

# BRONFMANIM

The Alumni Magazine of the Bronfman Youth Fellowships

2008



Opinions expressed are those of contributors or the editor and do not represent the official positions of The Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel.

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Rabbi Shimon Felix,  
Executive Director

“BYFI remains committed to this wonderfully dynamic and diverse community.”

**The Jewish community has always been** one with some unique features. Back in Egypt, when the Israelites were first organizing themselves into a nation, Moses asked Pharaoh to let his people go into the desert for a few days to worship God. Pharaoh initially refused, but — after a few plagues — came around and asked, “Who are those who shall go?” Moses responded: “We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters...”

Not used to such inclusivity, Pharaoh doesn't get it: “Not so; the men may go and worship God, for that is what you request.” Since then, in a world that did not usually include everyone in the community as a real member of that community, the Jewish people have insisted on welcoming everyone into the tribe:

- You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God: your leaders, your tribes, your elders, your officers, all the men of Israel. Your children, your women, and the stranger who is within your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water. (Deuteronomy 9; 9).
- Assemble the nation; the men and the women and the children, and the stranger within your gates (Deuteronomy 31; 12).

Again and again, whenever the Torah wants to assemble and address the entire nation, it includes everyone: men, women, and children, rich and poor, young and the old, the Jew and the “stranger within your gates.”

The Jewish people have not always lived up to this standard of inclusivity. Often, we have behaved more like Pharaoh, excluding the women. We sometimes forget the old and ignore the poor, overlook the young, and ostracize the stranger. We do not always behave in the way the Torah demands of us, by failing to include all elements of the Jewish people in our plans, our concerns, our hopes, and our dreams.

Since its inception in 1987, The Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel has tried to model a community that lives up to the words of Moses and to the inclusivity demanded by the Torah. This has been true every year in our choice of a diverse group of Fellows, our pluralistic faculty, and even more so in our expanding network of alumni.

Our community becomes more multifaceted every year. If once you were all 17 year-old high school students, you are now 18, 28, and 38 year old scientists, artists, academics, doctors and lawyers, rabbis of all denominations, writers, musicians, comedians, dancers, teachers, businesspeople and so much more. You are single and married, urban and rural, living among Jews or as the only Jewish person for miles around. You're in San Francisco New York, Haifa, London, and Buenos Aires, and voting for Obama or McCain (OK, maybe I've gone too far with this diversity thing, but you get my drift).

BYFI remains committed to this wonderfully dynamic and diverse community. We have recently hired BYFI alumna Becky Voorwinde ('97) as Director of Alumni Engagement, to help keep the community connected, coordinated, and, (most importantly, active as a force for the good of American and world Jewry and for the world beyond. It is in this spirit that we bring you this magazine, which provides an opportunity for you to read about what your fellow Fellows are doing, hear what they have to say, and, through the written word, come together as a community.

We hope you enjoy.

Rabbi Shimon Felix

**This is an exciting time for the** Bronfman Youth Fellowships as we work together – the BYFI Alumni Advisory Board and professional staff, our funder, the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, and our alumni, 573 strong and counting – to identify initiatives and programs that can maximize the impact we make, individually and collectively, in the Jewish community and the wider world.

BYFI means participation in a lifelong Fellowship. We are a pluralistic group that can, in Edgar Bronfman's words, "model a different quality of discourse for the Jewish community." The BYFI summer program offered a Jewish lens through which to view our worlds. It immersed us in stimulating text study, connected us with the people and stories of Israel, and encouraged us to take seriously our responsibility to society and the Jewish people.

Many of us have found our Bronfman experience meaningful to our adult lives, not only because of the way it shaped us as thinking people and Jews when we were impressionable teenagers, but because of the personal and professional opportunities afforded us by participation in the BYFI alumni community.

This magazine provides a perspective into BYFI's greatest strength: the diverse and talented people it can bring together. We hope the stories contained in these pages will inspire by offering engaging perspectives and insights from alumni and faculty.

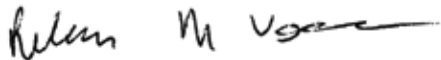
The BYFI alumni community is an outstanding place in which to find Jewish meaning, connection and value in our lives. We invite each of you to join us in any way you wish to move this vision forward – via comments on our website, listserv or by email.

We are grateful to the Bronfman family for their commitment to the BYFI summer program and their investment in the ongoing work of supporting our alumni as they work to make a difference.

Best,



Elijah Dornstreich  
elijah@byfi.org



Becky Voorwinde  
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BYFI is conducting an important survey of our alumni. For instructions on how you can participate, check your email inbox or make sure it didn't go into your spam folder. Contact [becky@byfi.org](mailto:becky@byfi.org) with any questions.

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Becky Voorwinde,  
'97, BYFI Director of  
Alumni Engagement



Elijah Dornstreich,  
'92, President of BYFI  
Alumni Advisory Board



# Picking Sides: Bronfman Alumni Canvass Voters, Dissect Obama's ★ Jewish Problem ★ in 2008 Presidential Race ✪ *By Joshua Goodman (BYFI '93)* ✪

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**Anyone who thinks** Barack Hussein Obama doesn't have a Jewish problem hasn't checked their e-mail in over a year.

Whether it's false allegations he attended an Indonesian madrassa, outrage over racial hatred spewed by a former spiritual advisor or references to the praise heaped on him by Middle Eastern terrorist groups, Obama has transfixed Jewish voters like few Presidential candidates have before. For Jewish voters, small in number but traditionally among the Democrat party's staunchest liberal base, the controversy and hope he has inspired has exposed hidden fault lines that cut across generational, political and religious lines.

One Bronfman Fellow who has watched this trend from a front-row seat is Adam Magnus. The 1996 Fellow is a partner in Shorr Johnson Magnus, a Philadelphia-based advertising firm that creates advertisements for Democratic candidates.

"Because of my involvement in politics, I get a constant flow of e-mails from friends and family asking me things like whether it's true that Obama went to a madrassa," Magnus said. "Quite frankly, I find it disappointing that Jews would believe, much less help spread, rumors that are clearly false."

As Election Day draws closer, debunking the myths about Obama is getting easier, despite their persistence in the blogosphere and around the pinochle table at Jewish retirement homes across the country.

An on-line straw poll of Bronfman alumni ranging in age from 16 to 39 mirrored broader Jewish voting trends overwhelmingly in favor of Democrat candidates. Of the 116 respondents, 75 percent described themselves as Democrats, and 87 percent said they planned to vote for Obama. If the alumni poll is any indication, Obama's relative inexperience in foreign affairs or allegations he would endanger Israel appear to have lost traction. In fact, 57 percent of Bronfman alums think

the Democrat candidate's Middle East policies would be good for Israel, compared to 35 percent in John McCain's case.

Among the broader Jewish community support for Obama is more tenuous. A September poll of Jewish voters, by the American Jewish Committee, found Jews supportive of Obama over John McCain by 57 to 30 percent with 13 percent undecided. For some, especially Jewish Republicans who have conducted polls of their own, the lower numbers for Obama-- compared to 80 percent support for Al Gore and Bill Clinton, as well as 76 percent votes for John Kerry in 2004--point to a credibility gap among Jewish voters. Partisan groups like the Republican Jewish Coalition have tried to capitalize on lingering doubts, real or invented, by canvassing retirement homes in the swing state of Florida, where Jews make up 5 percent of voters.

Anat Maytal, a 2000 Fellow, has found herself reluctantly supporting Obama. During the primaries, she hung posters and badgered friends into attending a speech by Hillary Clinton at Boston University, where Anat is attending law school. When Hillary bowed out, Maytal's strong views in support of a woman's right to choose and ending discrimination led her to Obama.

Maytal, who worked as a legislative intern for New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer after graduating from Harvard, called Obama "unknown" and McCain "unacceptable." She explained, "I know that doesn't portray Obama in a favorable light, but I'm not very happy with both choices."

Maytal's political conversion, albeit forced by circumstances, has been anything but tepid. This summer she was on a host committee of a Jewish Young Professionals for Obama fundraiser event in New York, successfully soliciting several young friends to make a "double-chai" donation of \$36 to the candidate's campaign.

Isaac Dove, a 1997 Bronfman Fellow who edits two monthly papers on New York politics, praised Obama's attempt to tackle Jewish anxiety head-on.

The candidate made headlines when he clumsily declared to members of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC that he supported an undivided Jerusalem, a more hawkish stance than is

Middle Eastern policy the most important factor in their voting choice.

The tidal shift is generational, believes Dove, who has an MA in American intellectual history from the University of Chicago and interned on Capitol Hill as a high school student.

"My mother, she loved it when John Kerry's father was discovered to be Jewish in 2004. Or that Hillary had Jewish relatives," said Dove. "I'm 28, and though I'm certainly involved in the Jewish community, those sorts of things don't register with me. I'm concerned about issues that affect me as an urban, middle-class resident."

Margie Klein, a fourth-year rabbinical student at Hebrew College in Massachusetts, also rejects using a candidate's views on Israel as a litmus test. But that doesn't mean her Jewish identity isn't a core part of her political activism.

In 2005, she started the non-partisan Righteous Indignation project, seeking to mobilize progressive Jews around issues such as the environment and fighting poverty. A book and a national conference later, the project -- supported, in part, by a grant from the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund -- has morphed into

a small army of 200 Jewish activists registering and educating voters in low-income, minority neighborhoods.

"Jewish voters, in large part, remain committed to the same social issues they've always been and will rally behind Obama," says Klein, a 1996 Bronfman Fellow. "Most of those who don't are single-issue voters on the right who wouldn't take a look at Obama anyway."

Even if the early anxiety caused by Obama's candidacy has subsided, the question persists: Which candidate would be better for Israel?



(Clockwise from left): Eric Trager with former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney; Anat Maytal with General Wesley Clark; Edward-Isaac Dove, editor of City Hall and The Capitol

avored by the Bush administration and many Israelis. He also jokingly referred to e-mails circulating about him, saying, "let me know if you see this guy named Barack Obama, because he sounds pretty scary."

Dove said that was "exactly what everyone concerned about Israel issues wanted to hear."

U.S. support for Israel appears unlikely to change anytime soon. But the intense concern for Israel held for decades by Jewish voters may be fading. Only 19 percent of Bronfman alums said they considered a candidate's

Obama's statements on Israel so far have been in line with the pro-Israel lobby, Klein said. "Nevertheless, most progressive Jewish voters think the hawkish stance of the last eight years hasn't done so well at creating peace in the Middle East. Because Obama is more accountable to progressive Jewish voters who will have helped put him in office, there is a hope he will be more open to recommendations coming from progressive pro-Israel groups like Brit Tzedek v'Shalom and J Street PAC."

For Eric Trager (BYFI '00), who took time from his PhD in Mideastern politics at the University of Pennsylvania to canvass for McCain in Republican-hostile West Philadelphia, Obama's stance on Israel is less than reassuring.

Writing for Commentary's "Contentions" blog in January, Trager said Obama's "whispering of sweet Zionist nothings" to Jewish voters underscores his naïve acceptance of the pernicious thesis that the U.S.-Israel relationship is a product of power politics rather than strategic interests.

Then there's the question of Obama's advisors, among them Samantha Power. Before resigning as a senior foreign policy advisor from the Obama campaign in March -- for calling Clinton a "monster" -- Power advocated ending military aid to Israel in favor of economic development for the Palestinians. Sound Middle Eastern policy would require "alienating a domestic constituency," she was quoted as saying in a 2002 interview.

"These are the sort of things I'd hear in a mosque in Cairo, not what I'd expect from a U.S. political advisor," said Trager, who studied in Egypt in 2006 on a Fulbright scholarship.

Deby Kanner (BYFI '88), a self-described pro-choice Republican, said Obama's affiliation with Reverend Jeremiah Wright is also worrisome. "It doesn't make me a racist because I'm uncomfortable over Obama's

20-year membership in a church that gave an award to Louis Farrakhan, a man who praises Hitler," said Kanner, who was the target of obscenities while participating recently in a pro-McCain march in New York's very Jewish, very liberal Upper West Side. The church later clarified that it was an affiliated magazine, and not the church itself, that granted the award.

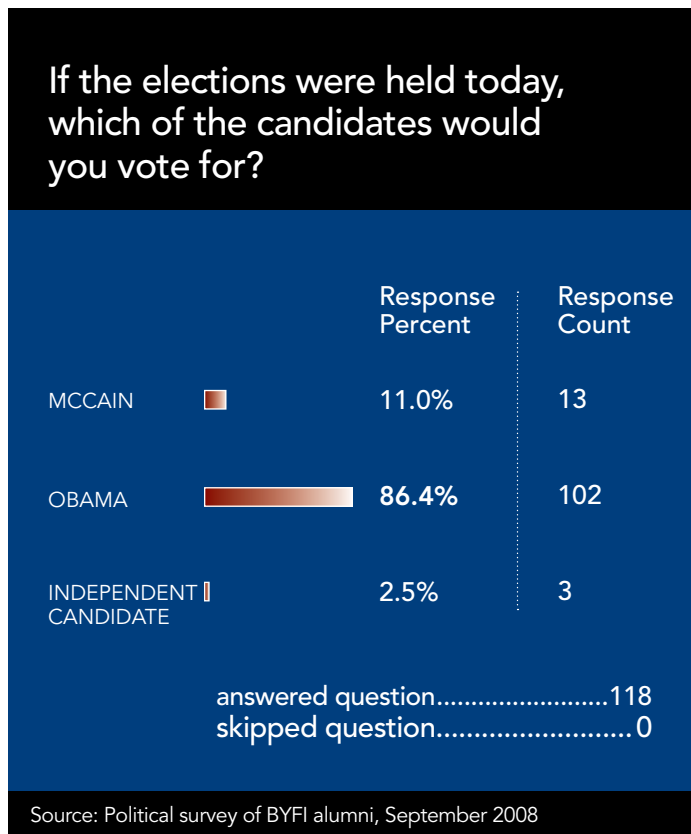
try to impose their will in the sputtering negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

"What can any president do with a Palestinian authority beholden to Hamas and an unpopular Israeli government holding onto power?" said Trager.

If McCain is elected, at least one Bronfman Fellow may have an important say in how that policy is drafted. David Adesnik (BYFI '94), spent four months in Iraq as a civilian analyst with coalition forces before joining the McCain campaign as a foreign policy and national security adviser. He's unable to discuss his work for the campaign, however.

Whoever wins, the emotions stirred by this election won't easily fade. Jews long ago stopped being a homogenous group whose vote was determined on the bima (pulpit). Still, ingrained in the American Jewish psyche is the image of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel marching with Martin Luther King Jr. and the sacrifices made by many young Jews during the civil rights battles of the 1960s. Jews of both the left and the right believe our role is to fight discrimination, not fuel it. Obama's historic campaign, depending on your viewpoint -- young or old, hawk or dove, religious or secular -- is either a fulfillment of longstanding Jewish values or a threat to them.

Never have our differences seemed starker. The wounds may take time to heal. ■



Trager is sanguine about his own candidate's chances of matching Ronald Reagan's feat in 1980, when he secured 39 percent of the Jewish vote, the highest tally since Dwight Eisenhower in 1956. George W. Bush captured 22 percent of the Jewish vote in 2004.

McCain, Trager said, is a "run-of-the mill" pro-Israel candidate, buoyed by his close association with former Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Joseph Lieberman. Although Gov. Sarah Palin displays an Israeli flag in her Alaska office, Trager said her commitment to Israel was largely unknown. He and Dover believe both McCain and Obama are unlikely to



Joshua Goodman, a 1993 fellow, will be mailing his absentee ballot to his swinging, home state of Ohio from Rio de Janeiro, where he writes about

Latin American politics and economics for Bloomberg News. Prior to moving to Brazil in May, he worked for The Associated Press in Colombia and covered Argentina's 2001 economic collapse for Business Week.



# The Blessings and Burdens of Raising Jewish Children: Reflections from BYFI Alumni and Staff

*Compiled and edited by  
Matti Friedman (BYFI '94)*

With the Bronfman program getting on in years and more and more alumni dutifully fulfilling the commandment to be fruitful and multiply, parenthood has become another experience tying Bronfman Fellows together. Even if they're changing diapers and carpooling in very different places and circumstances, many alums likely find themselves dealing with some of the same questions. One example: *in what ways is raising Jewish children as part of a Jewish community a blessing? In what ways is it a burden?*

The essays below emerged when we posed that question to four very different members of the Bronfman family: to a father who finds himself raising a pair of identical Israelis, a rabbi looking for new meaning in old traditions, a woman who married a non-Jewish man and brought up Jewish children, and a woman with a Jewish family beyond the boundaries of how Judaism traditionally defined family.



*Matti Friedman and his family live in Jerusalem  
(Bottom right): Leah Oppenzato and her family live in Brooklyn, NY*

## The Communal Uterus

By Matti Friedman (BYFI '94)

"Excuse me, one placenta or two?" asked the grinning stranger from her car. She had just stopped beside me on the Jerusalem street where I was pushing Aviv and Michael, my 15-month-old twins, in a stroller. "Two," I told her, having become used to such questions, "but they're identical." After a few inquiries about amniotic sacs the woman seemed satisfied, told me her daughter was expecting twins, and drove off with a friendly wave when the light changed.

This was early this summer, and it was – except, perhaps, for the "excuse me" – a classic Israeli moment. My wife, Naama, and I are regularly asked nonchalantly by strangers whether our twins are the result of in-vitro fertilization, whether they were born via C-section, and when we're planning to have another child. We are also regularly told by people who stop us on the street how beautiful our children are, how lucky we are, and how we shouldn't worry because it will get easier soon.

People here are genuinely interested in children, and in your children, and expect you to be interested in theirs. It's all taken in stride in a way that manages to be simultaneously annoying and endearing. The kibbutz movement may have faded, but in some ways children here remain communal property. Some of this is the nosiness and empathy inevitable in any group that sees itself as sharing a history and a fate. Some of it is more visceral and specific to living in Israel. The latter type was expressed in its rawest

form by a frail woman we met outside a hospital in the northern town of Afula when our kids were a few weeks old. She looked approvingly at the two babies in their little red slings and said: "Twins – that's very good." Then, gesturing vaguely but ominously with

her hand, she dropped her voice and explained why: "They're going to outnumber us," she said, meaning our Arab neighbors, the ones who made up half of the hospital's patients and half of the unfailingly competent and patient doctors and nurses who had just treated her.

I am used to belonging to this raucous and problematic place, and when I moved here from Canada 13 years ago it was my choice. But being a parent means making a choice for someone else, which, it turns out, doesn't make me feel entirely comfortable.

This uncertainty must exist for most Jewish parents, and for every parent raising children as part of a community, an experience that always means walking a line between comfort and suffocation. The pressure cooker of life in Israel is simply an extreme case that makes the pros and cons starker.

