.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN JEWISH EDUCATION: UPDATE FROM THE 2007 NRJE CONFERENCE

By Meredith Katz, Teachers College • 2mlk@netzero.net

Building on successful meetings at the 2005 and 2006 NRJE conferences and some mid-year gatherings, the Doctoral Students in Jewish Education (DSJE) hosted two sessions at the recent NRJE conference in LA. The first session was held during the conference registration period, providing attending doctoral students with the opportunity to get to know each other. We shared our research topics, stages of dissertation work and general concerns about the process in our respective research settings and home institutions. Establishing these connections early on helped us take full advantage of the conference: we compared notes on sessions and provided support to our colleagues who were presenting. Some suggestions we generated for the future included creating a link on the NRJE website through which to share bibliographies, sample proposals and grant/funding opportunities and trying to connect with our doctoral student counterparts in Israel. Inspired by Miriam Heller Stern's presentation after her very recent dissertation defense, we would also like to facilitate the attendance at each Network conference of those of us who have completed the defense process in the past year, so that we might benefit from their experiences.

The second session dedicated to graduate students was titled, "On the Other Side of PhD: Planning and Pursuing your Career." Chaired by Hana Bor of Baltimore Hebrew University, panelists presented their professional experiences in a variety of positions in Jewish education. Mitch Malkus discussed his many roles as educational director of Pressman Academy in LA. Tali Hyman reflected on her recently completed academic job search and described the scope of her new position as professor of Jewish Education at HUC-LA. Tali had also interviewed Wendy Rosov, Director of the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA and Bethamie Horowitz, independent consultant and recent Research Director for the Mandel Foundation. Their responses provided a perspective on research and agency work. The panelists' presentations were received enthusiastically and were followed by a robust question and answer period.

The doctoral students greatly appreciate the efforts of the Network to incorporate our sessions into the Conference schedule. Approximately fifteen graduate students participated in one or both of these sessions.

The next meeting of the Doctoral Students in Jewish Education has been scheduled for Sunday, November 11 at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, preceding a conference being held there to honor the memory and work of Professor Seymour Fox, z"l. For more information, please contact Rebecca Shargel at Rebecca36@gmail.com.

For more information about DSJE please contact Renee Rubin Ross at rjr300@nyu.edu.

We would like to thank the Covenant Foundation, Yeshiva University, New York University and the Network for Research in Jewish Education for supporting the efforts of the Doctoral Students in Jewish Education.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE 2007 YOUNG SCHOLAR AWARDS

Diane Schuster • Dt.schuster@verizon.net

Leslie Ginsparg, a doctoral student at NYU, whose dissertation research is an historical study (using archival data and oral history interviews) of Jewish girls' education in post World War II America.

Michael Kay, a doctoral student at NYU, whose dissertation interviews focus on issues of ideological diversity as addressed by leadership in pluralistic Jewish schools.

Rebecca Shargel, a doctoral student at JTS, whose field observation dissertation research asks the question: How do middle school students make meaning of classical Jewish texts?

Each of the winners received \$650 to offset expenses associated with the travel involved in collecting data for their projects.

As described in the Spring 2007 of the NRJE newsletter, the Young Scholars Fund was established in 1999 to assist graduate students with their individual research projects. Between 1999 and 2006, ten Young Scholars were honored (in the words of the Award) for their "potential to present significant advances in knowledge or in methodology to carry the field forward."

The applicant pool for the 2007 Young Scholar Awards demonstrated that compelling research in Jewish education is being conducted by talented individuals whose scholarship is "pushing" the field in diverse and creative ways. Indeed, the number and range of impressive applications for this year's awards reached an all-time high. The Awards Committee reviewed nine applications from graduate students at five different institutions; the theoretical orientations of the applicants ranged from Jewish identity formation to curriculum planning to leadership in Jewish schools.

Faced with the spread of proposals, the Committee was challenged to review its selection criteria and to consider potential biases about what is "cutting edge" in Jewish educational research. As a group, we resolved to revisit our criteria and to make them as explicit as possible to future applicants. We also grappled with the reality of our limited supply of funds for supporting our young scholars and speculated that the Network will want to do some deliberate fundraising on behalf of our awards program.

The announcement about the 2008 Young Scholars Awards will be distributed in late fall 2007 to Network members; applications for the awards will be due in late March 2008.

