

# Academy for Jewish Religion | CA

*Serving as a bridge between the pillars of Judaism*

Spring/Summer 2006 Volume 1 No.3



Our mission is to train men and women to become spiritual leaders who will serve all Jews and Jewish movements, who will be steeped in the teachings and traditions of the sacred texts and, at the same time, will make Torah real and relevant to our lives as Jews today.



## News briefs from...

### The Rabbinical School

Dr. Shlomit Baruch, Dr. M. Shai Cherry and Dr. Michael Menitoff have joined the Rabbinical School Faculty. Dr. Baruch's writing has appeared in the *British Society for Phenomenology*. Dr. Cherry was the *Mellon Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought* at Vanderbilt University and Dr. Menitoff, who is also a rabbi, has been actively involved in interfaith work which has included meeting with the late Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

### The Cantorial School

Cantor Susan Caro of Wilshire Boulevard Temple has joined the Cantorial School Faculty. A Vice President of the American Conference of Cantors, she was at the forefront of the publication of *Divrei Shir*, the curriculum from the ACC for Adult Education in the area of Jewish music.

### The Chaplaincy Program

Rabbi Carla Howard, the co-founder and Executive Director of the Jewish Hospice Project – Los Angeles, and Vivian Feintech, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with a private psychotherapy practice, have joined the faculty of the Chaplaincy Program.

# We've Arrived!

In January 2006, just over five years since our inception, the Academy for Jewish Religion, CA (AJR, CA) moved from our original location in West Los Angeles to our new home at The Yitzhak Rabin Hillel Center for Jewish Life at UCLA. The building is an architectural gem. Our administration, faculty and students are now working and studying in an aesthetically uplifting environment that includes spacious classrooms and a library offering far more resources than ever before. Our new campus also provides us with a very exciting opportunity for exchange and interaction with Hillel rabbis and UCLA faculty members and students. In this issue, you will learn more about the fact that we continue to attract illustrious faculty and highly accomplished students. Our alumni are assuming leadership positions throughout the country and our work is being recognized in major national and local publications. On March 19th, we held our most successful fundraiser to date, honoring our co-founder, Rabbi Stan Levy, and celebrating the move to our new home.

It is a unique institution where everyone involved - students, faculty, administration and board members – repeatedly talk about how honored and privileged they feel to be associated with it. And yet, that is precisely the case of the Academy for Jewish Religion, CA. While we have indeed “arrived” in terms of our new campus, all of us associated with the Academy will continue to work diligently to assure even greater accomplishments in the years to come.

**Rabbi Stan Levy**  
*Chair, Board of Governors*

**Rabbi Mordecai Finley**  
*Provost*

**Rabbi Mel Gottlieb**  
*Dean, Rabbinical School and Chaplaincy Program*

**Dr. Tamar Frankiel**  
*Dean of Students*

**Hazzan Nathan Lam**  
*Dean, Cantorial School*

**Hazzan Eva Robbins**  
*Director of Admissions and Recruitment*

## Alumni Making an Impact

Only a few years since our first ordination, Academy alumni are already making an impact. The following is part of a series of profiles of our recent graduates.

### Rabbi Bonnie Sharfman, '05

**Current position:** The Assistant Rabbi of Temple Kol Ami, a congregation of 400 families in Scottsdale, AZ.



**Making an Impact:** As of June 2006, will serve as Treasurer of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Phoenix, and has created a women's Rosh Chodesh study and spirituality group which now has 50 women meeting monthly.

### Cantor Phil Baron, '05

**Current position:** A Cantor at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, CA.



**Making an Impact:** Among his responsibilities, conducts ShabbasFest, a highly creative monthly service featuring traditional and contemporary Jewish stories, innovative music and much celebration, attended by approximately 400 people.



# Greenfeld Cantorial Library of Jewish Music

It is with tremendous pride that we announce that Cantor Judy and Michael Greenfeld have given the Academy a gift of \$25,000 in order to establish AJR, CA's Greenfeld Cantorial Library of Jewish Music. This initial funding will help to set up the Library with the goal of it becoming an invaluable physical and programming resource for cantors, soloists, musicians, students and laypeople interested in the richness of Jewish music. In discussing the impetus for the gift, Cantor Greenfeld said "Nothing like this currently exists and, after receiving a superlative education and training from the Academy's Cantorial School, I felt an obligation to help ensure the continuation of this important field. My hope is that others will join Mike and I and that, together, we can create something truly magnificent."



Michael and Cantor Judy Greenfeld

## Board of Governors Welcomes Four New Members

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

**Cantor Judy Greenfeld** is the founder of the Nachshon Minyan, a unique community (based in Encino, CA) that observes Shabbat and year round Jewish holidays and created the inspiring "Sermons for the Soul" series. The co-author (with Dr. Tamar Frankiel) of two books on a modern approach to traditional prayer, she has also recently accepted a position to serve as Cantor of Adat Shalom in Los Angeles.

**Charles Hamrell, MD** is a Board Certified Obstetrician/Gynecologist and the founder of Women's Healthcare Associates of Santa Monica. The former Chief of Staff of Santa Monica Hospital, he also served on the board of that institution and is the "rebbeitzen" of Ahavat Torah, the Los Angeles congregation founded by his wife, AJR, CA alum, Rabbi Miriam Hamrell.

**Rabbi Yocheved Mintz**, representing the Academy Alumni, is the spiritual leader of Valley Outreach Synagogue of Las Vegas, the only Reconstructionist congregation in Nevada. Ordained by AJR, CA in 2004, she is also a member of the Board of Rabbis of Southern Nevada, the Clark County Ministerial Association, and the Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada.