Here, especially for boys, belonging has darker implications. It is assumed they will grow up to be soldiers; if the collective is to survive, our sons will have to serve. This is joked about: "straight to the Navy Commandos!" someone will say as a child crawls ferociously or vaults onto the dining room table. Naama likes to say that by the time they're 18 things will work out here and they will serve as peacekeepers on Cyprus. But they won't, and it's not funny. The detail I remember most vividly from the curriculum of my summer as a Bronfman Fellow is a poem. It was by the Israeli writer Haim Gouri, and it described Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac, the ultimate moment when a Jew realized his son was not his alone. Abraham had a covenant with God, which wasn't bad -- it's nice not to be on your own. But it turned out early on, atop a hill in the Promised Land, that linking your life and that

of your family to something bigger can also be unbearable.

God stayed Abraham's hand and Isaac survived, as we know. But since then, the poet wrote, we have been born with a knife in our heart.



*Matti Friedman grew up in Toronto, was a Bronfman fellow in 1994 and moved to Israel the next year. Since then, he has been a dairy farmer, soldier, university student and reporter. Today he works as a correspondent in the Jerusalem bureau of the Associated Press. He is married to Naama and has twin boys, Aviv and Michael.*

## Raising a Jewish Child

By Leah Oppenzato (BYFI '91)

My Catholic wife first suggested raising our children Jewish. We were at a wedding of two friends in which the wife had converted to Judaism. For the previous year or so, we'd been dabbling in Unitarianism, thinking that perhaps its ecumenical approach would blend our traditions in a comfortable way. On the contrary, the Protestant feel of Unitarianism left us – a Catholic and a Jew – both feeling alienated.





*Rabbi Avi Katz Orlow with son Yadid, pre-Upshurin*

So Colleen looked at me across the flower arrangement and said, "Let's raise the children Jewish." We weren't yet married (religiously or legally; we have yet to be married legally, as we live in New York State) and we certainly didn't have any children. But that conversation was recognizably the start of our path.

We joined a small congregation that meets in a church nearby. The shul is nondenominational and accepts – welcomes – non-Jewish partners, even allowing them to be board members. Our son has been attending Kolot Chayeinu since he was a bouncy little polliwog in utero, where he danced to nigunim. He still loves the singing, and crawls in the aisles. We had his naming there and have felt the encompassing welcome of Jeremy's Jewish community.

Our Reform rabbi (the congregation itself is nondenominational) said that, ironically, according to the doctrine of patrilineal descent, she considers Jeremy a Jewish child. I function as the Jewish father, and we plan to raise him Jewish. However, we wanted to ensure that he would be accepted as a full Jew in the wider Jewish world, so we chose to convert him. Our first hurdle was finding a mohel who would not write "ben Avraham v'Sara" on his bris certificate – however, as it turned out, our Reform mohel agreed with our rabbi that Jeremy didn't even need to be converted, and his certificate reads "ben Colleen v'Leah." His conversion won't be accepted everywhere, given that the Bet Din was a trio of Reform women rabbis, but we feel we have done what we can to give him a solid base in Judaism.

Jeremy's Judaism has forced me to grapple with my own understanding of what makes a Jew. I see my child as fully Jewish. And yet, I come from a family of "full-blooded" Jews. I still have a nagging sense that there is a racial aspect to

Judaism, that I am Jewish not only because of my upbringing, beliefs, and practices, but my curly hair, my Jewish mother, my Eastern European lineage. I look Jewish; Jeremy looks Celtic. I am glad for this challenge, to be pushed past my own stereotypes.

And yet Jeremy may find himself in places where he is not accepted as a Jew. I struggled in my own adolescence with different forms of Judaism that were less than accepting of my own Reform/Reconstructionist background, or my lesbian identity, but no one can ever dispute my Jewish heritage. It's my job to pass on my strong sense of Jewish identity, just as my mother passed hers on to me; but unlike my mother, I can't give him the security of the bloodline.

Being a non-biological mother comes with a host of challenges (different, in my situation, from adoption because Jeremy does have a biological parent). I need to pass my Judaism to him from my heart, not my blood or my genes or my curly hair. That is my challenge. And I accept it fully.

.....  
*Leah Oppenzato '91 lives in Brooklyn, New York with wife Colleen and 9 month old son Jeremy. She teaches 7th grade at progressive charter school in Hoboken, New Jersey. She is a member of Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, a non-denominational Jewish congregation in Brooklyn.*

## Down with the Upshurin

*by Rabbi Avi Katz Orlow (BYFI '91) as told to Matti Friedman*

When our son Yadid approached the age of three, I began to think about the Jewish tradition of upshurin, when a boy's hair is cut for the first time on his third birthday. I grew up in a family where this was not practiced. But in my own home, where an Orthodox rabbi (me) and a Reform cantor (my wife, Adina H. Frydman) are raising children in a loving Jewish mélange, it started to look like a potentially amazing and meaningful ritual.

Research into the halakhic roots of the tradition got me even more interested. I discovered the links between upshurin and the agricultural laws of orla, which forbids harvesting from a fruit tree within its first three years, and pe'a, which requires a farmer to leave a corner of his field aside for the poor. Parallel to this, a boy's hair is left uncut for the same period of time (three years), and when it is cut we are required to leave pe'ot, corners (sidelocks). At three years of age, like a fruit tree, a Jewish boy is considered to have reached a landmark. With diapers out of the way, and with his consciousness developing, he is considered ready for learning, wearing tzitzit, and his first haircut.

But I felt that interest alone in the custom was not a good enough reason for us to perform it. Would we even consider this if we had a daughter? But then we began to think about how we could make the upshurin into a full-blown mitzvah that we would want to perform for our children regardless of gender. For us, mitzvot are not just doing what is right or not doing what is wrong according to some other worldly law. Our ideal is to model commitments that are personally meaningful, universally relevant, and distinctively Jewish.

That is how we got the idea to have Yadid wait past his third birthday to get his hair cut. Yadid was going to wait until his hair was long enough to donate. Instead of a strange tradition performed by rote, it would become a religious experience of giving.

I am not sure if he understood at first. But at the time he was undergoing the shift from mere repeater to understanding being and Yadid began to develop a language of altruism. At the party we finally had for him when he was three and a half, his grandmother gave him a tzedaka box, which he began to fill. I asked him why, and he said that when he had hair he gave it to someone who needed it, likewise when he had money he would give it someone in need.

If I have to put my finger on what raising children as Jews means for us, it is this. The community, its history and laws are not just a backdrop to the bedlam of parenting. In this case, they provided a way of getting Yadid to think, before he was even aware he was doing so, about what it means to live a halakhic moral

existence. We look forward to repeating this ritual with his brother Yishama and some day if we are blessed, also with a daughter. Our upshurin has provided us with a platform for a discussion with a three-year-old about what it means to be a mensch.

.....

*Rabbi Avi Orlow '91 is a Jewish Educator for the Foundation for Jewish Camp. For the past four years, Avi was the Campus Rabbi and Assistant Director of St. Louis Hillel at Washington University. Prior to this experience he held numerous positions as Rabbi, educator, and youth leader. Avi spent 17 years as a camper and then educator at Ramah Camps in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and YUSSR camps in the Former Soviet Union. Avi has a BA in religious studies from Columbia. He was ordained in the charter class at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox rabbinical School. Avi lives in White Plains with his wife, Cantor Adina Frydman, and their sons, Yadid and Yishama.*

## Growing With My Children: A Mother's Reflections

By Ava Charne (BYFI staff)

Before my daughters were born, I remember being in synagogue with my father on Rosh Hashanah. The rabbi was talking about how intermarriage will be the demise of the Jewish religion. I could swear he was looking straight at me, and I felt like I was wearing a scarlet letter.

Tina and Robyn are adults now. Their father, Vince, is Italian. My children are a product of intermarriage.

As the rabbi spoke, I remember thinking that if and when I had children, I would go out of my way to make sure they were Jewish, and that I would not single handedly destroy the Jewish people.

Tina went to nursery school at our temple. One Shabbat, she came home and said that she had flowers for our Shabbat table. I asked her where our Shabbat table was, and she told me she thought it was downstairs in the basement. It amazed me that at her young age, she was okay with whatever traditions we did or did not have.

When Robyn was 4, I began to teach kindergarten at our Sunday School. Tina and Robyn would come with me without fail every Sunday morning. They continued to accompany and "assist" me until Robyn graduated from high school. I never imagined that they would go to a Hebrew day school, yet Tina began kindergarten and Robyn followed, and eight years later they graduated.

We became more and more involved in Judaism, and as the years went by, Vince asked me if I made up Jewish holidays -- each year there seemed to be more that we were observing. Tina and Robyn got involved in Israeli dancing, danced with their Israeli dance troupe through high school, and even taught Israeli dancing when they got older. They came with me to Israel for many of the summers when I was there with the Bronfman Fellows. The winter retreats and reunions were so meaningful to them.

Today, both of my daughters are very active Jews. Both took part in Avodah, the Jewish Service Corps, after college. Tina is a special education teacher in Maryland, and Robyn just got a job at the Jewish Community Center in Newton, Mass. as a Social Justice Youth Coordinator.

I think my experience reflects both something of the price of living in a community, and its benefits. The rabbi's harsh words that Rosh Hashana showed to what extent Jews believed they must be exclusive to survive. The community excluded people like Vince, who aren't part of it, and rejected the life choice I made when I married him.

And yet at the same time, our community offered my children so much, and made them the Jewish people they are now. I am very proud of Tina and Robyn, and very grateful for the support of the Jewish community in which they grew up -- their synagogue, their day school, and BYFI. ■

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*Ava Charne is the Administrative Director for The Bronfman Youth Fellowships and has been part of BYFI since the fall of 1987. Ava is very proud to say that she personally knows all 573 Bronfmanim. Ava is also the Executive Director of the Capital District Women's Bar Association. Prior to 1987, Ava was the Training, Safety and Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services. She holds her BA in political science and her Masters Degree in Public Administration from the State University of New York at Albany. She was born and raised in Brooklyn, but has lived in Albany, New York since 1973. In recent years she has developed a strong passion for playing tennis.*



*Ava Charne with daughters Robyn and Tina and their father Vince*



# A Pluralistic Jewish Stance

*By Professor Joseph Reimer*

Once, when teaching at Stanford, I befriended a local Reform rabbi. When he learned that I taught for the Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel (BYFI), he told me he was angry at the program. I asked why, and he said it was because on BYFI a young man from his congregation had been taught to put on tefillin. What was wrong with that? His response: it was an effort by Orthodox rabbis to discredit the Reform movement.

That claim was disturbing. I was present when this young man had asked to learn to put on tefillin. He did feel badly that he had never been taught about tefillin. But do tefillin belong to the Orthodox movement? Is wishing to learn more necessarily a negative comment on one's past learning? Is embracing an age-old Jewish tradition a rejection of Reform or any other religious movement?

I thought of this conversation last week as I was listening to Aliza Kline describe how she, the author Anita Diamant, and other pioneers built *Mayyim Hayyim*, the pluralistic mikveh (ritual bath) in the Boston area. Aliza is a product of the Reform movement and yet has devoted her career to building a mikveh that is used not only for conversion ceremonies and traditional rituals

relating to niddah, the menstrual cycle, but also for many healing rituals as well. Aliza talked of her growing fascination and dedication to use of the mikveh and her delight at seeing hundreds of Jewish women discover the power of these traditions for themselves and their daughters. Is Aliza using the mikveh to discredit liberal Judaism? Hardly; her clientele and supporters are overwhelmingly liberal Jews.

Last year I sat on the doctoral committee of Orit Kent, who has completed a stunning study of chevruta learning – a traditional method of studying in pairs – among non-Orthodox university students. Orit grew up Orthodox and has dedicated her career to promoting serious Jewish text study among all Jews. Her theory is that the yeshiva-based interchange of a pair of students working over a traditional Jewish text has great power, when used wisely, in an array of learning contexts. Like Aliza, Orit sees the potential of unleashing the spiritual power hidden in this traditional practice for the benefit of Jews who have never and would never venture into a traditional yeshiva.

A hundred years ago modern Jews were busy reforming Judaism by letting go of many of the traditional practices they associated with old-

world religion. They sought an American Judaism that could proudly take its place alongside its sister religions. No beards, Yiddish accents and, for God's sake, no ancient practices like mikveh or chevruta. We've clearly outgrown that need for rational reconstruction. In a post-modern world mikveh and chevruta can proudly take their place alongside back-to-nature health practices and learning methodologies. We are free to reshape the great modern reforms.

We are also free to think past conventional denominational boundaries. The denominations are outgrowths of those modern reforms and have played important roles in giving organizational shape to 20th century American Judaism. But their capacities to play future shaping roles will depend upon their adaptive strengths in responding to what we see every day: seeking Jews in search of deeper meanings who do not care a whit about the labels. They seek Jewish quality and meaning wherever they can find it.

Jewish pluralism, to my mind, is not a movement but a stance exemplified by Aliza, Orit and other outstanding Jewish teachers such as Rabbi Danny Lehmann. Danny grew up in the Conservative movement, was ordained as



an Orthodox rabbi and was the founding head of the pluralistic Gann Academy in the Boston area. A few years ago Danny, a talented musician, felt the Jewish community needed a serious summer arts program that was kosher and Shabbat observant. He began BIMA at Williams College and pioneered something new: not a Jewish camp with a subsidiary arts program, but a serious arts program for Jewish teens. It is perhaps not surprising that BYFI and its alumni were involved from the beginning, and that the Samuel Bronfman Foundation supports BIMA through the Foundation for Jewish Camping. Two years ago BIMA moved to Brandeis University and has taken its place alongside its sister program, Genesis, a summer program for high school students combining Jewish studies, academics, the arts and humanities.

Watching those two programs closely and comparing them to the great denominational Jewish camps has been instructive. I know Jewish denominational camps that have arts programs and learning methods of which we can be proud. But they are not as strong in two crucial components that flourish at BIMA and Genesis. First is the opportunity for Jewish youth to get to know people who have grown

up in other movements. Second is the freedom to explore –intellectually and artistically – beyond the boundaries of any one movement.

The first point seems obvious, but the second deserves more explanation. I have seen participants who have discovered a new approach to Judaism. They entered thinking their religion was a circumscribed system embodied by their synagogue, rabbi and youth movement. They left seeing alternatives beyond those limits; they began to explore the nooks and crannies of our traditions and discover therein hidden treasures not known to their parents and grandparents. We can explore these treasures and learn from them without rejecting our roots. We can expand our Jewish horizons by reclaiming practices and ideas that have fallen away under the rush of modernizing Judaism.

Beyond that, in a pluralistic stance we are free to explore the wide oceans of knowledge and the depths of artistic possibilities and bring those riches to bear on our Jewish lives. Jews have nothing to fear from developing their artistic talents and exploring their intellectual curiosities. Indeed, the Judaism we are seeking is one that is more deeply rooted in its full past and more

devotedly open to the insights that await us in this radically new and unknown century. The Judaism that emerges will likely look very different from what we have known. I suspect it may look more like BYFI, BIMA and Genesis than the denominations of the 20th century. ■



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*Joseph Reimer is associate professor and former director of the Hornstein Program in Jewish Communal Service at Brandeis University. Dr. Reimer served as a faculty member*

*on the Bronfman Youth Fellowships summer program for 4 years. His book Succeeding at Jewish Education: How One Synagogue Made it Work won the 1997 National Jewish Book Award. Dr. Reimer has served on the staff of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America and on the boards of the Covenant Foundation, the Rashi School and the New Jewish High School. He currently chairs the education policy committee for Birthright Israel, North America. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts with his wife Gail Twersky Reimer and their daughters Tamara and Ziva.*



# Turning the Outside In: Bronfman Alumni Comedians Discuss American Jewish Humor

By Judy Batalion (BYFI '94)

The husband said: Close the window, it's cold outside.  
The wife replied: And if I close the window, will it  
make it any warmer outside?

- Old Jewish Joke

I began performing stand-up comedy in London at a time when my Jewish identity was not on my mind, and certainly not in my set, which is why I was so surprised when it was the first thing industry folk picked up. At early auditions, they would say, as if helping me: 'Go back to New York.' Um, OK, I thought, but I'm Canadian. Or, 'Don't worry, stick it out – the British public is slowly getting used to Woody Allen.' Or even, 'You should really marry a non-Jew - your kids will be much better looking'. I had to face the fact that some element of my yiddishkeit (my pronunciations? gesticulations? attitudes? face?) must have been inadvertently leaking onto the stage. I smacked of Jew. What until then I had taken to be mainstream, as my unremarkable background – I actually did grow up speaking Yiddish – was suddenly my main feature. Jewish meant difference, even in, or especially in, the comedy world. I was being placed as an outsider, viewed as 'playing a character', and told to get out.



This reaction, aside from making me aware of my Judaism (doing a better job than most Jewish organizations ever had), also got me thinking about the ways that outsidership might be integral to the very Jewish humor that I was being accused of using. All humor might be seen as coming from an alternate perspective, but Jewish humor has traditionally been known as the humor of the outsider. Among their many attempts to characterize Jewish humor, scholars consistently refer to it as the humor of members of an underclass making jokes in order to feel better about their position, to feel solidarity, to give their nebbish psyches confidence, and, eventually, to overthrow the Tsar.

In America, a well-known brand of outsider-Jewish-neurotic humor emerged in the 1960s, embodied by comedians like Woody Allen and Joan Rivers. Their senses of humor were based on self-deprecation and the discomfort of fitting into one's own skin as well as into society; it's a humor of neurosis, insecurity and assessing position. Allen and Rivers are originally Konigsburg and Molinsky.

But my hunch was that things had changed since the 1960s. Is current American humor post-Jewish? And if so, how has the Jewish humor of the outsider been accepted into and perhaps altered by America, the land of the immigrant outsider par excellence?

I turned to some Bronfman alumni who are also in the comedy industry to find out if and how being a Jew had catalyzed and affected their careers and their senses of humor, and whether Jewish comedy – the humor and the business – could still be considered that of the outsider.

## Hip-Hop, Beavis, and Oysters

With a completely serious face, eyes facing straight ahead and making no contact with the audience, stand-up Dan Mintz (BYFI '97) says into the mic: "My grandfather was actually a Holocaust survivor. And you can tell that it really affected him. Because, to this day, he still will not walk into a gas chamber."

Dan is known for his dead-pan delivery of non-sequitur one liners, and his absurd twists of logic. Dan's is an intellectual comedy, with a logical, clear and concise writing style, and in which the passion is under-wraps, in tension with the calm of the performance. Regardless of the content (this is one of his sole Jewish jokes), I wondered if he felt his writing and

delivery style were Jewish in any way. "Well, maybe," he thinks. "If there's a brand of Jewish humor that is based in structural playing, and an emotional remove, a dryness, a Talmudic twisting.