NETWORK FOR RESEARCH IN JEWISH EDUCATION CONFERENCE JUNE 1 - 3, 2008 • SIEGAL COLLEGE, CLEVELAND

Jeffrey Schein • jschein@siegalcollege.edu

Siegal College is glad to be hosting the NRJE conference this year from June 1-3. We had previously hosted the Research conference in 1991 and 1997. Lifsa Schachter and Jeffrey Schein will be serving as host co-chairs.

SOME FEATURES OF SIEGAL AND THE CLEVELAND JEWISH COMMUNITY THAT WE HOPE WILL ENRICH THE CONFERENCE

- an opportunity to visit the two-year-old Maltz Museum of American Jewish History which is located right next to Siegal College;
- pre and post conference opportunities.

Two of our Judaic faculty members (Dr. Alan Levenson and Dr. Brian Amkraut) will be offering Sunday afternoon workshops on topics that we believe are of particular interest and value to Jewish educators. Dr. Roberta Goodman will be offering a post-conference course (June 3-6) on educational evaluation for educators and community professionals.

- A number of NRJE members have come as guest scholars to our Friday Seminar Series.

This year this series is devoted to research in Jewish education in the form of a course "Reading, Understanding, and Doing Jewish Educational Research". We believe this will further engage the interest of many of our local rabbis and education directors and create a natural bridge for their participation in the research conference.

Again, we look forward to hosting the conference this year.

THE JOURNAL OF JEWISH EDUCATION

HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR CONFERENCE PAPER YET?

The *Journal of Jewish Education* welcomes all submissions that make an original contribution to the knowledge base in Jewish education. Presenters at the 2007 Conference especially are encouraged to submit their papers.

Manuscripts should be submitted according to the Instructions for Authors available online at the *Journal of Jewish Education* website: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/15244113.asp>

CALL FOR NEW RESEARCH

If you are involved in or know of research reports and dissertations relevant to Jewish education that will be available between now and Summer 2008, please submit a brief description, including how one could gain access, to JournalofJEd@aol.com. All appropriate submissions will be included in the *Journal of Jewish Education's* 2008 Annual Research Update.

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR AN UPCOMING THEMED ISSUE TEACHING AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Intent to submit requested by January 1, 2007; Manuscript due by July 1, 2007

For many centuries, studying, teaching and learning have been perceived and cultivated as important values of Jewish life and culture. From the biblical dictum "teach your children diligently" to rabbinic narratives about the nature of the relationship between teacher and student, from the emphasis on hevruta learning (a special kind of partner in learning) to ideas about what subjects can appropriately be taught at given ages, Jewish tradition has expressed its interest in a wide array of themes that are connected to teaching and learning. Recent interest in topics related to teaching, learning and learning to teach invite us to attend to these areas in the contexts of Jewish education.

The *Journal* invites articles that explore current issues and challenges in Jewish Education related to teaching, learning and learning to teach, including research about the preparation and professional development of teachers,

their classrooms, their students and the families and communities with whom they work. Research is to be understood broadly and submissions can fall into one of three broad categories: empirical work, including a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research; thick descriptions and analysis of programs and practices; and conceptual analyses, which may include philosophical or historical studies. Successful articles will describe the context of their inquiry, detail the research methods used, highlight key findings, and discuss implications for the field of Jewish education and other cognate fields.

Manuscripts should be submitted according to the Instructions for Authors available online at the *Journal of Jewish Education* website:

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/ujjeauth.asp>

QUESTIONS REGARDING
SUBMISSIONS OR ANY OTHER
JOURNAL BUSINESS SHOULD BE
DIRECTED TO:

JournalofJEd@aol.com.

**TEACHING RABBINIC LITERATURE:
BRIDGING SCHOLARSHIP
AND PEDAGOGY**

Sunday, January 27-Monday, January 28, 2008

This conference will bring together teachers of rabbinic literature from schools and synagogues, universities and yeshivot, in a set of shared conversations about their work.

<http://www.brandeis.edu/centers/mandel/TeachingRabbinics.html>

Visit the conference website above for more information about the conference, and the ongoing research project, the Initiative on Bridging Scholarship and Pedagogy in Jewish Studies, of which it is a part.

From the main conference web page, you can find links to a current list of participants, a Call for Proposals, and an online form to request registration information when it becomes available in the fall. You can also download and print a Save the Date card for the conference.