**Barry L. Wolfe**, is the CEO and Managing Director of Marsh Private Client Life Insurance Services. He serves on the board of the Jewish Community Center at Milken and is actively involved with a number of organizations and institutions including Shomrei Torah Synagogue in Northridge.

## Ordination 2006

On Monday, May 29, 2006, we will be celebrating our fourth Rabbinic ordination ceremony as well as the first graduation ceremony of our Chaplaincy Program. Held at Stephen S. Wise Temple, the event draws hundreds of friends, family and Academy supporters who come to honor this remarkable milestone in the lives of the graduates. Seven rabbinic students will

be ordained this year. They are Elisheva Beyer, Diane Alynn Elliot, Liat Yardeni-Funk, Sara Lonstein Gilbert, Malka Mittelman, Avraham Navah, and Paul Franklin Shleffar. Three students, Ruth Belonsky, Judith C. Sommerstein, and D'vorah Epstein will have the distinction of being the first graduates of the Chaplaincy Program.



Left to Right: Ruth Belonsky, Liat Yardeni-Funk, Judith Sommerstein, Avraham Navah, Sara Lonstein Gilbert, D'vorah Epstein, Malka Mittelman (Not pictured: Elisheva Beyer, Diane Elliot, Paul Shleffar)

## Prominent Positions Go To AJR|CA Grads

We are proud to announce that two AJR, CA alumna have assumed prominent positions with congregations in Beverly Hills and Sedona, AZ. Rabbi Lynn Brody is now the Associate Rabbi at Temple of the Arts in Beverly Hills, a unique 1400 member synagogue where the prayer experience is heightened through the use of performing and visual arts. After a national search, Rabbi Alicia Magal has been chosen to lead the Jewish Community of Sedona and the Verde Valley, a congregation in Arizona whose emphasis on providing a common spiritual bond has attracted members representing the spectrum of Jewish backgrounds and denominations.

## AJR|CA In The News

Over the last several months, the Academy has been in the news! The March issue of *Hadassah Magazine* (with 250,000 subscribers) had two articles mentioning the Academy and those affiliated with it. AJR, CA graduate, Rabbi Min Kantrowitz, was among those discussed in "Women Rabbis I – Second Careers," and fellow alum, Rabbi Tsipi Gabai, was prominently featured in "Women Rabbis II – Eastern Tropes." On March 20th, the *Daily Journal*, the leading newspaper for California lawyers, ran "Jewish Academy Honors Manatt Attorney for His Spiritual Work," a major profile of AJR, CA's co-founder, Rabbi Stan Levy.



## Student Profile: From Hollywood to the Cantorate

For AJR, CA cantorial student, Lorna Lembeck, a Jew by Choice, the path to the cantorate originated in Hollywood. Lorna's career as a singer and actress on stage, television and film kept her very busy for many years. Known then as Lorna Patterson, she appeared in countless musical theater productions. Her long list of film and television credits includes starring in

the title role of the series *Private Benjamin*, and as the singing stewardess in the movie *Airplane*. Since 2003, she has served as the cantorial soloist for the Creative Arts Temple in Los Angeles and is the High Holiday soloist and cantorial intern for the Malibu Jewish Center and Synagogue.

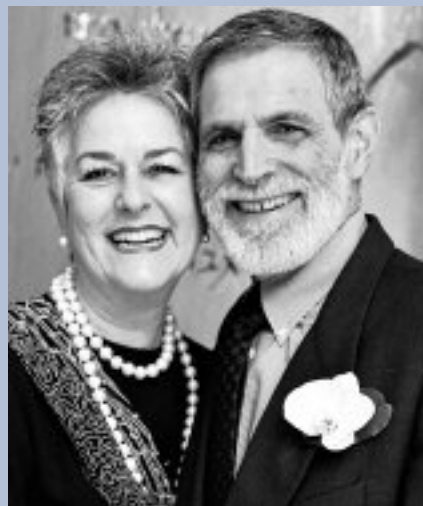
# Standing Room Only!

**O**n March 19th, over 300 people came to The Yitzhak Rabin Hillel Center for Jewish Life at UCLA to honor our visionary co-founder, Rabbi Stan Levy, Esq., and celebrate the move to our new home. The event featured cabaret star, Andrea Marcovici, performing selections from the inspiring musical composition, “I am Anne Frank,” in its Los Angeles premiere. Her performance was both moving and memorable.

The “standing room only” crowd also heard rabbinical student, Laura Owens, give an enthusiastic “student’s perspective” of the Academy and Selwyn Gerber, a member of the Board of Governors, was equally eloquent in his remarks about why this institution is so worthy of support. The Academy’s talented Cantorial Choir, led by Dean of the Cantorial School, Hazzan Nathan Lam, opened and closed the event.

In presenting Rabbi Levy with a gift in his honor, Rabbi Mel Gottlieb, Dean of the Rabbinical School and Chaplaincy Program, noted Rabbi Levy’s many achievements. An accomplished lawyer with the law firm of Manatt, Phelps and Phillips, he is also the founder and spiritual leader of Congregation B’nai Horin – Children of Freedom as well as the co-founder of Bet Tzedek – House of Justice

which provides free legal services to over 12,000 poor and elderly people each year. As Rabbi Gottlieb noted, “Stan is a visionary with a



Lynda and Rabbi Stan Levy

clear Jewish identity, who has touched many lives with his generosity, kindness, and passion for social justice. Most significant perhaps, is that as a spiritual teacher he has had a profound impact on those who have studied and prayed with him because they sense in him a man of deep faith, conviction and integrity.”

The event raised over \$300,000; much-needed funds that will enable

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the Academy to continue the important work of teaching and training a new generation of Jewish spiritual leaders.

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