"You get Jewish comedians for the same reason you get Jewish lawyers," Dan says. "We like to play around with laws, see things from different perspectives."

The probing attitude of Jewish study, where every point is re-questioned and re-interpreted, and in which one is always taking on 'outside' positions, also came up in conversation with comedy hip hop artist Eli Batalion (BYFI '97), who – among his many accomplishments – also happens to be my brother. Eli recognized that elements of a Jewish childhood had an impact on his comedy writing. Biblical stories, Freudian tales, self-deprecation, major tonal changes in the delivery of lines, and twists of logic that occur in Talmudic reasoning all influence his lyrics. Eli and his writing/performing partner Jerome Saibil often work in a dialectic way, taking on different sides of arguments which are later embodied by different characters.

Hollywood scriptwriter Etan Cohen (BYFI '91) says his experience of 'difference' came not from the studios but from the Orthodox Jewish community where the idea of writing for raunchy cartoons was a touch suspect. His own insecurity about committing acts that were asur, forbidden, and writing for treyf showbiz is what led him to major in Yiddish at Harvard, where he began freelancing for the MTV cartoon Beavis and Butt-Head. "The famous Yiddish writers also grappled with ethical contradictions involved in being religious and writing for the popular market," he says. Etan found confidence in these stories, in feeling he was part of a tradition that tussled with tradition.

Etan was, however, influenced by the Orthodox community's distrust for some elements of American culture. Indeed, perhaps the intense examination of the rest of society by the Orthodox community is at the heart of Etan's comedic perspective. Some of Etan's earliest comedy work, he jokes, was scribbling parodies of commentary in the margins of his Talmud books at school, adding another humorous layer to the endless Judaic discussion.

Israel-based comedian Yisrael Campbell, who has done shows for the BYFI summer program, also comments on feeling excluded from the Jerusalem Orthodox community because of his career. He grew up Catholic in Pennsylvania and converted to Judaism three times, each with a more stringent rabbi.

Not having been raised Jewish, is his sense of humor Jewish? Yisrael replied that he was brought up by a family of immigrants that used to drive around and point out all the country clubs they weren't allowed into. "I also didn't feel like the world was my oyster – or, actually, I felt like it was, but I couldn't eat it," he explains. In that sense, Yisrael says, he may have always had a Jewish sense of humor.

## In the Out Culture

Yisrael's experience might demonstrate the palpability of Jewish humor for Americans, and why it was so readily adopted – partly because everyone was and is an outsider, a recent-ish immigrant. Indeed, I wondered how Jewish humor might have been absorbed into the American culture of outsidership – how easily was it taken up, and how much has it affected and been affected by the mainstream.

Dan says there isn't a new generation of 'Jewish' comedians on the stand-up circuit. "Woody Allen already did Woody Allen; you can't repeat that," he says. "Jewish humor is so absorbed into the culture that everyone does it.

"Jewishness is normal in the USA, you don't have to be neurotic about it. Really, who could still talk about being Jewish on stage? What would you say?"

Eli agrees: "Jews are more integrated, but consequently, I think they have less Jewish-oriented material. To a certain extent, the Jewish stereotypes and jokes to harp on are somewhat clichéd – how many more jokes are you willing to sit through about Jewish mothers, or Jewish guilt?"

But Eli thinks that though Jewish content might be less overt, American comedy preserves some of its Jewish roots in different guises – Larry David's nebbishyness, Seinfeld's style and the characters created by the Stiller/Rogen/Apatow cabal.

"Watching Eugene Levy in the 'American Pie' films suggests to me that America is prepared to handle certain Jewish-isms like mazel tov greetings as part of the American

cultural institution," Eli says. "Unfortunately, it is probably the most boring Jewish elements which are received in this way, but that only means there's an opportunity for greater Jewish comedy out there, to be exploited by a Jewish filmmaker capable of spinning a classic scene out of a tashlich sequence."

Some American comedy characters are still Jewish, but it appears they've gone from



*Dan Mintz performing a stand-up routine*

the neurotic to the parodic. Current Jewish Hollywood characters like Adam Sandler and Judd Apatow's Israeli hairstylist Zohan have traded the nebbish personality for sass and punch. (Albeit, I add, as a caricature of an Israeli, just as Sarah Silverman, unlike Joan Rivers, plays a caricature of a Jewish princess confident in her sexuality and position.) Etan, who is currently writing a Sherlock Holmes film for Apatow, to star Sacha Baron Cohen, says Apatow's productions have Jew-heavy staffs, and they're frank: No one is worried about being Jewish, and Jewishness is not the punchline.

## In the Industry

Then it seems that Jewish humor, coming from the outside, has found its way to the inside of American culture. But has it also made it to the

inside of the studios, stages and boardrooms, in a way that it hasn't in England? Did today's American Jewish comedians think about their Jewish identity on a daily basis, as I had started to?

Dan is flummoxed by the question. While growing up in Anchorage, he felt exotic being a Jew. But since his Bronfman Israel trip – his first immersion into saturated Jewish culture – he has spent time at Harvard and lived in New York and LA, and has been surrounded by Jews. His Jewishness, he says, has "become a background element of my identity."

Eli's main experience of Jewish identity outsidership came from working in his particular genre – hip hop. He is, after all, a Jew in a do-rag. Though he never indicates his religious background in press releases, many critics address it. Eli, however, doesn't feel awkward about it at all. He takes the art form seriously; his comedy is in his (Jewish-ish) lyrics.

To Etan, being a Jew – even an observant, kippa-wearing one – is not a big issue in LA, where there are kosher groceries at every gas station, and TV station. Not only does it seem to him that Jews work in all aspects of the entertainment industry – writing, directing, producing, acting – but Jewish humor has so pervaded the

American comedy industry that around the writers' table the only way Etan knows if a colleague is Jewish is by their last name. He never feels self-conscious about his Jewish practice, he says, except a tiny bit during Pesach, when at lunch he pulls out a suitcase filled with matza and Diet Coke.

But isn't writing with Jewish collaborators, like Ben Stiller, a little different than writing with non-Jewish ones, like his mentor Mike Judge, with whom he co-wrote the film Idiocracy and episodes of Beavis and Butt-Head and King of the Hill? No, Etan claims: He sees no difference in the writing, the sense of humor, or the ways of working.

Yisrael, however, says it was his religious observance and his sense of being an outsider in Hollywood that led him to Israel in the first

“Jews are more integrated, but consequently, I think they have less Jewish-oriented material. To a certain extent, the Jewish stereotypes and jokes to harp on are somewhat clichéd - how many more jokes are you willing to sit through about Jewish mothers, or Jewish guilt?”

—Eli Batalion '97

place. Unlike Etan, Yisrael faced problems being observant in LA in the late 1990s, especially when he didn't want to film a commercial on the eighth day of Passover. His agent thought he was crazy: “It's cute when you put on a kippa, but not cute when you turn down work.” In 2000, Yisrael went to Israel for a short reflective break. He ended up studying at the Pardes Institute for several years, and the re-emergence of his stand-up career happened by accident: Pardes asked him to talk about his personal experiences during a program on conversion, the audience cracked up, and next thing he knew he was performing this monologue to crowds in his living room. It soon became a touring piece in Israel and back in the USA, and he's now preparing for the Off Broadway run of his show 'You Can Never Be Too Jewish' – an encouraging title that seems to summarize the American industry.

### Stars of David

In Joan Rivers' 2008 West End show, the finale included an enormous cheese plate covered with Israeli flags. The plethora of blue Magen Davids made me gasp (as did the plethora of blue stilton). Wow, I thought, never in my life would I use Israeli flags in a show. But, the reason behind this 'never' has changed dramatically over the past years. In my previous North American life, I wouldn't have placed the blue-and-white on stage because I wouldn't have had much to say about it, despite (or perhaps because of) having gone to a Zionist high school. On the other hand, in my current life in England, the

Israeli flag is a loaded symbol, pungently political, and I'm already English enough to feel self-conscious about showing it. I would now not wave an Israeli flag unless I was trying to make a statement - and one akin to appearing on stage holding a Starbucks cup, wearing a red-white-and-blue T-shirt from Wal-Mart, and beating up the infirm. (But, if I did this, it would be as a parody of these typical statement-makers...).

Though I haven't yet employed the I-flag, I have started to address my Judaism in comedy shows. Having been marked and excluded because of it, my Jewishness has become something I want to talk about, and there seem to be audiences who want to hear about it as well. When there's something at stake in Jewish identity, when it is a topic of taboo and tension, it also becomes one of jokes.

Rivers' show, in which she mentions being told early on that she was too Jewish to play anywhere outside New York, makes it pretty clear that her younger self probably wouldn't have used Israeli flags either. But her comfort at doing so now (and how I envy it), seems to be the comfort of Dan, Etan, Eli and Yisrael playing in America; it attests to how much the American comedy industry and mainstream culture has changed in the past four decades.

With outsider Jewish comedy now comfortably insider, I wonder where it will go from here: Will it turn in on itself? Will post-Zohar Jewish characters be blond supermodels doing tashlich in picturesque brooks? And will 'Jewish' humor now emerge only from cultures outside the land of free refills? ■

*Etan Cohen on the set of Tropic Thunder which he co-wrote with Ben Stiller*





# Amplifying Impact— The BYFI Alumni Venture Fund

The **BYFI Alumni Venture Fund** enables alumni of the Bronfman Youth Fellowships to support their peers' cutting-edge initiatives with funding and technical assistance. Since launching our fundraising campaign in 2005, donations from alumni and their families have enabled us to award grants to 33 innovative alumni-led projects that are helping to shape the Jewish community and the wider world.

The \$74,850 distributed in small grants is only part of the story. More exciting is the way the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund brings alumni together to share their technical skills and expertise. In the coming years, we will continue to create opportunities for grantees to share successful strategies with one another and for alumni working in all disciplines to offer guidance that helps grantees grow their initiatives and organizations.

All members of the BYFI alumni community are eligible to apply. Grants support projects

that seek to promote BYFI's core values of Jewish learning, pluralism, engagement with Israel, social responsibility or a combination of the above.

Projects that meet the funding criteria have included community service programs, support for innovative Jewish communities, conferences, publications and grants to not-for-profit organizations where alumni serve as formal and informal leaders.

Below are profiles of five Bronfman Fellows who are making an impact.



**Randi Cairns  
(BYFI '87)  
Home Front  
Hearts**

Randi Cairns (BYFI '87) is an expert multitasker: A

mother of four children ages 3 to 13 who works freelance jobs while her husband, Captain Ian Cairns, is stationed in Afghanistan training the Afghan National Police. At the same time she is studying full-time towards an MS in Human Services and working to run and expand her not-for-profit organization, Home Front Hearts.

For Randi, Home Front Hearts is literally a labor of love. "My heart has belonged to a soldier for almost fifteen years. Supporting his career, managing things in his absence and working with the families of his soldiers, I've become personally acquainted with the challenges faced by military families," says Randi. Home Front Hearts provides support and resources to the families of deployed service members, especially those from the New Jersey National Guard or Reserves. It works to increase public awareness of the struggles and sacrifices of military families and engages individuals and businesses in building a more military-friendly community.

Home Front Hearts has connected military families in a support network and found businesses to offer them, pro-bono, services they need. It has also sent over 300 boxes of school supplies to needy communities in Afghanistan at Randi's husband's request.

The money from a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant enabled Randi to secure official 501c3 status as a public charity. With this in place, Randi can focus on increasing the breadth of her organization and serving the needs of military families. "The BYFI alumni community offers a sense of belonging, a diverse set of skills and experiences, and a connection the likes of which I have not experienced in other communities to which I've belonged. Twenty-one years after a summer trip to Israel, it is still a community that I turn to and know that I will be supported."

In Hebrew school, Randi learned about ideas like tikkun olam (repairing the world) and tzedakah (charity). But her understanding of the importance of viewing our responsibilities for each other through a broader lens, one that extends beyond the Jewish community, deepened as a result of being part of an interfaith relationship. "My husband and I are deeply committed to teaching these values to our children," explains Randi. "The best way I can do that is through my own actions in advocating for others."

For more information visit [www.homefronthearts.org](http://www.homefronthearts.org)



**Idit Klein  
(BYFI '89)  
Keshet**

Idit Klein (BYFI '89) is working towards a day when Jews will not fear

they will be rejected by their community based on their sexual or gender identity. Since late August 2001 Idit has worked as executive director of Keshet, a grassroots organization striving for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender inclusion in Jewish life. Under Idit's leadership, Keshet has flourished.

Based in Boston, Keshet first reached a national stage with the release of a documentary the organization produced, titled Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School. The film tells

the story of a girl at a Jewish high school who campaigns to establish a gay-straight alliance. The film and accompanying curriculum have been used across the U.S. and internationally. Since its premier, the film has been screened in several hundred communities, including a GLBT film festival in Guyana.

Idit's work is highly personal. When in college at Yale, Idit experienced a sense of isolation and vulnerability when deciding whether to talk about her sexual identity with leadership at the campus Hillel. This anxiety was generated, she says, by the "complete absence of any signs of GLBT life in the campus Jewish community." When she did come out, Idit was supported by friends and staff at Hillel particularly Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld and Rabbi Jim Ponet (BYFI faculty). But it concerns Idit that fifteen years later there are still many young people who have the same experiences of marginalization.

The desire to create welcoming environments is what led Keshet to develop the "Hineini Education Project." Part of this project entails training and peer support to Jewish educators and lay leaders throughout the country to create safe schools and supportive communities. Keshet is also working to strengthen the capacity of Jewish GLBT organizations in other cities. Rather than replicate what Keshet created in Boston, they work to transmit curriculum resources and what they've learned about organizing, coalition-building, and facilitating difficult conversations with other groups.

Being awarded a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant is important to Idit on a symbolic level – the funds provided come with the support of the entire BYFI alumni community. "It really means a lot to me to be supported in this work by fellow Bronfmanim," Idit affirms. Keshet's mission of inclusion reflects BYFI's ethos of pluralism and open dialogue. With Idit's involvement, BYFI hopes to bring programming on GLBT issues to alumni.

One of Idit's proudest moments was a quiet one, sitting alone at her desk, when she received an e-mail from an 83 year old Jewish lesbian who had just watched Hineini. Her e-mail read, "I have never felt welcomed in the Jewish community. I couldn't find a shul to say kaddish in for my partner of 60 years after she passed away a couple of years ago. Thank you

for showing me that another kind of community is possible."

For more information visit [www.keshetonline.org](http://www.keshetonline.org)



**Ari Lipman  
(BYFI '95)  
Faith Vote  
Columbus**

Ari Lipman (BYFI '95) is an activist and organizer.

As founder of Faith Vote Columbus in Ohio, he is leading an interfaith coalition of religious congregations, neighborhood associations and labor unions committed to increasing voter turnout in urban precincts.

Faith Vote Columbus connects to 130 precincts, mostly low-income neighborhoods, where voter turnout in the 2004 presidential election was below 50% of registered voters. Right now, they're working with Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner to ensure that the November 2008 election runs smoothly, without the long lines in urban precincts that marred the 2004 vote. His non-partisan organization hopes to maximize the political power of disenfranchised communities.

Ari first developed a passion for social justice as a student at Harvard, where he helped start the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter. "All of a sudden," he says, "I moved from a nice D.C. suburb to Cambridge. Twenty yards away from my dorm, people were sleeping on grates." Working with the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Ari helped build a coalition of religious leaders advocating for social change in Massachusetts. With the support of over one thousand volunteers from Boston's religious communities, GBIO successfully pressured the Massachusetts government to enact state-wide universal health care. In May of 2007, the progressive alliance Take Back America acknowledged Ari's role in this work with its Maria Leavey Tribute Award.

Ari believes that activism is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition. "The one thing that exists in Torah that did not exist in any contemporary religious code was the exhortation to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger," says

Ari, whose grandfather and great-grandfather were labor organizers. "It's a role of the Jewish community to critique governmental and religious authorities, and to bring them toward a more just vision of the world."

Ari, who now holds a master's degree in theological studies from Harvard Divinity School, credits his BYFI summer for helping him develop the strong Jewish identity that guides him in his work with religious leaders. "If I walk into an African-American Pentecostal church, I need to know their tradition, and more importantly, who I am and where I came from. That was a big part of what BYFI did for me."

With an election year approaching, Ari hopes to build a significant voting bloc around social issues. Faith Vote Columbus has already seen success, working with Governor Ted Strickland to expand health insurance programs to low-income Ohio residents. "If you can claim to hold 20,000 votes in Ohio," Ari says, "that's a big deal."

For more information visit [www.ohio-iaf.org](http://www.ohio-iaf.org)



### Elizabeth Ochs (BYFI '01) *Street Sights*

Elizabeth Ochs (BYFI '01) is dedicated to advocacy for the homeless.

Elizabeth is the coordinating editor of *Street Sights*, a monthly Rhode Island newspaper written by people who are homeless, or were in the past. The newspaper serves as a forum for the homeless and for advocates, students, state officials, and the general public to share accurate and honest information about what it means to live in the streets and how to help the people who do.

The newspaper was defunct until a little over a year ago, when Elizabeth took charge. Since then, under her direction, it has grown to distribute 2,000 copies a month to Rhode Island's senators and representatives, all major news sources, and every major homeless shelter and service provider in the Providence area. It also goes to bookstores, libraries and community centers. The paper includes writing, art, news stories, and opinion pieces.

*Street Sights* strives to build a community of people who, Elizabeth explains, "are not defined by what they lack, but what gifts they bring to the production." The newspaper aims to empower its reporters. One writer who was homeless when he first got involved started two columns, the "Humanitarian Award" and the "Rainbow Award," that honor organizations and individuals who change the lives of homeless people in Rhode Island. Today, he has worked his way up to become the magazine's creative writing editor and is on his way to moving into his own apartment.

The BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant helped ensure that Elizabeth could continue her work with *Street Sights*. Elizabeth is grateful for this support. "So many individuals in the BYFI community serve as inspiring examples of what it means to live out one's values and beliefs," she says. For Elizabeth, *Street Sights* is her way of repairing the world, living the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam*; it is an expression of her Judaism and provides fulfillment. Elizabeth explains: "I am in awe of all the people I meet who find a way to better their lives and those around them, even when they are struggling to reach a stable place."

For more information visit [www.streetsights.org](http://www.streetsights.org)



### One to Watch Jodi Meyerowitz (BYFI '05)

Jodi Meyerowitz (BYFI '05) is in her senior year at the University of Ore-

gon, but she has already embarked on an ambitious project whose goal is no less than to "create a unified Jewish community." Jodi is co-founder of *Shomer Achi*, an entrepreneurial not-for-profit aimed at fostering personal connections between college students in Israel and the U.S. through community-based learning. She balances her commitment to *Shomer Achi* with her studies in Economics and Planning, Public Policy, and Management and role as President of Oregon Hillel.