Jon A. Levisohn, Ph.D.
Conference Chair
MandelCenter for Studies in Jewish Education
Brandeis University
Levisohn@brandeis.edu

**NRJE CONFERENCE
JUNE 2008**

**Look for the
Call for Papers
on our website
from
Mid-October 2007**

nrje.org

Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

**PEDAGOGY AND
CURRICULUM IN
CONTEMPORARY
JEWISH EDUCATION**

A Conference in Memory of
Professor Seymour Fox z"l.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2007
4:30 PM – 9:30 PM
and
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2007
9:00 AM - 5:30 PM**

The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education of the Jewish Theological Seminary is proud to announce a symposium in memory of our teacher and friend, Professor Seymour Fox z"l.

Professor Lee Shulman, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, will be the opening day presenter. Many of the speakers are people who were Professor Fox's students and/or colleagues and whose work is closely related to his own concerns. They will include reflections on Professor Fox's life and career.

For more information, please contact:
Faslyn Felicien at fafelicien@jtsa.edu or
Ofra Backenroth at ofbackenroth@jtsa.edu

Please print out and complete the registration form on the next page.

Mail it along with your check to:

William Davidson Graduate School
Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway, Box #55
New York, NY 10027

SEYMOUR FOX CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Title (Mr/Ms/Dr)	First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name		
Professional Title		Organization			
Address		City	State	Zip	Country
Phone Number		E-Mail Address			

CONFERENCE FEE: \$50.00 if paid by November 5, 2007 • \$75.00 at the door
Fee includes dinner on Sunday, November 11th and lunch on
November 12th as well as snacks and drinks during the conference.

Registration Deadline: November 5, 2007

MEALS

Please indicate which meal(s) you will join us for:

Sunday, November 11 **Dinner** _____ Monday, November 12 **Lunch** _____

Special Dietary Requirements: Vegetarian _____ Other: _____

PAYMENT

Please make your check* payable to

The William Davidson Graduate School and mail to: 3080 Broadway, Box 55, New York, NY 10027

*No other form of payment will be accepted. Payment enclosed: _____

HOTEL INFORMATION

We have a block of rooms with the following hotels for discounted rates. In order to reserve rooms with these hotels, please contact the hotel directly and be sure to mention the Seymour Fox Conference at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Please read the information carefully as these hotels have different costs and dates by which the rooms need to be reserved.

ON THE AVENUE HOTEL is located at 77th Street and Broadway in Manhattan. Their rate is \$299/night. In order to reserve a room at this hotel at this group rate, please call 212-362-1100 by September 30th.

THE HOTEL NEWTON is located at 2528 Broadway, located at 95th Street and Broadway. Their rate is \$300/night. To make a reservation at this hotel at this group rate, please call 1-800-643-5553 by October 9th. For this hotel, also mention that this is in relation to conference #163.

THE HILTON HOTEL is located on 2117 Route 4 (Eastbound) in Fort Lee, NJ. Their rate is \$152/night + tax. In order to reserve a room at this hotel at this group rate, please call 201-461-9000 by October 19th. They provide shuttle transportation to 56th Street and 6th Avenue in Manhattan. In order to get to JTS from this stop, take the 1 train from the 59th Street/Columbus Circle Station, which can be found by walking 3 blocks north and 2 blocks west of the shuttle drop off point. Take this train to the 116th Street/Columbia University Station and then walk 6 blocks north to JTS.

THE HOLIDAY INN is located on 2339 Route 4 in Fort Lee, NJ. Their rate is \$129/Night + tax. In order to reserve a room at this hotel at this group rate, please call 1-800-972-3160 by October 9th. No shuttles are provided to or from this hotel. Contact New Jersey transit for more information on bus/train schedules from the Fort Lee area to Manhattan.

The following hotels are located near the conference site, but no reduced group rates are available. Should you wish to make a reservation, please contact them directly.

THE BEST WESTERN is located at 2330 Route 4 in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Reservations can be made by calling 201-461-7000.

THE DAYS INN is located on 94th Street and Broadway. Reservations can be made by calling 212-866-6400.

A CALL FOR PAPERS:

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EDUCATIONAL AUDACITY

An International Conference and Edited Volume in Honor of
Abraham Joshua Heschel's Centennial Year

Melton Centre for Jewish Education, Hebrew University • December 23rd–24th, 2007

Heschel's life work inspired a generation of students to combine their religious beliefs and their commitments to social change. The iconic photo of Heschel marching with Martin Luther King memorialized in the popular imagination a passion for social justice as a Jewish and as a religious issue. Forty years later, Heschel's message still reverberates whenever Jews speak about social justice. Within the peace movement, within the movements for social equality and economic justice, and within the environmental movement Jewish activists revisit Heschel's teachings. Informal and formal Jewish educational programs can be found throughout the Jewish world which foster social justice as a Jewish issue, many of which can trace their lineage to Heschel's work. Heschel's work can be seen in the larger context of religious thinkers, educators and activists throughout the world who saw their theology as motivating their politics of social justice and change.