When Jodi immigrated to Portland, Oregon at the age of ten from South Africa, she was surprised to find that many of her Jewish

day school peers were not familiar with Jewish life outside of North America and Israel. In college, she saw friends return from organized trips to Israel with a deep love of the land but little contact with Israelis. This concerned her. According to Jodi, "connections based on places are less sustainable than connections built through people." Jodi's experience as a Bronfman Fellow taught her this firsthand. While on her BYFI summer, Jodi connected with Israeli Amitim, a parallel cohort of Bronfman Fellows from Israel. She witnessed inter-Jewish dialogue "without the antagonism."

Jodi plans to continue the pluralistic dialogue she witnessed on BYFI, choosing to pilot *Shomer Achi* in the Pacific Northwest, a region where many Jews are unaffiliated. She hopes to connect them to Judaism through social justice. Jewish American students from and the University of Oregon will engage in social action projects with Israeli students from the Technion and Haifa University. Students will visit one another's countries, hear speakers, study Jewish texts, and conduct community service projects related to immigration.

Jodi was recognized for her leadership by *Presentense*, a Jewish incubator program. Together with *Shomer Achi*'s co-founder Jamie Zebrak, she spent 6 weeks this summer preparing the project and learning practical leadership and organizational skills as a *Presentense* Fellow. *Shomer Achi* has also received seed funding from the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund.

Jodi is already getting a sense of what leadership in the Jewish community entails: "empowering others," and, she says with a laugh, "many early mornings and late nights." ■

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## *1987 Collected by Deb Kornfeld*

**RANDI CAIRNS** My third-born starts Kindergarten which leaves one lone munchkin yet unschooled. That means we now have teens, tweens and toddlers simultaneously. AGGGHHH. I am working freelance from home, attending grad school full-time and will have a Masters in Human Services specializing in Nonprofit Management as of the end of the year. I am anxiously awaiting the safe return of my hubby from Afghanistan. I am also starting my own nonprofit (Home Front Hearts) supporting military families (which the Bronfman Alumni Venture Fund has generously supported). I'm seeking willing volunteers to offer services, expertise, etc. in terms of building the organization ([www.homefronthearts.org](http://www.homefronthearts.org)).

**MICHAEL COLSON** In December 2007 I left Geneva, Switzerland, after living there for 10 years to move to Washington, DC where I took the job as Director of Israel Programs for the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. My grant making portfolio includes funding for the study of modern Israel at universities across the United States; developing creative, engaging, and effective ways to teach about Israel in K-12 formal and informal educational institutions; and funding for high school and university Israel advocacy programs. And personally, I am, as I write this email, on my way to Israel where next week I'll be marrying a wonderful girl from Herzliya.

**REBA CONNELL** has been immersed in the study of mindfulness meditation. She enjoys practicing yoga and is currently doing a teacher training for Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. In her business, Center for Stress Reduction, [www.centerforstressreduction.com](http://www.centerforstressreduction.com), she does psychotherapy with couples, individuals, and teens, and stress reduction workshops in the workplace. She is also studying to be a certified Gottman Method Couples therapist with John and Julie Gottman, who as it happens are religious Jews. She loves finding and teaching gems from Jewish tradition related to healing. She helps to lead a Reconstructionist Havurah, Or Zarua, where she chants torah in Hebrew and translates into English from a present moment psycho-spiritual perspective. She is open to a shiddach with a wonderful woman...especially now that gay marriage is legal in California. She has also been writing liturgy since she was on Bronfman. She recently had the kavod (honor) of re-writing the Sheva B'rachot (7 blessings) in both English and Hebrew for her friends' lesbian wedding. She chanted the blessings in Hebrew while others shared them in English. The couple was legally married in California as well as welcomed by our Jewish community.

**ADAM DAVIDSON** I married the lovely Jen Banbury in November, 2007. I'm still a global economics correspondent at

NPR, which I continue to like a lot. I'm heading up a team that will try to make the global economy more interesting for non-business audiences.

**JENNIFER GERSTEL** I just had a new baby, Madeleine, at the end of July. She joins our two year old, Alexandra. My husband and I live in Natick, MA and I am on the faculty at Lasell College, a small college in Newton, MA. A very boring but rewarding suburban existence!

**DANIEL HANDLER** I'm in San Francisco with my charming wife Lisa Brown. I have been travelling thither and yon, performing a piece for narrator and orchestra (not unlike Peter and the Wolf) entitled *The Composer Is Dead*, which I wrote in collaboration with a composer, and I am at work on my fourth novel for adults. My wife, an illustrator, published her second picture book this year, entitled *Sometimes You Get What You Want*, and last year we published our first book together, *The Latke Who Couldn't Stop Screaming*. Our other collaboration, our son Otto, will turn five in October. His interest in trains can generously be described as maniacal.

**DAN JACOBSON** We have now been in Israel for 3 years, and living in our newly built home in the Judean hills for one year. Our kids are happy, adjusted, speaking Hebrew fluently and speaking English perfectly with a drip of an Israeli accent (what can you do...). We are just wrapping up a mildly relaxing summer of doing psychology work (and hanging out with the kids during the month of August which is dead here). Dassi and I are both busy with our psych. practices, and I'm enjoying and fulfilled by my rabbi/psychologist work in a "gap-year" yeshiva program for American guys in Jerusalem. Our yeshiva is in...the Goldstein youth village! Life in Israel is hectic, sometimes frustrating, daily grindish like everywhere, and also a tremendous gift and inspiration. We have the good fortune to live in one of the highest places in Israel (Neve Daniel in Gush Etzion, just south of Jerusalem), where we see Jerusalem to the north, Jordan (Moav mountains) to the east, the outskirts of Hebron to the south, and the Mediterranean to the west. It's beautiful. Always happy for any Bronfman past or present, Israeli or American who would be interested in joining us for a shabbat.

**SHEILA ELANA JELEN** I am living in Silver Spring, Maryland with my husband Seth and my three children, Malka (10), Nava (7) and Akiva (2). I teach English and Judaic Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, and just got tenure in May. I am currently thinking a lot about the way literature that was written in the pre-Holocaust period is read ethnographically (and not as literature) in the post-Holocaust period, and I am hoping to write about it in my next book. I feel blessed to be able to read

and teach and write for a living, and now that I have job security, I am taking a breath and enjoying my children even more than I was before (if that is possible). Last summer I traveled to Israel as a Bronfman faculty member and enjoyed working with Shimon immensely. I even got to spend some time in the last few days of the trip with Avi (who is a Silver Spring neighbor, although I never see him here). Shanah Tovah to everyone!

**DEB KORNFELD** I was a Judaic director this summer at camp chi in Wisconsin. It was fun to be at summer camp with my kids. My daughter Chava is 9 and she had a blast as a camper in a bunk all summer and my son Elie who is 4 was with me and ran all over camp. It is also very nice to be back home in Colorado where I have lived for 18 years! My independent outreach nonprofit for interfaith and Jewish unaffiliated families is doing great. The need is huge in Boulder and Colorado for meaningful Jewish education and experiences. Anyway I am still running mountains, teaching spinning classes, and biking with my kids.

**SARAH LARSON** Rob and I are busy juggling school, career and family like everyone else. At 46, Rob courageously decided to get off the corporate treadmill and pursue a PhD. It has been wild to have a student in the house - an adjustment but also really great to have him home more. Aidan (5) is going to Gan Ilan this year - a Jewish kindergarten in Lafayette with a whopping 6 kids! He had a blast learning new sports and spending time with friends this summer. He's super physical but gets his emotional insight and intuitiveness from his dad. Julia (2) starts at Temple Sinai's Preschool this year so we'll be doing a lot of schlepping to schools. She's a real hoot - very dramatic, artistic, and independent. I'm still consulting in organizational development and have been busy working at Dreyer's Ice Cream (yum) and Levi's this last year. I've taken on 3 "employees" so its been fun to have partners to collaborate with in my business. All three are dynamic Jewish women - go figure. With all my free time (hah) I've been enjoying all types of movement and fitness experiences like Kinesis, spinning, hip hop, etc. We're still loving Oakland and the "Nor Cal" experience - i.e. being close to Tahoe, beaches, culture, etc. Open invitation to folks who are passing through or live nearby. We do a hippie/dippy/interfaithy shabbat so come on by.

**HALLIE LOEB** It's finally my turn to shriek, "I'm engaged!" Other than the groom's name, Mark Neuman of St. Louis, MO, no details to report. Mark and I have been together for 3+ years, and have known each other even longer. Mark and a very close cousin of mine met at Aish in Jerusalem (though now rehabilitated), were roommates in Chicago, and g-w, will be cousins very

soon. Mark and I are living in St. Louis, coddling my senile, senior dog and having lots of fun with his 4 year old dog. I'm working in conferences and meetings for a national trade association and Mark is an IT specialist with a consulting firm.

**BEN LOWENSTEIN** We are here in Southern Maine. I am working as a Cardiologist between two hospitals. I am both the Director of The Heart Failure Program for York Hospital and Director of Non-Invasive Cardiology at Portsmouth Regional Hospital. I am staying busy at work and home with my wife Beth and my children, Ariella (7), Annabelle (5) and Sam (2). We have enjoyed life on the ocean this summer trying to catch fish bigger than the kids. In addition, I am trying to be a good example to my patients and trained for my first sprint duathlon/triathlon. We hope to see people soon, and if you are ever in Maine - give a buzz!

**LAUREN ROTH** I am a psychotherapist in private practice in Lakewood, New Jersey, where I live with my husband and my 5 and 1/2 children! Yes, we are expecting our sixth child in November, Gd willing! I homeschool my 10th and 8th grade sons for the secular studies portion of their day. The rest of their day, they are in yeshivas here in Lakewood. I speak in many different venues all over the United States, about marriage, parenting, healthful eating, and various Torah topics, and I love the travel and truly enjoy meeting people from all different walks of life. After working on it for seven years, I finally finished a novel, about the destructiveness of war and hatred, and the healing power of love. I'll start looking for agents and publishers after the baby is born. My husband is a retinal surgeon and a Professor of Medicine at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Last but not least, I very much enjoyed seeing everyone from '87 at the 20th reunion!

## *1988 Collected by Ella Shteingart*

**LAURA ALPERSON** recently moved to Albany NY with her husband, Boaz and two children, Yoav and Matan. Prior to the birth of her sons, Laura practiced labor and employment litigation in Portland Oregon. After staying home for a few years, Laura recently started a job at the Albany Law School's Office of Institutional Advancement as an Advancement Officer. It's a wonderful place to work and a lot more positive than litigation! **RONDA ANGEL ARKING** currently lives in Baltimore and works as a freelance writer and editor for various educational and academic publishers. She has three sons (Andrew, 9; Jonathan, 7; and Jeremy, 21 months), who keep her VERY busy! Ronda's been involved in founding a new synagogue in Baltimore, Netivot Shalom, which espouses a liberal Orthodox philosophy, and she's also involved in the Jewish

Orthodox Feminist Alliance. She is completing a Master's degree in Bible from Baltimore Hebrew University.

**ROBYN FARBER** lives in Irvine California with her husband, Marc Kirshbaum, and two amazing daughters: Zofia (5) and Temma (2). Robyn is calling on all Bronfmanim who have any expertise in education or fundraising. She is trying to get a "Jewish Montessori Pre-School off the ground". If anyone is interested in this project please contact Robyn.

**MAYA FISCHHOFF** works at Michigan State University, and reports to be dating someone very nice named Ziad. She loves the Midwest and encourages everyone to consider moving to Michigan where "there's a kind of beauty in flatness and people are very friendly." In her spare time she goes for long walks, volunteers at a homeless shelter, hectors her brothers and bakes unleavened bread.

**AARON HENDELMAN** just moved to Seattle with his wife and three children: Tess, Noah and Ella (!!!) The Hendelman family splits vacation time between France, where Aaron's wife is from, and Texas, where Aaron's family still lives.

Aaron continues to work as an intellectual property lawyer for a large technology-focused law firm. **JEREMY HOCK-ENSTEIN** and his wife, Rabbi Joanna Samuels, have a newborn son Natan. The family along with big sister Orli who is now 2.5 years old live in NYC. On the work front, Jeremy is now working full-time as CEO of the non-profit company Digital Divide Data, which he founded. DDD now employs 500 people in Cambodia and Laos. **ARI KELMAN**

has settled in Berkeley California. He teaches popular culture and the media in the American Studies Department at UC Davis. Though Ari has been studying and writing about contemporary Jewish culture, his latest research involves contemporary Christian worship music. Look out for his books on the subject coming out soon. **AYELET KUPER** lives in Toronto with her husband Andrew. Ayelet is physician at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. She is also a medical educator and an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, where her research focuses on the historical development of legitimate knowledge within medical education research.

**MICHELLE LYNN-SACHS** is a proud mother of a 9 month old daughter, Phoebe. She is currently an assistant professor of Jewish education at the Jewish Theological Seminary and lives in Brooklyn NY. **JOE MENASHE**

and his wife Deborah Musher and children Molly 3 and Gabriel 1 live in Dallas, TX. He is working as a rabbi at Congregation Shearith Israel. **DAVID SELIGMAN** Congratulations to David Seligman who is getting married on Oct 4. David admits that his fiancée Betsy, a former social worker and current yoga instructor, has gotten David to be "involuntarily healthier". David is still a restructuring lawyer in Chicago at

Kirkland and Ellis. **ELLA SHTEINGART (NADELSON)** is mother of three. Her oldest son just started middle school this year (impossible to believe!) and the baby just turned 8 months. Ella works as a program officer at a private foundation in NYC where she manages scholarship programs enabling underprivileged women to attain higher education.

**TANYA SCHLAM** recently completed her PhD in clinical psychology from Rutgers and started a research post-doc at the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. She lives in Madison, WI with her husband Jordan Ellenberg who is a math professor at the University of Wisconsin and their 3-year-old son Caleb. **JONATHAN TEPPERMAN** lives in NYC and is the assistant managing editor at Newsweek International. Jonathan is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage. **JOSHUA WALLACH** and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor's office on Lower Manhattan redevelopment, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. **ADAM ZAMBILOWICZ** will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

*1989 Collected by Amir Karger*  
**AMIR BAR-LEV** I was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a journalist. I am a filmmaker living in Brooklyn. My last documentary, "My Kid Could Paint That", was released in the fall of 2007. I am currently working on a film about a football player turned Army ranger Pat Tillman.

**DAVID BERNIS** I am currently living in Cairo, Egypt where I work as a political officer at the U.S. Embassy. Cairo is an interesting place, if a bit hectic.

**STEVE BIRNHOLZ** After a decade in Florida state government, I am currently the Research & Issues Director for the Florida Council of 100, a group of top Florida CEOs, which advises state policymakers on a wide variety of public policy issues.

**JENNY BRENNER** I am a licensed Toenet Beit Din (the equivalent of a divorce lawyer in the religious court in Israel). For the past six years I've been home with my kids building with legos, riding scooters, and doing math homework. To keep my mind and body from complete atrophy I've been learning Daf Yomi (one page of Talmud a day) and riding my bike (anywhere from 15-30 km) a few days a week. There's nothing

like the Judaeen Hills for a good work out!

**CHARLIE BUCKHOLTZ** I am a rabbi in the East Village. Not the bad kind of rabbi, though. The good kind. I just coauthored a book, you should read it! It's a good book. I, for one, enjoyed it thoroughly. (<http://www.inheaveneverythingisfine.com/Book.html>) Also, I'm engaged to be married.

**MARISA (DOLINSKY) CAHALL** After receiving a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, I am now serving as an Adjunct Professor and enjoying being a mother to Andrew (6-1/2) and Claire (3-1/2).

**JESSICA (CZARLINSKY) GREGG** We welcomed Sasha Anna five weeks ago (Aug 3). Big sister Zoe age 4 is a huge help and handfull at the same time. Charleston, SC is beautiful and definitely the South.

**JON DUKE** To flaunt my lack of regard for financial stability, I recently left my high-paying doctor job in Atlanta to become a lowly fellow in Medical Informatics at the Regenstrief Institute in Indianapolis. I am spending most of my days dreaming up crazy uses of technology in the health care setting. I'll be doing a degree in Human-Computer Interaction along the way to keep things interesting. Hadn't spent much time in the Midwest before, but we are enjoying the pace and the wonderful people.

**ABIGAIL (HEITLER) HIRSCH** We are living on my Grandmother's 15 acre farm which is now in the middle of the city. I love babies, but I'm delighted to realize that the post-diaper era has its own wonderful surprises - like family trips that are actually fun! I have somewhat accidentally landed a 2.75M 5-year federal grant to make online marriage educational materials. So, with 2 brothers and a kid I used to babysit (Daniel Berson, Bronfman '98) we've launched a web-training company. It's been a blast finding myself as CEO of a start-up that basically has 5 years of no-strings angel funding. [www.poweroftwo.org](http://www.poweroftwo.org) gives a mini-taste.

**DANA (HERDOON) RAUCHER** I am spending most of my time with my husband, Yossi, chasing after our one and a half year old son Eitan. We all live in NYC.

**AMIR KARGER** By day, I help biologists use computers in their research. By night, I've taken up songwriting. Currently co-writing a Purim "Popsical". In my spare time, I'm trying to figure out what 'Modern Orthodox' means.

**IDIT KLEIN** After fulfilling my childhood dream and making aliyah at 21, I followed in my parents' footsteps and came back to the States for 'a few months.' Well, 11 years later here I still

am. Executive Director of Keshet, a non-profit that works for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender inclusion in Jewish life.

**MICHAEL KUMIN** I have been in Boston for over six years, working for a local private equity firm. We've got a great 15-month old boy, Noah and are expecting another boy due in mid-November.

**RACHEL (LEBOWITZ) COHEN** I am part-time policy consulting and volunteering. I joined an "open Orthodox" synagogue - while the services are conducted in the Orthodox tradition, there is a big range in the level of observance of the congregants (and the shul tries to meet the educational and spiritual needs of all of its members). I participated in the Behrend Institute, "which provides monthly seminars to help local community lay leaders work on skills to help them better serve our community". The Behrend Institute reminded me so much of my summer on the Bronfman program; it brought together Jews from all branches of Judaism to share perspectives and help inform each other's way of thinking about Jewish communal service. Like on the Bronfman program, it was so nice to meet interesting people who never stop thinking.

**ELIZABETH PLOTKIN SIMMONS** I have been living in West Hartford, CT and enjoying life in the suburbs. I work part-time at the University of Connecticut as an ophthalmologist specializing in medical retina. I am pregnant and due in the beginning of November.

**SHAWN RUBY** We just passed our 8th aliyah anniversary. I am building the Zionist dream by helping my customers turn the desert into microchips. I am very involved in local community and Kadima party politics.

**SCOTT SAVITZ** I have been analyzing chemical, biological, and radiological defense (along with mine counter-measures and other areas) for the U.S. Navy. Immediately after 9/11, I went to Bahrain to support Navy forces in the Persian Gulf. My career has just taken an exciting turn; I've been lured away to support the Department of Homeland Security. Recently, I discovered the love of my life, and we expect to get married in the next year. Renee Stein I live in Decatur Georgia with husband Gregg Shapiro, son Sam (born August 2007), and two cats Oliver & Theo. I continue to work as staff conservator of the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University where I am also an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Art History.

**ANGELA WARNICK BUCHDAHL** I am the Senior Cantor of Central Synagogue, in Manhattan. I just returned from Israel where I led a family trip from

Central, bringing my children to Israel for the first time. I passed by the Goldstein Youth Village and thought of our great summer of '89, which still to this day, was the most influential summer of my life.

**MIKAEL WOLFE** I will finally complete my dissertation in Latin American History at the University of Chicago this year. I am also hoping to land a tenure-track job this year (any advice is appreciated from those who have one). When I teach college students these days about the 1980s before most of them were born, I can say I was around and remember the first Intifada, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Reagan/Bush I, the USSR...scary thought.

*1990 Collected by Diana Bloom*  
**DIANA BLOOM** I am living in Tampa Florida with my husband Aaron and our 4 1/2 year old twins Eliana and Gil. I have been working as a trainer and public relations ambassador for Weight Watchers International for the past 10 years as well as traveling around the United States training corporate executives in the skills and processes that will increase productivity and accountability in their companies.

**JONATHAN BRESMAN** I am living in Park Slope these days with my girlfriend, Nellie Zupancic (in the same building as Elissa Gootman!). By day I'm a senior editor at MAD Magazine and by night I'm a grad student at Teachers College, Columbia University. I keep up with the Fellowship by being on the Alumni Advisory Board (no joke - even though as of this writing, my photo and bio aren't up on the website, it's true!) and it never fails to freak me out that there are Fellows who weren't born yet when I went on BYFI back in 1990. Anyway, come visit me at MAD sometime. I get tons of free toys and comic books here and can't give them away fast enough.

**RICK BRODY** I had a very busy summer. In May, me, my wife -- Rachel Kobrin -- and 4-year-old daughter Noa welcomed baby boy Adin Baruch into the family. I filmed as a contestant on "Are You Smarter Than a 5th-Grader" (they were looking for a rabbi!) -- air date still undetermined. Rachel passed her Talmud exam that places her on track for being ordained as a rabbi next May. And then I began a new full-time job at the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, overseeing young adult initiatives with a special focus on programs for LA alumni of Birthright Israel programs. I continue to serve part-time as the rabbi of Temple Ami Shalom and am also teaching for the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School. I'm working on finding time to breathe.

**SUSAN WOLF DITKOFF** lives in Brookline, MA with her husband Joseph and two children, Anya and Zachary. Susan works at the Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit professional services firm affiliated with Bain & Co. that helps organizations increase their social impact. She focuses on strategic planning and leadership issues for foundations and education nonprofits. She was also elected to Brookline School Committee (also known as the school board) in May. Joseph is Deputy Legal Counsel and ADA at the Suffolk County DA's office in Boston. Anya enjoys attending nursery school at Kehillath Israel, where Joseph is a board member, and Zachary enjoys chasing after Anya.

**YOSSI "JOE" FENDEL** I am living in Berkeley, CA with my wife, Tamar, and two children, Shoshana is five and Ari is two. I'm working in Securities Lending Research at Barclays Global Investors, and I'm currently serving as President of the Board of Directors for Midrasha in Berkeley, a community Jewish high school program which has produced many Bronfman Fellows over the years, including myself, Megan Lewis, and Lisa Inman!

**SEMA BANK GOLDSTEIN** Our first girl (after 3 wonderful boys) Atara Rachel was born 5 months ago. I am still practicing OB/GYN in Englewood NJ, but have recently changed practices. My husband, Asher Goldstein, has opened a 3rd pain management practice location in Paramus NJ (in addition to those in NYC and Teaneck, NJ). Wishing I could attend more Bronfman events...

**MICHAH GOTTLIEB** Our second daughter Jordanna was born at the end of June, joining her older sister Gabriella who turned 2 in August. I'm starting my third year of teaching Jewish thought at NYU.

**AVI HELLER** We have 3 children and are living in Brookline, MA. I am the Director of Jewish Education at the Boston University Hillel and, along with my wife Shira, am part of the Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus. I am training for the Philadelphia marathon in November and starting an audio podcast that should be available from iTunes, called the Weekly Dose of Torah. If any Bronfmanim want to sign up for the email version, you can always reach me at rabbiavi@bu.edu.

**JONATHAN KAPLAN** I finished my plastic surgery fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic in June of 2007 - 12 years of school and training after college! So I'm finally out in the real world. I moved back to Louisiana and started up a practice jointly with a hospital in Baton Rouge. I am also acting as a Clinical Assistant Professor with the

Divisions of Plastic Surgery for LSU and Tulane Medical Centers by helping train their plastic surgery fellows. In my free time I travel to destinations as close as New Orleans or as far as New York and Israel. I'm active with the Federation, UJC's National Young Leadership Cabinet and the JDC. I still enjoy water and snow skiing and running.

**RABBI BRETT KRICHIVER** is the new Senior Jewish Educator for UCLA Hillel in Los Angeles. This pilot program through International Hillel places educators on five campuses in North America to supervise student interns and provide creative outreach to unaffiliated students. Our goal is to expand the concept of engagement beyond the walls of Hillel, and I am excited to be a part of this new initiative.

**LEAH MUNDELL** I recently relocated to Flagstaff, Arizona with my husband David and three-and-a-half-year-old Madeline and eight-month-old Gabriel. David has a faculty position in the physics and astronomy department at Northern Arizona University. I finished my Ph.D. in anthropology four years ago and since then have done some teaching at the University of Arizona and worked as a research consultant for a community organization in Tucson, called the Pima County Interfaith Council. My dissertation focused on relationships between faith-based organizations and public schools in Philadelphia, so I really enjoyed working for an organization much like the one I'd spent so much time writing about. Hopefully I'll be able to find similar work in Flagstaff.

**KIM VAN NAARDEN-BRAUN** I am still with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention working primarily on the Epidemiology of Autism and Cerebral Palsy (as well as other developmental disabilities). Josh just finished his fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We moved 3 weeks ago to Westfield, NJ. He is still on-staff at Montefiore/Albert Einstein, but is working full-time as a Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist at Morristown Memorial Hospital and has started a private practice in Summit. Sophie is now 3 1/2 and Sam is 17 months and they are such fun.

**JOSHUA NEUMAN** I am married to Danyelle and we have two girls, Michal is 4 years old and Eden is 15 months old. We live in Manhattan and I am still at the same job I've been at for the last 7 years. I was with Bear Stearns Merchant Banking but now that Bear Stearns was acquired by JP Morgan, my group is spinning out to be its own private equity company.

**NOAM PIANKO** I am living in Seattle with my wife Rachel Nussbaum (BYFI '93) and our one-year-old daughter,

Yona. I teach Jewish history at the University of Washington and research modern Jewish political thought. Seattle is a wonderful place to live and we would love to encourage east-coast oriented fellows to consider visiting/relocating to the Pacific Northwest!

**JUDITH ROSENBAUM** I live in Boston with my husband, Or Rose, and our twins, Ma'ayan and Aviv, who will be two in November. I work as the Director of Public History at the Jewish Women's Archive. In my spare time (ha ha ha), I'm also in the early stages of a book project on definitions of "The Jewish Mother" in the 21st century, which I hope to finish before the century's end. Our lives are filled with the wonder of toddlerhood, as well as the challenges of the work/life continuum.

**DANA WEINBERGER** I have been living in Boulder, CO since August 2007. I moved here with my partner who started graduate school at University of Colorado at Boulder. I am working for a pharmaceutical consulting company, enjoying the clean Colorado air, and doing a lot of biking and hiking.

**BETH ZASLOFF** The book I co-authored with Edgar just came out--Hope, Not Fear: A Path to Jewish Renaissance. I live in Brooklyn and have two daughters, Gilana, age four, and Naomi, sixteen months.

*1991 Collected by Amber Levanon Seligson*  
Greetings from the BYFI class of 1991! We have lots of good news to share from our cohort. Several of us are living in Israel, including **SHIRA REIFMAN** and **YAIR SILVERMAN**. Shira and her family made aliyah a year ago (July 31, 2007) and are now living in Yad Binyamin, a community about 40 minutes west of Jerusalem. Shira has four daughters, Miryam (8 1/2), Hadara (5 1/2), Tikva, and Chedva (twins, 3 1/2) all of whom are integrating beautifully and, G-d willing, she is expecting to welcome her first Sabra child in January. Shira's husband Daniel is teaching at two Midrashot in Jerusalem and Shira is working for a small UK based consulting firm called Secure Prospects that provides PR, marketing, fund raising and management consulting to non-profits in Israel. Yair and his wife Ilana have been blessed with a gorgeous and sweet baby girl named Ashira Toda, born on March 3, 2008. Big sister Hadar (4) and brother Adin (2) are loving her with great intensity. Two years into their Israel move they are still savoring the joys of Zichron Yaakov. In tragic but true Israeli fashion Yair is working at 4 jobs: building a warm open diverse community in Zichron, directing the Young Leader's Fellowship for YCT, teaching at the Hesder Yeshiva of Petach Tikva, and

priming Israeli executives for social leadership. Also living abroad, **MARTA WEISS** is in London with her husband, Alex Paseau. Since July 2007, she has been Curator of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She finished her dissertation on Victorian photography and received her PhD from Princeton in June 2008.

In the US, **JAKE DORMAN** is starting his second year as a professor of African American history and American Studies at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, which he loves. Contrary to popular opinion, Eastern Kansas is not flat, and in fact he rides a bike to work on top of a steep hill and sees vistas once seen by pioneers on the Oregon trail heading West, by John Brown fighting the forces of slavery, and by a young Langston Hughes, who grew up there in his mother's hometown. Lawrence is a great college town like Berkeley or Ann Arbor, and features lots of microbreweries, cafes, book stores, record shops, and live music venues. This summer Jake used research grants to visit Jamaica, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, as he wrapped up the research for his first book, to be published by Oxford University Press, entitled *Chosen People: Black Israelites, Black Ishmaelites, and Black Orientalism from Reconstruction to the Renaissance*. The book traces the development of an Orientalist stream of black alternative religions that includes black Jews, black Muslims, and Rastafarians, tracing their rise to images of Islam, Judaism, and the Orient transmitted through freemasonry, Christianity, esoteric faiths, and popular culture from the circus to film, world's fairs, and the Ancient Arabic and Egyptian Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, aka the Shriners. In many ways it was the Bronfman summer when Jake was seventeen that set him on the intellectual journey of comparing black and Jewish nationalisms that led him to where he is, seventeen years later.

Also in the US, **BRETT ABRAHAMS** is a UCLA postdoc. He is enjoying LA, and even more so now that he has been married for the past year. He is looking for faculty positions. **ETAN COHEN** welcomed a new son in March, Maccabee. He joined his twin sisters Dani and Beverly. Etan has a movie in theaters now, *Tropic Thunder*, and one coming in the fall, *Madagascar 2*. **JULIE GELLER** just left her day job to focus full time as a singer/songwriter. New mp3s should be up at [www.juliegeller.com](http://www.juliegeller.com) in the coming months. **AMBER LEVANON SELIGSON** is a director in the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, focusing on studies of incarcerated and homeless populations. Gadi and their daughters Maya

and Dalia are looking forward to Amber having a new baby around Halloween. **LEAH OPPENZATO** (formerly Oppenheim) had a baby in December (Jeremy Angelo Oppenzato). Rabbi **AVI ORLOW** is thrilled to join the Foundation for Jewish Camp. For the past four years Avi has been the Campus Rabbi and Assistant Director of St. Louise Hillel at Washington University. Avi lives in White Plains with his wife, Cantor Adina Frydman, and their sons, Yadid and Yishama. He is very excited to reconnect with family and friends on the east coast. **JESSICA ZELNER** is entering her fourth year as an Assistant District Attorney at the Queens District Attorney's Office. After spending one year prosecuting domestic violence cases, she was promoted to a felony trial bureau, where she prosecutes major felonies - everything from attempted murders, burglaries, assaults, robberies, and gun possession cases. She couldn't be happier with her decision to leave private practice!

**DANIEL SILVERBERG** We just bought a house in DC, which means my family has delayed our triumphant return to California by at least five years! I am a lawyer on the Hill, and my wife, Sarah, just came out with a Jewish children's book titled, "The Bedtime Sh'ma". Check it out on Amazon!

**DANA WEINBERG** I am married to Eugene Shuster, and we live on Long Island with our two children, Michaela (age 7) and Julian (age 4). I am an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Queens College, and my research areas are healthcare workforce, management, and organization. I am up for tenure this year, and I am also working in the City University of New York Office of the University Dean for Health and Human Services as the Director for Interdisciplinary Research. I also have a company that conducts program evaluations.

*1992 Collected by Elijah Dornstreich*  
Thanks to so many of you for responding with your updates! For my part, I'm living in Philly as I have since college. I have a startup commercial lending business on the side and I also work full-time for a mortgage bank which specializes in government loans. I was on the founding board of A Chance to Heal [www.achancetoheal.org](http://www.achancetoheal.org), which advocates on behalf of those with eating disorders, and I am an early member of The Idea Coalition, which will bring together young Jewish and African-American political and business leaders in Philadelphia, and will have branches soon in New York and DC. I live in the beautiful Fitler Square part of center city, and I welcome any of you to reach out to me if you pass through - as **WARREN BRAUNING** did recently,

when we got a beer downtown and caught up, which was excellent! Starting with Warren, he writes "The big news in our life is the birth, on June 2, of our son Isaac Traylor Braunig, who was brought into the covenant on his eighth day before family and friends. Isaac (Ike) was born a healthy 8 lbs, 11 oz, and has brought so much joy and love into our lives that we barely know what to do with it all. We are slowly settling into the parental routine and enjoying every minute of it. Lindsay and I are still living in San Francisco and working as attorneys. I had the fascinating experience of working on my first criminal defense case this past winter, handling a judicial bribery case down in Mississippi. Lindsay is on a lengthy maternity leave but looking forward to returning to work next year. Otherwise, we're just enjoying the California sun and doing all we can to elect Barack Obama our next president." **DAVID ANDORSKY** writes that "I am living in Los Angeles, in my third (and final) year of my hematology/oncology fellowship at UCLA. (That's my 6th year of training since med school - I will be glad to be done.)" **JEREMY PERLMAN** writes "I'm living out in Los Angeles now. I've become somewhat of a Californian, having been here for almost a decade. I'm a pediatrician. I work and teach in the Neonatal ICU at Olive View-UCLA hospital. My girlfriend just started dental school at USC, so we'll probably be in LA for another 4 years. After that, who knows? I spent a month in India last year travelling and doing medical work with HIV-infected children, and am working on setting up my next international medical venture. I've also gotten interested in real estate investing, as a way to make money apart from my medical work, which I'd ultimately like to do for free." **GINA (WARNICK) COLETTI** writes "I am living in Los Angeles with my husband Paul Coletti (also a violinist) and 1 year old daughter Olivia. Life is returning somewhat to a resemblance of what it did before my daughter arrived but it will never quite be the same - in a good way of course. My life is being a mom, violinist and wife. I am a freelance violinist so that includes playing for movie scores, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and in chamber music concerts among other things. My husband and I are both musicians and that has allowed us to collectively teach, perform and travel to many places all over the world and I am really grateful we can do that together as a family. Paul and I have literally

passed Olivia off to each other backstage when one of us has exited from playing and the other is about to perform. Music is a family thing with us. I also am really involved in music for young people and run two programs that are dear to my heart. One is Junior Chamber Music which puts talented kids in chamber music ensembles and gives them access to top professionals in LA who guide them. The other project is called ViolaFest that brings together hundreds of young violinists from all over the area to experience a day devoted to all things viola. I also teach viola privately and really enjoy the one on one relationship that I am able to develop with my students. Olivia is a riot and I just adore being a mom - she has totally changed my life. Paul and I just celebrated our 2nd year anniversary. We had a small wedding with our families in Tuscany, Italy two summers ago. All in all, life is wonderful and full." **SARAH FLICKER** wrote: "I am a professor of environmental studies at York University in Toronto. I study teen sexual health and HIV prevention in Canada and South Africa. I have a cat named Trouble. I can often be found biking around the city and visiting interesting restaurants and galleries..." **MICHAEL BROWN** writes: "No marriage and no babies means not much to report! I'm a partner at a venture capital firm in Silicon Valley called Foundation Capital. Still living in San Francisco just above Dolores Park. Started a men's choral singing group last November called The Filmore Slims - we're having our first concert September 20th. I am serving on the board of a non-profit called TechSoup that provides technology equipment, counsel and community to 80,000 non-profits in the US and globally. When not at work, I'm learning to cook. Stop by for a meal any time all Bronfman are welcome!" **ELIOT DOBRIS** writes "I've been living in San Francisco for eleven years now. For the past couple of years, I've had my own public relations practice, representing nonprofits and health care organizations. Having my own business has been great. I live with my boyfriend, Enrique, on one of San Francisco's famously steep hills. If you happen to be at one of San Francisco's farmers markets early one morning and you see a guy who looks like me, looking for the sweetest peaches or the freshest greens, come say "Hi." **JOSH FRAIDSTERN** "and his wife, Andrea Morrell, welcomed Bernadette Shayna Morrell Fraidstern into the world on July 4th, 2008. All are doing well and learning a lot." **MICHAEL SUGARMAN** lives in Brooklyn and directs commercials. **DANIA (BOURKOFF) MATTHEOS** is "living in Los Angeles with my husband Peter and my sons George (8-years-old), Thomas (6-years-old),

Nicholas (4-years-old), and Victor (2-years-old)." **TAMAR GORDON** writes: "My son Elisha is 9 months old and ready to roll - any second now he will be walking faster than me. Work-wise, I am a supervisor in a mental health clinic in Yonkers, NY, and I have a small private practice on the UWS. You can check out my website at [www.cbt-therapy.com](http://www.cbt-therapy.com) if you're interested in learning more about mental health or therapy. My husband Josh continues to work on a PhD in Talmud at JTS, and to run the Beit Midrash there."