The conference aims to critically examine the links between religious-cultural thought, Jewish and others - and social, economic and environmental justice, using Heschel's legacy as a point of departure. There will be a particular focus on educational manifestations both in theory and practice. For Jewish education, where issues of identification and continuity have dominated the community agenda, the conference aims to reassert social criticism and political action as an organizing principle. We plan to publish the conference papers in an edited volume, which can serve as a catalyst for reasserting the socially critical dimensions of religious-cultural educational philosophy and practice.

Papers that address the following aspects of religious-cultural thought and education are particularly welcome:

Heschel's Religious-Social-Political-Educational Agenda

We are interested in critical social, historical, literary and/or philosophical examinations of Heschel's agenda. We are also interested in situating Heschel's ideas within the larger movements for social change of the twentieth century, both in the United States and elsewhere.

Papers comparing Heschel's work to others who combine/d theology, social justice and political activism are similarly encouraged, as are original attempts to articulate the nexus between religious-cultural thought, social justice and political activism. Explorations of the place and relevance of socially critical theologies/educational philosophies in a 21st century of essentialized/fundamentalist ideologies are sought, as well.

Religious-Cultural Education as Social Criticism

Education is far too often focused on recapitulating the cultural, social and political norms of the larger society. Heschel saw the prophetic voice offering an alternative educational model, one which challenges and confronts societal values and ruling hegemonies. We are interested in papers which critique contemporary educational philosophy and/or practice from such a Heschelian perspective, or papers that will critically examine those educational ideas and/or practices which assert a tension between education and society, seeing religious-ethnic-cultural education challenging values of the dominant culture. Papers which explore educational issues of environmental sustainability, economic justice, peace studies and/or social criticism from such a religious-cultural perspective are also encouraged. Case studies of educational practices are welcomed.

Israeli Education and Society

Religious-cultural narratives in Israeli society are increasingly associated with fundamentalist theological streams and right-wing political agendas. We are interested in exploring the places where theology, religious-cultural identity and social justice agendas have merged. Studies of historical or contemporary examples within Israeli society are sought, as are examples of such expressions in the Middle East. Recently, there has been a plethora of educational initiatives in Israel, linking Jewish identity with social criticism and action, many aimed at youth after High School. Research critically examining such programs is also encouraged.

We welcome a full range of theoretical and methodological approaches, both from

academics and reflective practitioners. Submissions may take a variety of forms including articles presenting new empirical work in this area, case studies or theoretical essays on these topics.

For full consideration please submit abstracts by September 30, 2007.

Guidelines for Abstract Submission.

By **September 30, 2007** we need to receive from you,

1) An **abstract** of the intended paper between **800-1000** words. The abstract should be clear regarding the subject and the theoretical/methodological and empirical nature of your work. The length of the abstract follows from our need to make sure consistent academic quality can be sustained thus furthering the chances that potential contributors invited to complete the manuscripts will indeed have them accepted for publication. **Still final decisions will be taken after a due refereed process is conducted.**

2) A **short CV** up to 70 words including affiliation, discipline, and areas of research.

The abstract and the CV should be sent as an **attachment**. The manuscript should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around. Please use a 12-point Times New Roman font. Name the attachment: Last name.doc (ex. Schwartz.doc)

The paper will not be able to exceed 7,500 words including notes and references. Decisions with regard to accepted papers will be received by October 15th, 2007.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Dr. Eilon Schwartz, *Melton Centre for Jewish Education, Hebrew University; The Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership*

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Dr. Marc Silverman, *Melton Centre for Jewish Education, Hebrew University*
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Dr. Jeremy Benstein, *Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership*
Jeremy@heschel.org.il

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

BURTON COHEN has published “Jewish Camping” in the new second edition of the Encyclopaedia Judaica (Thomson/Gale, 2007), Volume 11, pp 272-275. No such article appeared in the first edition.

SHAUL FEINBERG is the acting chair of the Israel Chapter, of The International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies. Colleagues are looking towards summer 2008 for the next major academic convocation.