**SARAH (GILLER) NELSON** writes "The last few years have been very busy. My son, Jack, will be 2 in December. He is at the point where he is climbing, and running, and jumping, and starting to string together words. Most recently he said, "poo-poo bye-bye." I am so proud. When I am not chasing after him, I am working at Spertus Museum, a contemporary Jewish museum in Chicago, where I have been the assistant curator for the past two years. In other exciting news, last October my first book, *Designing the Good Life: Norman M. Giller and the Development of Miami Modernism*, was published by the University Press of Florida. I wrote the book with my late grandfather Norman M. Giller. The project took years to complete, and along the way I had the pleasure of getting to know an extraordinary man in a way I never could have imagined. Feel free to check out the press blog: [www.designingthegood-life.blogspot.com](http://www.designingthegood-life.blogspot.com)."

**RENA (DAVIS) NICKERSON** "is Senior Brand Manager at the Campbell Company of Canada, managing the Cooking Soup portfolio (no, none of them are kosher). She previously held product management roles at Colgate-Palmolive and Heinz Canada, marketing leading household brands. Rena lives with her husband Yehuda and their children (Tiferet, 9 and Gavriel, 4) in Toronto, where she is an active board member and the Marketing Chair of her local synagogue, Ayin L'Tzion."

**NAHANNI ROUS** writes that she is "still working at Just Vision in the capacity of Education Director, designing educational resources that draw on the stories of Israeli and Palestinian peace builders from our documentary film, *Encounter Point*, and [Justvision.org](http://Justvision.org), and working with communities and educators to implement them. I am also loving being a family with Ned our beautiful Shalvah, who is shedding her babyhood and becoming a little kid before our eyes. We live in Washington, DC, where in my spare time I study textile design at the Corcoran School and make custom chuppot. (Check out my website at [www.nahannirous.com](http://www.nahannirous.com).)" Last but not least, **ALIZA THOMPSON** writes that she and her husband are "now living in Washington, DC. After finishing my

nephrology (kidney) fellowship, I took a job at the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (part of the Food and Drug Administration). I like the job and it's nice having more time to spend with my daughters, Molly and Evelyn." **DAVID PONET** writes, "I received my PhD from Columbia University in Political Science in 2006 and am currently the Head of Research at Public Insight LP." Again, great to hear from everyone from our wonderful BYFI '92 year! Best, Elijah.

*1993 Collected by Jessica Radin*  
Hey Bronfmanim! I was grateful for this opportunity to hear more about all of you and exchange an email or two. I myself am still in NYC with my husband Simeon who is from England but has been here for 14 years. I have taught at Beacon, a public high school, for the past 8 years but this year I am excited about taking a year off to take classes, do some writing, and take care of some family affairs. I certainly want to go back to teaching but it is nice to have a short respite. I hope to see you all sometime in the near future.

**ALLIE ALPEROVITCH** I am living in NYC with my husband, Yuri, and daughter, Emma. Emma is now four and attends pre-K at Ramaz. We recently finished renovating our apartment and hope to stay put for a while. Professionally, I am an attorney at Ropes & Gray. In my "spare" time, I am a member of the BYFI alumni advisory board (and encourage other alumni to get involved). I am also a board member of Darkhei Noam (an independent minyan on the Upper West Side) and of JOFA (Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance).

**ROBERT BRYSKIN** A lot of things have happened since we've last seen each other. I am married and have a son who is about to turn three. We relocated to Jacksonville, FL about a month ago from NC and are trying to stay dry amidst all the storms. I work as a pediatric anesthesiologist and am busy with my new job and learning the new location.

**DAVID BELL** I have been working as a lawyer in NYC, focusing on corporate law, election law in various states in advance of the 2008 elections and refugee law to resettle Iraqis who have become targets in their own country for assisting the Americans. Work has been interesting, at times taxing, and New York always teaches me something new, but I'm still searching for what comes next.

**KATHERINE ECKSTEIN** I live in New York City and work at The Children's Aid Society doing education policy and advocacy. I see Jessica Radin and David Bell frequently. I am hopeful about the upcoming election and incredibly

anxious at the same time. I run when I can (I'm trying to be more diligent). I am working on writing projects -- both poetry and a book project with two friends about faith, work and love. As I move further into my 30s feeling more at peace and alive than ever before.

**AVLANA EISENBERG** I just moved to Ann Arbor where I'm pursuing graduate study in orchestral conducting.

**DAN FREEMAN** In August I returned to London from Hong Kong, where I spent the last year, to take a new job in investment management. I'm trying desperately to break my terrible habit of moving every other year!

**DAVID M. GILLERS** I am working as a commercial real estate lawyer in the Boston office of Goulston & Storrs, Rachel is at the conflict management firm Insight Partners, and our 16-month old Yedidyah said "I love you" recently. Granted, it was to his day care friend Farouz, but we're still pleased. We continue to actively participate in "Minyan Tehillah," a shul we helped found which was the happy recipient of a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant several years ago.

**JOSH GOODMAN** Since May I have been living in Rio de Janeiro, writing about politics and economics for Bloomberg News. I have not taken up surfing or futevolei (foot-volleyball) and must be the most sun-deprived person living in Brazil. All the same, it's exciting to watch up-close how Brazil occupies the void left by America's declining economic influence in the world.

**ANDY KATZMAN** I am living in San Francisco and recently took a job at Yahoo as Director of Business Management for Corporate Partnerships. I am also recently engaged to another Bronfman alum, Sarah Cowan (BYFI '97). No other big news, though I guess that counts as pretty big.

**YEHUDA KURTZER** I have a lot of updates to share; it's been an extremely eventful year. About 3 weeks ago Stephanie and I welcomed our second child into the world, a terrific little boy who we named Jesse Michael Ives-Kurtzer. Noah is now 2.5 and is very delighted to be an older brother. We're still living in Brookline, and I just started my new position as a professor at Brandeis. I'll be teaching courses in Jewish history and professional leadership, and am writing a book for the next few years on "Jewish memory." I was awarded this position after winning an unusual competition endowed by Charles Bronfman in search of new ideas for the Jewish community, and am extremely excited to actually be working after years of student-hood. I'm hoping to defend my dissertation

in November. Stephanie is now on maternity leave but continues to love her work in real estate development law, specializing in affordable housing. We spent a wonderful Shabbat recently with David and Rachel Milner Gillers who we see regularly in Boston; actually, David and Stephanie now work together.

**WAYNE JONES** For my part, I'm currently director of operations at Oracle, the software company, where I have been for nine years. I live in Arlington, VA with my partner of fourteen years, Krista, and our very sweet cat Anna. I am currently on the Alumni Advisory Board of BYFI, where I have the role of Chair for Technology and Communications. I have also recently taken a position on the Board of Directors of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE).

**TALIA MILGROM-ELCOTT** This has been a whirlwind of a few years. In May of 2007, Aaron Dorfman and I got married (after a wonderful 15 months of meeting and falling in love). This past July, we had a baby, Oren Milgrom-Dorfman, and in August we came out to San Francisco for five weeks of baby moon, as our friends have taken to calling it. We're living in a cute cottage in the Mission and are enjoying the good life before heading back to New York and work in late September.

**RACHEL NUSSBAUM** I am still living in Seattle with Noam Pianko (BYFI '90) and my daughter Yona, who is turning 1 this month. Like almost everyone else in Seattle, I seem to have caught start-up fever, and two years ago I launched a start-up pluralistic Jewish community called the Kavana Cooperative. Things with Kavana are going really well - it's exciting and gratifying to be in a position where I can think creatively about the Jewish future.

**HEATHER SOKOLOFF** I moved back to Montreal, my hometown, two years ago, to give birth to my daughter Talia Rose Bukhman, after living in Toronto for six years and working at the National Post, a Canadian daily, where I covered education, family issues and provincial politics. Jacob William was born this summer. I've been mostly doing the mom thing as well as writing lifestyle features on fun stuff like food for the Globe and Mail, the other national Canadian daily. I am loving being back in French Canada, where maternity leave is extra-long, daycare is subsidized and the work day ends at 4pm.

**MIRIAM HELLER STERN** I am currently Director of Curriculum and Research at the American Jewish University's School of Education. I finished my Ph.D. in education at Stanford in 2007.

# BYFI Class Notes

My husband Jon and I live in L.A. with our three year-old son Elijah and we are expecting number two God willing in December.

**MAX (KAYLA) STRASSFELD** I live in San Francisco, where I've been the last ten years, with my partner. Michael Paley came to our commitment ceremony and gave an amazing drash in shul for the ufruf. I'm currently in the third year of a doctoral program in Religious Studies at Stanford, studying the androgynous and tumtum (roughly corresponding to contemporary transgender and intersex categories) in the Talmud. Oh, and I go by Max now.

**TANYA TRAKHT** I live in Manhattan with my husband David and my two (almost three) year old son Isaac. I am a lawyer and presently work at a law firm called Debevoise & Plimpton on the Upper East Side.

*1994 Collected by Shira Fishman*  
The Bronfman class of '94 is doing well professionally and personally. There were lots of exciting events to report. A number of the '94 fellows wrote updates from abroad. **MATTI FRIEDMAN** is currently living in Jerusalem where he is a correspondent for the Associated Press. Although he mainly covers local news, he recently had the opportunity to report from Georgia on the conflict with Russia. He is married to Naama and together they chase around 16 month old identical twins, Aviv and Michael. **JUDY BATALION** lives in London where she is writing and performing. She recently got engaged to Jon Lightman. Mazel tov to Judy and Jon. **ILYA FISCHHOFF** sends his regards from Kenya where he is doing biology fieldwork until November. He is working on zebra behavior and conservation. He writes, "it is nice to be back watching animals in-person, and not only as numbers on the computer. I had forgotten how cute baby warthogs are." He is disappointed to be voting absentee in the elections but he gets his election news from the Kenyans at the field station who quote him Obama speeches. After he returns from Kenya, Ilya will be living in Hamilton, Ontario (near Toronto) and looking for a postdoctoral fellowship for the next academic year. Anyone who is in the area is invited to visit him. Speaking of Toronto, **JACOB (DICKMAN) SADIKMAN** wrote in as well. He and his wife Samara live in Toronto with their 16 month old daughter, Yaffa. They are expecting a second child in late December. Jacob is still working as an energy lawyer at the law firm of Osler, where he has been for the past four years. Now to the US...Although he lost touch briefly with BYFI, **JED ROHER** is back in the loop. He reports that things are going well for him. After college he spent four years as an Audio

Engineer/Stage Manager/Production Manager for a touring musical theater productions and regional arts festival. This is perhaps unsurprising for the Bronfman Fellow who was never far from his guitar. What might be more surprising is that after that he attended law school and has settled down in Madison WI as a tax lawyer. He married Nora, an actress he met during his touring years, and they now have a "little fireball of a 2 year old" named Stella. **DARA HORN** reports that her family is doing well and growing. She and husband Brendan Schulman have two children, Maya, 3, and Ari, 16 months, and they are expecting a third child in February (Dara requests that I insert evil-eye discouraging idioms here). After an 8 year stint in New York City, they are moving to New Jersey this winter where "our children will no longer have to be accompanied by an adult in order to look at a tree." Dara now has three novels, *In the Image* (Norton, 2002), *The World to Come* (Norton, 2006) and *All Other Nights* (Norton, 2009) which will be arriving this March in bookstores. The third novel is about Jewish spies during the American civil war with many characters based on historical figures. Dara received her PhD in Hebrew and Yiddish literature from Harvard in 2006 and although she was teaching at Sara Lawrence College she tells us that currently her literary analysis skills are mainly used for "interpreting the picaresque adventures of Curious George." **ARIEL ADESNIK** shared with us the exciting news that he is getting married next May in Washington DC. His fiancée Susanna has just begun the conversion process and amazingly, it has been a learning process for Ariel as well. When he isn't studying Torah in preparation for the conversion, Ariel spends about 60 hours a week as part of the McCain '08 team. He sports a McCain '08 kippah which had to be purchased by his mother because the campaign does not distribute religious paraphernalia, as far as he knows. **JONATHAN BLUTH** lives with his wife Katherine in New York. They welcomed their first child, Jackson, in February and Jon still can't believe he is already 6 months old. He says, "he is the most precious thing we've ever seen." When not ogling over Jackson, Jon is working at Cowen and Company in health care investment banking and Katherine, in her "spare" time, is getting her MBA at NYU. From Brookline, MA, **ITIA SHMIDMAN** Roth writes in to tell us about her two kids, Emma, 3, and Joshua, 1, who keep the Roth family very busy. Itia is still lawyering at Goodwin Procter and Menachem, her husband, is still straightening teeth (as a dentist). Also in Boston, **RACHEL GORDON** is living in Cambridge and working on her doctorate in American religious history at Harvard. Her dissertation is about

Post WWII American Judaism. **DAVID NIR** just celebrated his second wedding anniversary to Mary Catherine Nir (nee Campbell) of Cleveland, OH. The two are living in New York City and practicing law. Mary is in-house counsel for a hedge fund and David does intellectual property litigation at a large firm. **SARA KLEIN EISENBERG** just finished a clerkship with Justice Stevens on the Supreme Court and moved to San Francisco where she is interviewing for jobs. She got married on September 7th – mazel tov – and is currently honeymooning in Hawaii for two glorious weeks before starting work in October or November. **SARA SCHWARTZ CHRISMER**, her husband Noah, and daughter Emma (age 2) are living out the suburban dream in Lower Merion, PA. Sara just completed her doctorate at Harvard's Graduate School of Education this past spring. Dr. Schwartz Chrismer is currently interviewing for part-time jobs in the field of educational policy, research, and/or evaluation. Noah is in his final year of a joint program at Penn's Design School (Masters in City Planning) and Wharton (MBA). Emma, who was born in Boston, just began her first year of part-time pre-school at the JCC. She enjoys reading, talking, singing, painting, and generally acting crazy. After five years in DC, I, **SHIRA MILLER-JACOBS FISHMAN**, moved to Wynnewood, PA this summer where my husband is a radiology resident at Albert Einstein Medical Center. I am finishing my PhD in psychology at the University of Maryland and writing my dissertation on social exclusion and attraction to terrorist organizations (no field work required). We have a little girl, Orly, who is five months old and keeps us smiling all the time. Since moving to Philly I have been able to reconnect with Sara as our girls attend the same pre-school! **SARA MEIROWITZ** moved to Jerusalem two years ago (fall of 2006) on a Dorot Fellowship, leaving behind Cambridge, MA, and the world of academic publishing. She is freelance editing, teaching and studying Jewish texts, and spending a whole lot of time drinking coffee in cafes. She would love to see other BYFI alumni in Israel. Alisa Mall left the West Coast and the practice of real estate law and is now am living in New York working for Tishman Speyer. She's still doing lots of triathlons and trying to be outside as much as possible. Finally, but certainly not least, **ITAMAR MOSES** wrote in an update. As expected, it is too funny to change so in Itamar's words, here is his update: "I am living in Brooklyn, with my six wives and eighty-five babies. No, wait, with my zero wives and zero babies. And I'm writing plays. My new play, *BACK BACK BACK*, which is about steroids in baseball, will be my third play to appear off-broadway, when it opens at Manhattan Theatre Club in

November, so I am beginning a cycle of HGH and Andro to get in shape for that. And then an evening of my short plays starts a run at the Flea Theatre, downtown, in February. Unfortunately, this will mean neglecting all of my babies and wives."

*1995*

**ALYSHEA AUSTERN** Things are going really well here in Brooklyn. The biggest news (and the kind that usually goes into these updates) is that I'm getting married in November. Dan and I met in law school and are living in Cobble Hill. In the "Small World" category is the fact that we will be married by Rabbi Ponet... Dan and David Ponet (Bronfman '92 are close friends from college). Otherwise, I'm still working as a litigator in the City and spending my free time in search of the ideal chocolate chip cookie.

**LAUREN CHERNICK** I am living with my husband Aaron Fishman on the Upper West Side and am in the middle of my Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellowship at Columbia Presbyterian.

**COREY DATZ-GREENBERG** I am working as an organizer with UNITE HERE Local 2, the Hotel workers union in San Francisco. I was previously with UNITE HERE Local 19 in San Jose for 4 years. I also volunteer at the Gay Men's Health Collective as a volunteer medic. I am not married, nor do I have kids. I do have 2 godchildren and one nephew who are playing the part for the time being.

**LISA EXLER** I just moved to Washington Heights with my family, Elie and Maytal (10 months), and would love to have visitors! I'm still working at American Jewish World Service in the education department.

**MICHAEL FRAZER** I am living in Somerville, MA. My wife Coral and I are expecting our first baby any day now. I'm employed as an Assistant Professor of Government and Social Studies at Harvard University. My first book, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

**ABRAHAM LEVITAN** I am closing in rapidly on my eight-year anniversary of being a Chicagoan. Last year, I founded a music-teaching group, Piano Power, that operates in the Chicago suburbs. Meanwhile, my band, Baby Teeth, is in the process of swelling to five members (recession? What recession?). Finally, I will be marrying the love of my life, Lara Marsh, in the summer of 2009. We have a happy home life with our two cats, Jason Priestley and Luke Perry.

**ARI LIPMAN** I'm living in Columbus, OH, home of Wendy's, Abercrombie & Fitch, Victoria's Secret, Nationwide Insurance (life comes at you fast!), Ohio State University football, a major league hockey team you have never heard of, and ground zero for the 2008 presidential election. I'm running a non-partisan interfaith voter mobilization organization ([www.faihvotecolumbus.org](http://www.faihvotecolumbus.org)), and on Friday evenings I play clarinet at one of the three Reform synagogues in town. Even after living and working here for two years I wouldn't quite yet call myself a Midwesterner -- my East Coast roots run a bit too deep -- though for what it's worth I now drive to any destination more than two blocks away.

**MELISSA MANN** I am living in Brazil, writing lots, cooking lots, and opening an organic coffee lounge fused with an antiques shop in an old house from the 1940's.

**NOAM MILGROM-ELCOTT** It has been a big year. I turned thirty, got a job (assistant professor of modern art history at Columbia University), almost completed my doctorate (from Princeton), and am engaged to Julie Ehrlich.

**DAVID SALVAY** I am currently living in Chicago and working to finish my Ph.D. in Chemical & Biological Engineering. My research focuses on the use of synthetic polymer-based scaffolds as platforms for cell transplantation and gene delivery with a special emphasis on the role of the extra-cellular micro environment on mediating transplanted pancreatic islet cell survival and function. After defending my dissertation later this year, I'll return to medical school and hope to complete my M.D. by mid-2010, after which I plan to enter a surgical residency program.

**SONYA SCHNEIDER** married her Stanford sweetheart, Stuart Nagae, in 2004. They currently reside in Seattle, WA. Sonya worked for four years at IN-TIMAN Theatre, and has since left to pursue playwrighting full-time. Her play, WAKE, was produced in April 2008. She and Stuart are expecting their first child in October.

**MICHELLE STERNTHAL** I am currently living in Somerville, MA. I just finished my PhD in Public Policy and Sociology from the University of Michigan and am starting a post-doc at Harvard School of Public Health.

*1996 Collected by  
Mathew Rascoff*

**ADAM CHRISTIAN** I am now happily married to John Volturo. We tied the knot this summer in Los Angeles. I am currently finishing up my urban planning program at Harvard and will be done in June of next year. Here in Cambridge, I have the pleasure

of seeing Matthew Rascoff '96 on a regular basis.

**JIMMY DAVIS** After graduating from college, I lived in Israel for 3 years, completing smicha at Yeshivat HaMivtar (where R' Shimon Felix formerly taught and R' Avi Weinstein formerly studied). Since then, I returned to Cambridge to attend Harvard Medical School and graduated medical school this past June. However, the best part of my post-Bronfman years, by far, has been meeting Stephanie Goldglantz while I was a medical student and she a dental student. We married 2.5 years ago. For now, I am doing my intern year at Tufts Medical Center, contemplating if I will head into internal medicine or surgery. Stephanie is in her final year of orthodontics residency. We still live in Cambridge and welcome all visitors who may be happening to pass on through.

**YONI ENGELHART** reports: Talia and I have moved to Brookline, MA and our daughter Yakira turns 18 months this fall. I'm beginning my first year of MBA at Harvard. I recently joined the BYFI alumni advisory board on the fundraising and projects committee.

**DAN GREENSPAHN** Having graduated from George Washington University Law School in May, I'm living in Washington D.C. with my wife, Karen Berenthal, and started clerking for a judge on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in late August. I recently wrote an article on a right to an education and co-wrote another on outsourcing, both published in law journals and available online at [www.ssrn.com](http://www.ssrn.com). In early August, Karen and I had the pleasure of hiking and camping in national parks in Washington, Montana, and Wyoming.

**ADINA GERVER** I left the Skirball Center at the end of May to study full-time, first at Yeshivat Hadar in NYC, and now at the Pardes kollel in Jerusalem. My goal for the year is to learn and write--two early loves that I've abandoned in recent years. The professional home of my writing projects will be [www.adinagerver.com](http://www.adinagerver.com). (By the time you get this, it may finally be completed.) In the meantime, I am beginning work as an American Jewish World Service Lisa Goldberg Memorial Writers' Fellow. You can subscribe to my work and that of my peers at [www.ajws.org/parshah](http://www.ajws.org/parshah). I was also very gratified to receive a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant to begin work on Borei Hoshech, a project focused on the interface between tefillah (prayer) and mental health, especially depression. My aim is to launch this project as my own, with the goal of making it collaborative shortly. All in all, things in my life are very good. I would love to hang out with any Bronf-folk who find themselves in Jerusalem.

**ARON GOETZL** I graduated from law school in 06 and have been in New Orleans clerking for two federal judges since then. I will be getting married in November. These last two years I have basically lived the life that Adam Magnus should have lived in his hometown if he hadn't abandoned it for greener pastures in Washington.

**SUSANNA GOLDFINGER** I live in Brooklyn and work in advertising which is not really as glamorous as it looks in the movies but still a lot of fun. In my free time I swim with a master's team, salsa, write short stories, and try to escape the city--I recently returned from a hiking trip in the Italian alps. My favorite activity of all is bumping into Bronfmanim, and I am happy to report this happens fairly often. I am looking forward to our next gathering...

**TALI GRIFFEL** I am living outside of Haifa with my 'chusband' Mitch, our spectacular daughter Shakked, who just discovered the pleasures of solid food, and our Canaanite hound Yupa. I'm finishing my last year of Physical Therapy at Haifa U right now. We love guests!

**ARIEL GROVEMAN WEINER** What can I say? I am busy being a mom to Ilan, 3.5 years old, and to Yael, 11 months old. I am still working at The Samuel Bronfman Foundation and living in NYC.

**MARISA HARFORD** I married Russ Agdern, a political and labor organizer, on September 2, 2007, and we are living in the Bronx. (BYFI '96 was represented at the wedding by Adina Gerver and Margie Klein.) After seven years of teaching and working as a professional developer for the NYC public schools, I have accepted a job as the Program Director for a new teacher preparation program, the Urban Teacher Residency. The Urban Teacher Residency aims to integrate graduate coursework with a school residency to support the development of proficient, reflective, and collegial teachers. If anyone is interested in becoming a teacher in NYC (or knows anyone who is), contact me and I will be excited to describe the program in more detail.

**MARGIE KLEIN** Life is good here in Boston. I'm taking a leave of absence for the semester from Hebrew College rabbinical school in order to direct the Righteous Indignation Project, which is organizing Jewish communities to voice social justice and environmental issues as religious community priorities in the '08 election. The project is related to an anthology I co-edited called Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice (Jewish Lights). In addition, I am still living in the Moishe/Kavod House, which is the hub of an amazing community of creative and tikkun olam oriented Jews.

**SHEILA NAZARIAN** I have been married to Fardad Mobin, neurosurgeon, for 3 years tomorrow! I have a 13 month old daughter named Leila and am pregnant with a baby boy due Halloween. I have finished general surgery, and I am taking two years for craniofacial research at Children's Hospital Los Angeles before starting 3 years of plastic surgery at USC. Also, I am applying to USC's Marshall School of Business for a Masters in Medical Management.

**SOPHIE OBERFIELD** I can say that after four years teaching, English and Environmental Studies at the High School for Environmental Studies (NYC public school), I have moved to Stuyvesant High School (NYC public magnet school, alma mater of many Bronfmanim, the best NYC public school I did not attend). I'm teaching ninth and tenth grade English, and I'm very excited about the move. Also, I'm working part-time on an MA in Theater at Hunter College. I'm working on a paper about two plays that allegorize political conflicts using romantic relationships, one of which genders the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in surprising ways.

**MATTHEW RASCOFF** I am living in Boston, where I recently started my second year at Harvard Business School. Just this afternoon I had the pleasure of having lunch with Yoni Engelhart, who just started his first year here. I spend my free time doing letterpress printing at the Bow & Arrow Press in the basement of one of the undergraduate houses, and helping to lead the Social Enterprise Club at HBS. I had a magical July and August, interning for the Google Book Search project in Mountain View and living in the paradise that is San Francisco, where I spent many lovely hours with Bronfmanim Sarah Cowan (BYFI '97), Ruth Kaplan (BYFI '95), Andy Katzman (BYFI '93), Yaacob Dweck (BYFI '95) who was visiting from the East Coast, and others. Please look me up if have plans to be in the Boston area.

**MICHAL SCHARLIN** I just moved to NYC from Jerusalem and am enjoying being closer to family and friends. While a little overwhelmed by the city's "muchness", I'm excited to work in this psychotherapy metropolis, exploring endless options for further training.

**MIRIAM SHEINBEIN** I had a baby in the end of December, 2007. I graduated from medical school in May. My husband (Yaron) and I moved to San Francisco where I started my residency in family medicine.

**DAN SMOKLER** I am living in New York, working as the Educational Director for Hillel International's E3 project. I'm based at NYU. But most

importantly, I am getting married, Gd willing, on November 2nd to Erin Leib.

## 1997 Collected by Zina Miller

I'm proud to report that the '97ers are up to their usual impressive tricks. Over the past couple of years, we've had several marriages, three babies (although, to be fair, those were all in one family), rabbis ordained, lawyers admitted to the bar, documentaries filmed, scandals reported.... Well, we're a busy bunch. **JONATHAN GRIBETZ** is currently living with his wife Sarit in Princeton, where Sarit is beginning her second year of a Ph.D. in religions of late antiquity. Jonathan continues to write his dissertation, tentatively titled "Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the 'Arab-Zionist' Encounter: A Study of Mutual Perceptions in Late Ottoman Palestine", and teaches modern Jewish history for Hebrew College's Me'ah Program. Jonathan has just been joined in Princeton by **DAVID WOLKENFELD**, his wife Sara, their son Noam, and new arrivals in the form of cute twin boys. David was ordained in June as a rabbi by Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (YCT), and he and Sara have begun work as directors of the Jewish Learning Initiative at Princeton University, a partnership between the Orthodox Union, Hillel, and Torah m'Tzion. And as if we didn't already know what good taste YCT has in students, they also boast **STEVEN EXLER**, who will be ordained come June. Steven says that he had a "wonderful summer job" teaching at Yeshiva Hadar in Manhattan and is now working as Associate Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale—"a wonderful job in a wonderful community". In his spare time, Steven hangs out with his niece Maytal (daughter of Lisa '95 and Elie Kaunfer). A few months ago, Steven had the pleasure of attending **ELISHEVA GLASS'** wedding to Conan Yuan, which was Elisheva's big update as well, of course. She enjoyed the sheva brachot organized by **BECKY VOORWINDE**, who has joined the BYFI professional team as Director of Alumni Engagement. After several years working for the accounting firm Ernst & Young in their Corporate Responsibility group, Becky is enjoying "getting to know all the BYFI alums out there and growing in my understanding of the issues facing the Jewish community today and what we can do to make a difference." Becky lives in Brooklyn with husband Michael Voorwinde, a civil engineer working on the design of the 2nd Avenue Subway in New York City. Unsurprisingly, it turns out quite a few other '97ers are in New York these days (what, Jews in New York?!), including **ALISON HORNSTEIN**, who is entering her second year as a litigation associate in the New York office of Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett. Alison wrote to say she is "delighted to report that I got married

in October of 2007" to Andrew Koss and that "married life has been totally wonderful so far". Another longtime New Yorker (although still boasting that famed southern charm), **ANYA KAMENETZ**, continues to give talks and make media appearances in connection with her book *Generation Debt*. In addition to covering the sustainable economy as a staff writer for *Fast Company* magazine, Anya recently celebrated her second wedding anniversary. And lest you think Anya has cornered our year's market on journalism, **ISAAC DOVERE** is the founding editor of two monthly political magazines focused on New York Politics, City Hall and The Capitol. Isaac lives with his girlfriend Sarah a cool "seven blocks from the apartment where I grew up" and has had an exciting year covering everything from Hillary and Rudy to "Elliott Spitzer's prostitutes, the budget crisis, several smaller sex scandals, and a couple of incumbents losing primaries". He's a busy man. Finally moving outside New York, we find more 1997ers scattered around the country. **DONYA KHALILI** graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and currently lives in Philadelphia while she works as a law clerk for the Honorable Thomas O'Neill of the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She also serves on the American Constitution Society Board of Directors. **SARAH COWAN**, a graduate student in a PhD program in Demography and Sociology at UC - Berkeley, lives in San Francisco and will marry Andy Katzman (BYFI '93) in May. Sarah tells us that her program means she "uses statistics to study how and why populations change." She also extended an invitation to anyone who would like to come visit her in San Francisco. Also on the West Coast is **DAN MINTZ**, who is doing standup comedy and writing a pilot for NBC while living in Los Angeles—although visiting New York to see his girlfriend. A little farther afield, **TAYLOR KRAUSS** is still in Rwanda working on Voices of Rwanda, an NGO he founded to record and preserve testimonies of Rwandan genocide survivors. He reports that: "Some might think I'm marooned in Rwanda, but when I run into friends and celebrities on the street it tends to feel more like Brooklyn than I bargained for. I'm continuing work with VOR, but to keep myself afloat I pick up freelance shooting jobs. Some of the projects I've had a chance to shoot for recently include pieces for NOW on franchise hospital clinics in Rwanda, and women in Rwandan parliament; covering the horrific stories of sexual violence in Congo for Eve Ensler's Vday; and this week's celebrity visitation to bring attention to (RED)'s work with The Global Fund. If anyone wants to visit please let me know, Rwanda has an open door policy, especially if

you're Chinese. I'm not kidding. They have plans to start teaching Mandarin in one of the Universities." Meantime, **TOVA SERKIN** has just marked four years living in Israel and was married in March to Yair Yehuda, "an amazingly kind, smart, funny man". She is the executive director of KolDor - a global network of Jewish leaders and activists (write to her for more information). She explains that "When I'm not doing the 'Peoplehood thing', I try to find time to bake, hike, watch bad Israeli reality TV (only to have something to mock), and play competitive Scrabble." Based in Canada, **ELI BATALION** has toured the world as one of the two stars of the Sable & Batalion performing duo and just got his MBA. And speaking of rock stars (metaphorical and literal), for the last five years, **DAN EDINBERG** has toured internationally full-time as bassist of the indie-rock band Zox. Zox has finally called it quits, so Dan will move to NYC in October to pursue film/TV/commercial scoring opportunities and to continue working as a freelance bass player with groups in and out of the New York area. As to your faithful reporter, I (**ZINA MILLER**) finally finished my JD/MA, miraculously passed the New York bar, and promptly fled the country. I've just returned from a difficult and fascinating year in Israel/Palestine working as a Visiting Researcher at the Minerva Center for Human Rights at Hebrew University and am now a Visiting Fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University in Providence, RI. Which just means: apparently I enjoy visiting places.

## 1998

**ASHER AUEL** I am in my 5th and final year of the Ph.D. program in Mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania. I'm applying for post-docs and other academic jobs for the upcoming year. I just finished a productive summer research stay in Manchester and Bordeaux, and I'm back in Philadelphia.

**SARAH D. BELLER** After studying Arabic and traveling in Egypt for two months this summer, I am starting the second year of my masters at American University in Washington, DC. My thesis research is on evaluation and best practices for arts-based conflict resolution initiatives. I'm still enjoying life in DC and trying to get in as much biking, dancing, and music-making as possible.

**SHELLI FARHADIAN** I am in my fifth year of a combined MD-PhD program in NYC. My clinical interest is infectious disease, and my research focuses on insect behavior.

**NICK FITCH** I am in my second year of an Art History PhD at Columbia.

**ELLIE GETTINGER** I am the Educator of the Jewish Museum Milwaukee,

which opened in April 2008. The Museum looks at American Jewish history through the lens of the Milwaukee community.

**SARAH KRAININ** I just graduated from CalArts with an MFA in scenic design, and am continuing my freelance career in both New York and L.A. as a set designer for theater, and production designer for film. I have also started developing some large-scale, interactive sculptures and installations that deal with space and scale and landscape, and are based on my previous work in object theater and puppetry.

**EMMA KIPPLEY-OGMAN** I have finished my fourth year of rabbinical school at Hebrew College in Boston. Following a summer of truly enriching hospital chaplaincy work at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, I am taking a year off from school to work with Breaking the Silence in Jerusalem on a social justice fellowship from the New Israel Fund.

**ARI WEISBARD** After graduating from law school at Yale this past May, I spent the summer romping around New York, where I ran into Rachel Kort '98 twice in Brooklyn, once with her husband in tow. Then, after seeing Emma Kippley-Ogman '98 and Sarah Beller '98 at the National Havurah Institute and my friends' wedding in Boston (Emma officiated!), I moved out to Phoenix, AZ. I'll be clerking here for Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Michael Daly Hawkins. It's shaping up to be a wonderful year, but there are precious few Bronfmanim out here, so if you're looking for a home base in driving distance from the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, Sedona, or perhaps the artist/hippy colony of Bisbee, AZ, don't be afraid to look me up.

**JOSHUA WNUK** Still working on my doctorate in chemistry at Johns Hopkins University. My research topic is electron and ion beam induced deposition processes. I married my wife, Danica Horrell-Wnuke, on September 1st, 2008, at B'nai Israel Congregation in Baltimore, MD. We met on j-date two years ago. Danica is working on her doctorate in Cellular and Molecular Medicine at Johns Hopkins University as well. Bought my first house and just finished spending the past year remodeling. Moved in three weeks before the wedding. Currently preparing to present my research at talks in Boston and elsewhere this Fall with the hopes of finishing my degree by next summer.

## 1999 Collected by Rachel Ann Burstein

With almost a decade gone by since our Bronfman summer, the class of 1999 is flung far across the country and the world. **ANNIE ROSENZWEIG**

wins the award for the furthest from the States among those who responded to my plea for class notes submissions. She reports that she will be in Iraq for the next five months, working on the upcoming elections and on civic engagement programs as part of an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team in Fallujah city district. After that, you'll be able to find Annie in Washington, back at the Pentagon.

**REBEKAH HART** lives in Montreal with her husband of one year, Gil-ad Arama. Gil-ad has become a professional bread-baker and Rebekah is studying Hakomi (mindfulness-based, body-centred psychotherapy). She coordinates a grassroots workshop/speaker series called the Earth Dialogue, and teaches workshops in deep ecology -- helping people uncover their sense of power to take part in the healing of our world. She's also applying to do a MA program in somatic psychology or drama therapy for next year. **HANNAH SARVASY** and **ELINA SEGAL** are both living on the West Coast. Hannah just got back from Sierra Leone where she was part of a research team documenting endangered languages in coastal fishing villages. When at home with her husband in Alameda, Hannah works as a cartoonist. You can see some of her work at [www.hannahsarvasy.com](http://www.hannahsarvasy.com). Elina is also happily married and spends many happy evenings cuddled up next to her husband in their Los Angeles home. Elina works for a real estate developer, where she enjoys wearing her hard hat. Moving east across the continent, **AARON ORKIN** is living in Thunder Bay, Ontario, completing a medical residency in rural family medicine. When he's not working, Aaron enjoys canoeing and is considering embarking on further studies in the history and philosophy of medicine and public health. The next furthest east Bronfman contingent who sent me replies is in New York. **JOSH FOER** is living in Brooklyn with his wife Dinah, and continuing to write for National Geographic, Esquire, and other magazines. Look for his first book, about the science of memory, to be published by Penguin Press next year. **MATTHEW GOLDBERG** is also in New York and taking a year off from his fourth year of medical school to undertake melanoma cancer biology research at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. He recently started road biking and trying his hand at gluten free cooking. **JOSH PLATT** lives far uptown in Manhattan and works at the Butler Library at Columbia University in addition to taking some classes. He is flirting with entering Columbia's MFA fiction program next year. **ERIN SCHARFF** is starting her first year of law school at New York University and living in Brooklyn after an eventful summer on the Obama campaign in Iowa. Liz Kilstein and Erin are in the same section and public interest

program at NYU law school where Liz has a Root Tilden Kern D'Agostino Fellowship in Women's & Children's Advocacy. As Liz reports, "we're keeping the Bronfman love alive downtown." She completed a fantastic 14 months abroad, as a Fellow at the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oswiecim, Poland, a Dorot Fellow in Jerusalem, Israel, and a backpacker in Central America. Liz, Erin and **RACHAEL WAGNER** are all members of BYFI's alumni advisory board. Rachael is helping open Lion Capital's first New York office and is pleased to report that the office now has desks, computers and chairs! On time off before starting her new job, Rachael went to the Beijing Olympics where she became an accomplished spectator, if not an Olympic contender herself. In her rare spare time, Rachael is helping on her mom's campaign for the lieutenant governor in Virginia. (The campaign website can be found at [www.jodyforva.com](http://www.jodyforva.com).) The BYFI '99 Boston crew approaches the New York group in size. **JOSEPH BERMAN** just moved to Jamaica Plain where he's been enjoying green spaces nearby, baking bread and reading fantasy and kids' books. With summer over, he's starting up with his fourth year of rabbinical school at Hebrew College and preparing for his first yamim noraim gig at the Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah. When he's not studying and learning, Joseph is involved in building Jewish-Muslim relations in the Boston community. **LEV NELSON** is also at Hebrew College, beginning rabbinical school as a Wexner Fellow. Both Joseph and Lev are excited to be reunited with **SHARON COHEN ANISFELD** who now serves as Dean of the Rabbinical School at Hebrew College. After a three year stint consulting at McKinsey and Company, **SHIRA SIMON** is also in Boston, pursuing a joint MD/MBA degree at Harvard University. She is living in her old college dorm of Leverett, but this time as a Resident Tutor. **JUDD KESSLER** is doing a PhD in Business Economics at Harvard University. He studies worker motivation and effort. He recently started living part time in Los Angeles, CA where he is conducting dissertation research at a small internet start-up. **SUSAN PULTMAN** just moved from New York to Philadelphia, in order to pursue an MSW and an M.Ed in Human Sexuality at Widener University. Her goal is to become a sex therapist, though she still dreams of opening a juice bar/cafe. When not at school, Susan is the Director of Programming and Marketing at The Collaborative, a social group for Jewish people in their 20's and 30's. She'd "love to be in touch with any Bronfmanim in Philly!" As for me, I'm living in Brooklyn (where being a Red Sox fan is a bit lonely) with my fiancé, Jeremy. I'm working on a PhD in American History at the City University of New

York Graduate Center and teaching two sections of world history at Brooklyn College. Invitations are out for anyone who wants to deliver a guest lecture!