Shaul is retiring from the Hebrew Union College after twenty six years of service, noting thirty six years since ordination. We send him warm wishes from the NRJE. Please note all correspondence to Shaul should now be sent to prf@netvision.net.il

BENJAMIN M. JACOBS wrote the entry on “Jewish Day Schools” for the forthcoming Cambridge Dictionary of Jewish Religion, History and Culture, edited by Judith Baskin.

HELENA MILLER has accepted the position of Director of Research and Evaluation at the UJIA, London. She has published “Accountability through Inspection: Monitoring and Evaluating Jewish Schools” (Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2007)

MICHELLE LYNN SACHS successfully defended her dissertation at New York University, titled “Inside Sunday School: Cultural and Religious Logistics at Work at the Intersection of Religion and Education”. Michelle has started a new position as Assistant Professor of Jewish Education at JTS.

Mazal tov to JEFFREY AND DEBORAH SCHEIN, on the marriage of their son Jonah, due to take place within days of the 2008 NRJE Conference of which Jeffrey is the co-chair!

TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM JESNA

Leora Isaacs • lisaacs@jesna.org • www.jesna.org

Redesigning Jewish Education for the 21st Century

The need to “link silos” is one major recommendation in the Lippman Kanfer Institute’s first major publication, entitled *Redesigning Jewish Education for the 21st Century*. The Working Paper is the product of more than a year of research and deliberations by a distinguished Advisory Council of educators, religious, communal, and philanthropic leaders, and experts from domains outside Jewish education. It proposes a set of “design principles” to enable Jewish education to be maximally relevant and effective in our rapidly changing world and outlines a set of strategic initiatives that can help the educational system adapt more rapidly and thoroughly to these changes. The Working Paper builds on innovative work currently taking place in the field and emphasizes the need for both continuing experimentation and systemic changes that address perennial barriers to education’s effectiveness. A hard copy of the report can be obtained by emailing vernessa@jesna.org; an electronic version can also be downloaded from the JESNA website www.jesna.org.

Making Jewish Education Work: Community Hebrew High Schools - Lessons Learned from Research & Evaluation in the Field

The first publication in JESNA’s new series, *Making Jewish Education Work*, focuses on shared challenges in improving Community Hebrew High Schools. The report contributes to the growing body of knowledge about what it takes to provide effective, high-quality post-bar/bat mitzvah educational experiences in other words, what works under what conditions.

The lessons learned that are presented in *Making Jewish Education Work: Community Hebrew High Schools* are based on key findings from evaluations conducted by JESNA’s Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education as well as other current research. By synthesizing what we have learned about community Hebrew high school programs nationwide, we provide policy makers, educators, educational professionals, lay leaders, and parents with valuable insights to help them improve and expand Jewish educational experiences for this significant and impressionable age group. We hope that community leaders will use the publication (and its companion summary brochure) to stimulate discussion, new directions, and support for Jewish educational experiences for teens. The publication was produced by NRJE member, Dr. Tobin Belzer. A hard copy of the report can be obtained by emailing vernessa@jesna.org; an electronic version can also be downloaded from the JESNA website www.jesna.org.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF JEWRY (ASSJ)

Harriet Hartman • Hartman@rowan.edu

I'd like to invite each of you to become acquainted with the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry (ASSJ). We are a cross-disciplinary international organization of individuals, founded in 1971, whose research concerns the Jewish people throughout the world. We network through a listserv, our website <http://www.assj.org> provides information and offers links to sites of related interest, we publish *Contemporary Jewry*, a peer-reviewed journal that draws on the range of social scientific fields and methodologies and encourages cutting-edge research and lively debate. Each year we honor an individual who has made a significant contribution to the social scientific study of Jewry, with the Marshall Sklare Award; our honoree addresses the Marshall Sklare Memorial session at the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS). In addition to meetings at AJS, we cosponsor sessions at a variety of other professional meetings, such as the American Sociological Association (ASA), the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), and the Association for Israel Studies.

If your research is at all related to social science (and most educational research is), you would benefit from joining us, and we would benefit from your input! Some of you already are members, but if you are not, please take a look at our website and download a membership form there. Membership is nominal and includes a subscription to *Contemporary Jewry*, with special rates for students, couples, Israeli colleagues, and retirees. And consider submitting your research to *Contemporary Jewry*. We are always looking for new material.

For more information, feel free to contact me. I look forward to welcoming each and every one of you to ASSJ!

Harriet Hartman
President, ASSJ
Hartman@rowan.edu

Merkaz i.t. L'Morim,
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York University and the
UJA Federation Board of Jewish
Education of Greater Toronto,
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