#### 2000

**DAVID COHEN** I am attending the Postbaccalaureate Premedical program at Bryn Mawr College, studying science and preparing to apply to medical school.

**HANNAH FARBER** I moved to Berkeley in August to begin a PhD in American history. I'm still blogging at [jspot.org](http://jspot.org).

**YAKOV FRYDMAN-KOHL** Living in Jerusalem and studying law and philosophy at Hebrew University. Exchange student at Georgetown Law in Washington DC for the fall '08 semester.

**MICHAEL GENSHEIMER** I am currently taking a break from medical school at Vanderbilt to do radiation oncology research in Boston for a year.

**DANNY GREENE** I am now living in San Francisco, working for Current, a global television network and social news website founded by Al Gore. I also recently discovered a third place to call home (other than the place where I grew up and Israel): Black Rock City.

**ANAT MAYTAL** I will be graduating this year from Boston University School of Law with my J.D., Concentration in Litigation and Dispute Resolution. I plan to move back to New York City to work as an Assistant District Attorney.

**ALICE PHILLIPS** I am in the fourth year of the philosophy Ph.D. program at Cornell and will probably finish in 2010; my dissertation is on the role of self-sufficiency in the Stoic conception of happiness. And my boyfriend (who was introduced to me, incidentally, by Michael Gensheimer) and I are planning to get married next year, after his conversion to Judaism is complete.

**LIBA RUBENSTEIN** and **MICAH FITZGERMAN-BLUE** We just finished year two in our Los Angeles adventure. Micah is slogging through his first feature screenplay assignment, and his production company, 5432 Films, just wrapped up a new web series. Liba still runs the non-profit and political programming on MySpace - with a torrent of activity around the election. A little vacation is long overdue.

**ERIC TRAGER** I married Alyssa Saunders on May 25th, and we live in Philadelphia. I am a PhD Graduate Student in Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

#### 2001 Collected by Ben Magarik

**ELI BRAUN** I am working in Cincinnati for the Ohio Justice & Policy Center,

a criminal justice reform NGO. I'm "advocating" (exact job description in process) to improve discharge planning for mentally ill offenders leaving prison (e.g., enrollment in Medicaid, disability benefits, transitional housing). After finishing at Brown in 2006, I worked for a medical school bioethics department in Syracuse, NY and tutored a GED class at a nearby prison. This past summer, I indulged myself with a hedonistic (but low-budget) trek through six countries in Southern Africa.

**ELISABETH COHEN** reports: Warren Tusk and I were married this summer. We'll be living in Philadelphia for the next year, while Warren finishes up law school. I've finished my coursework at Princeton, and in the next year hope to pass my general examinations and begin work on my dissertation. I'm still studying medieval Arabic poetry, with secondary interests in medieval Hebrew poetry and modern Arabic poetry.

**MELISSA KORN** I have been in New York City for a little over two years now, first for grad school (Columbia Journalism) and now working as a copy editor with Dow Jones Newswires. I write headlines on market-moving equities news and write features about the intersection of business and education (student loans, for-profit colleges, philanthropy, etc.); definitely an exciting time to be a business reporter. Busy with friends, family, and a little freelancing...life's good.

**RACHEL LAUTER** I have been working for the City of New York for the past two years, most recently as the Senior Policy Advisor to the Commissioner of the Dept of Small Business Services. In my free time, I was one of the primary organizers of Brooklyn for Barack, the grassroots organization for the Obama campaign in Brooklyn. I also founded a new political organization in Brooklyn, called New Kings Democrats which recruits and helps people run for local elected office. Check out our website: [www.newkingsdemocrats.com](http://www.newkingsdemocrats.com). And finally, I just started at Harvard Law School - I'm sad to leave New York (temporarily), but excited for the new adventure.

**NOAM LOCKSHIN** I am engaged to Etta Abramson of Toronto, whom I met at York University. After graduating from York with a degree in math in 2007, I moved to New York where I am working at Sanford Bernstein as a research associate in the oil and gas group.

**BEN MAGARIK** I have been working for Digital Divide Data, a non-profit that uses a business model to break the cycle of poverty in Southeast Asia. I spend two-thirds of the year living in the East Village (of NY), and the other third in Cambodia and Laos. Life in Cambodia is a pretty wild ride,

# BYFI Class Notes

I'd love to have BYFI fellows visit me while I'm there.

**YONINA MURCIANO-GOROFF** is currently on fellowships at Oxford University, where she is completing her doctorate on the history of cancer. She looks forward to returning to Harvard for her M.D. degree. Yonina is especially interested in international health work, and continues to be thankful to Bronfman for the many lessons that she learned about global cooperation.

**GABRIEL ROSENHOUSE** I am living in Chicago, entering my third year as graduate student in the Committee on Neurobiology at the University of Chicago. My research is, generally speaking, about how neurons exchange information - "synaptic transmission" in the jargon of the field. More specifically (and jargon-y), I'm studying the molecular mechanisms of vesicle fusion at the cell surface membrane. I hope to have a paper out within the next year.

**ADAM SCHWARTZ** I just returned from a summer of public health research in rural India to begin my second year of medical school in New York.

**ALEX SHERMAN** I am in Boston, working in architecture for high-end residential design, working towards my Professional Accreditation in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and completion of the AIA's Intern Development Program. On the side, I enjoy riding my bike, running, rock climbing, volunteering for the Massachusetts branch of the US Green Building Council, freelance graphic design work, sporadic cartooning, and design competitions.

## *2002 Collected by Anya Manning*

**BEN AMSTER** since graduating from Princeton in June 2007, I've been living in New York City and working as a Management Consulting for Accenture.

**DAVID BACK** is trying to start a clean energy company. He recently moved to Washington DC.

**SANDRA DI CAPUA** is living in Washington, DC, where she works for Joan Nathan, a cookbook author and food journalist. In addition, she writes restaurant reviews and does freelance consulting for a nutritional consulting firm.

**KATE FROMMER** is in her second year of a doctoral program in School and Child Clinical Psychology at Yeshiva University. She is currently interning at a private school in the city, working with 3-10 year olds.

**ABBY FRIEDMAN** is living in Boston and working at the Harvard Public Health School doing global health research.

**TALYA KAGEDAN** graduated from Brandeis last year (and misses it a lot!). She spent the summer traveling, including staffing a birthright trip. She just moved to NYC and started a doctoral program in school psychology at St. John's University.

**ANYA MANNING** is currently living in Brooklyn and working as an Insight Fellow. She will work in three different New York City Jewish non profits over the course of two years.

**SARAH MARCUS** currently lives in DC and works for The Israel Project. She just returned from the Republican and Democratic National Convention.

**HANNAH MAYNE** is living in Canada, figuring out the next step.

**NAAMAH PALEY** recently graduated from the University of Michigan Honors College and is now spending her year on a Dorot Fellowship in Israel. After studying four years of Arabic in Michigan, Jerusalem and Cairo, she is now working on and studying issues of Arab and Arabic education in Israel.

**YONI POMERANZ** I am studying in Jerusalem this year at the Conservative Yeshiva and beginning a M.A. at Hebrew University.

**NICK RENNER** graduated from Duke and spent last year studying Hebrew at Ulpian Akiva in scenic, sunny Netanya, in preparation for starting rabbinical school at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, in the Philadelphia area. He is currently living in Philadelphia and has begun his first year at RRC.

**KATE ROSENBERG** graduated from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington in May 2008 with a degree in Politics. She now lives in Washington, DC and works at The Aspen Institute, a DC based think tank, in the Energy and Environment Program.

**JACLYN RUBIN** spent last year studying at Drisha and this year is working full time for Mechon Hadar, an egalitarian yeshiva which provides resources for independent minyanim. Hadar has been the recipient of several BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grants.

**JACOB STOIL** just finished a research fellowship in Zagreb, Croatia with the Croatian Ministry of Defence. He also volunteered as a cantor at one of the local synagogues. He is currently living in London.

**ALANA WEISS** is enjoying San Francisco life and working in Learning and Leadership Development at Google. She got to have lunch with another Bronfman alum, Matthew Rascoff (BYFI '96), many times this summer!

## *2003 Collected by Anna Hutt Fredman*

**INESSA AYZENBERG** graduated from Babson College this year and moved back to Moscow, Russia. She is working for Renaissance Capital in Moscow.

**BEN BOKSER** After three years at Yale studying Ethics, Politics, and Economics, Ben Bokser is taking a semester off to participate in Tevel b'Tzedek, a Jewish/Israeli study and volunteering program in Nepal. The program's focus is on social and environmental justice / sustainable development. He plans to return to Yale for a final semester afterwards and graduate in the spring.

**LEAH BRESLOW** After four years of having a go at living in Israel, Leah Breslow decided it was time to head back to Canada to finish her B.A. at York University. She's looking forward to completing her B.A. in Humanities, especially since it will be taught in English!

**NERISSA CLARKE** just graduated from Binghamton University with a major in International Development and minors in Economics and Business. She is now living in NYC, working for this coming year at the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, as the Foundation's Fellow.

**JONATHON FEINBERG** recently moved to Davis, CA, where he is working for Environment California, trying to get the state to amend the nation's first statewide and industry-wide cap on global warming. He is considering pursuing a PhD in Environmental Policy.

**RACHEL FIRESTONE** graduated from Wesleyan in May and is excited to be traveling to India, where she will be starting to work with Ujjivan, an Indian-run Grameen-based microfinance institution in Bangalore. She has wanted to return to India to do social justice-based sustainable development work since her junior year abroad in Varanasi, India. At Ujjivan, she will be managing and implementing social programs to go along with loans, such as public health seminars, entrepreneurial training, communication skills training, and Hindi and English teaching. She is also hoping to connect with the Jewish community of Kochin, India.

**ELISHA FREDMAN** is currently pursuing a double-major in Psychology and Neuroscience at Brandeis University. He recently finished a summer of volunteer experience with the Department of Mental Health of Massachusetts for young adults with schizophrenia. This year he is serving as one of twelve university Roosevelt Fellows (academic advisors to underclassmen), working in a neuroscience research lab, and leading a weekly student chavura (study group) about Neviim Rishonim, the Early Prophets.

**ANNA HUTT FREDMAN** recently graduated from Brandeis University, where she studied Psychology, Hebrew, and a bit of Arabic. She has begun a master's program in speech-language pathology at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Institute of Health Professions.

**PETER GANONG** is starting his last year at Harvard, concentrating in economics and math and hoping to do a thesis on either education or crime. He spent the past summer doing development research in Chennai, India. At the end of the summer, he and Ben Bokser '03 traveled around Kerala, where they were the ninth and tenth men for Shabbat services at a 300-year-old synagogue in Kochi. The head of the synagogue told them all about the shul's history, complete with crowns for the Sifrei Torah given by maharajas in the 1800s, and they learned about the Jewish community in India in general. Leah Jordan I graduated this past May from the University of Kansas with a BA in English and minors in History and French. I've just started my first year of five in Hebrew Union College's rabbinical program. I'm really looking forward to this first year in Jerusalem and then to the four years after that back in the States!

**ALANA KINARSKY** I have graduated from Loyola University of Chicago with a degree in International Relations. Now I am looking for employment or great experiences abroad. In the mean time, I live in Chicago and enjoy the days!

**HANNAH SUFRIN** After spending the summer following my college graduation studying Mandarin in Beijing, I am now settling into and exploring my home for the next two years, Guangzhou. As a Yale-China Teaching Fellow, I am teaching courses on famous American orators and Election 2008 at Sun Yat-sen University.

**NATHAN STALL** I just graduated from McGill this past spring ('08) with a B.Sc. in physiology. I spent this past summer working with AJWS in Ghana on the volunteer summer program. I just started medical school at the University of Western Ontario (UWO)

## *2004 Collected by Hannah Kapnik*

**DANNY COHEN** Four years on from Bronfman, after spending a gap year as part of the halutzim who founded the Bronfman Bayit- a year of living in Jerusalem with Bronfman chevra, filled with learning, volunteering, Hebrew, Israelis, exploration and growth- I am now back in Israel, spending a semester continuing the cultivation of my (religious) identity at Yeshivat Maale Gilboa, a fascinating and colorful place, characterized by a wonderful combination of warmth, openness,

intensity, and sensitivity. At the end of the semester, I'll return to my beloved University of Pennsylvania, where I've spent the past two years meeting people, learning, exploring, and growing. I'm very involved in Jewish life there, also in the promotion of Academically Based Community Service, in the cultivation of a cadre of socially-oriented business students, and in getting to know all kinds of people. I also spent last summer founding a project with a friend called LendForPeace.org, an online site which allows you to lend directly to Palestinian micro-entrepreneurs to help facilitate the economic stability needed for peace. In the longer term future I hope to spend some time consulting in the social sector in Israel, though my ultimate passion and aspiration is to work in education, through some combination of the worlds of Judaism and positive psychology. I look back at Bronfman as a huge catalyst in my life, forever grateful for the opportunities, worlds, and relationships to which it's opened me.

**BENJAMIN EPSTEIN** I am in my junior year at MIT studying Biological Engineering, and have spent the past two summers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN doing research related to immunology and multiple sclerosis.

**DAVID ZVI EPSTEIN** I just moved back to Toronto to finish my degree in philosophy and religion at the University of Toronto.

**HANNAH KAPNIK** I am starting my junior year at Wellesley College, where I'm majoring in Art History. Last year, I was one of the cofounders of the Beit Midrash at the campus Hillel, for which I now coordinate weekly learning sessions. I organize Yamei Iyyun/study sessions for Boston-area students as an intern for The Center for Modern Torah Leadership and am the marketing director for The Milk and Honey Press. BYFI has continued to be a really important part of my Jewish identity and community.

**DANIEL MARANS** I am beginning my junior year at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore where I am continuing my studies for a degree in History. I will be studying in Paris next semester, where I hope to become fluent in French. This past semester I interned at a trademark licensing agency where I got first hand experience in a niche corner of the marketing world—and realized it probably wasn't for me. Around campus I am the president of Jews in Greek Life and the Jewish Identity Chair for my fraternity (AEPi). I am also the programming director of the Hopkins College Democrats with which I will be working avidly to elect Barack Obama.

**ARIEL POLLOCK** I am starting out my junior year of college with a semester abroad in Cape Town, South Africa. In addition to having a generally enriching and amazing experience so far, I am especially interested in researching Jewish communities and Jewish life during the apartheid era. So far my research is proving to be fascinating and complex. I also just spent a week traveling around Namibia, a country I highly recommend to anyone looking for an adventure. I would love to meet up with any Bronfman traveling through South Africa!

**MICHAEL POMERANZ** I am a senior at Yale majoring in Religious Studies and writing a senior thesis on the intersection of religion and politics, perhaps in the use of religion in American schools for the purpose of creating citizens. Last summer I worked for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a higher education non-profit, and am seriously considering work in education policy, either higher ed. or K-12. I am editor-in-chief of the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund-supported *Fiat Lux: A Journal of Religion at Yale* ([www.yale.edu/fiatlux](http://www.yale.edu/fiatlux)) and the short-stop on the Yale Club Baseball team.

**ARIEL WERNER** I am starting my Senior year at Brown University, where I am concentrating in Political Science and writing an honors thesis on recent developments in the politics of crime and incarceration. I lead a group of Brown women in teaching arts and writing workshops in Rhode Island's minimum- and medium-security prisons, and I'm working with one of my professors to research the 1993 case of a man we believe is wrongfully incarcerated here for a murder he did not commit. I'm also organizing on campus and in Rhode Island for Barack Obama, and I've been traveling the Northeast since last September trying to share the love. This year I was honored to receive the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, which put me in touch with a community of individuals dedicated to lives of public service and will help me significantly as I journey towards law school. I'm planning to move to New York after graduating, where my boyfriend just started NYU Law. I look forward to taking part in the many New York area Bronfman alumni activities.

### 2005

**ARIEL FISHER** I just got back from being the counselor on this past summer's Bronfman trip. I am now a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania where I am majoring in Urban Studies.

**JORDAN HIRSCH** I am now a Junior at Columbia majoring in Modern European History. This past spring, I became editor-in-chief of *The Current*, Columbia's journal of contemporary

politics, culture, and Jewish affairs ([www.columbiacurrent.org](http://www.columbiacurrent.org)). The *Current* is a recipient of a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant. This past summer, I interned for two months with Dr. Michael Oren at the Shalem Center, a regular speaker on BYFI summers and author of two New York Times bestsellers.

**ELISHEVA GOLDBERG** is currently beginning her sophomore year at the University of Pennsylvania where she has decided to double major in History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC). Last year she went on an Alternative Spring Break trip to Honduras through the American Jewish World Service where she helped a group of Penn Hillel students build a storage facility for sustainable agriculture. As she calls Seattle home, she spent the majority of the 2008 summer there, interning for JTNNews, the Jewish newspaper of Washington state and taking a class in Ancient Greek Philosophy at the University of Washington. She also spent three weeks in Israel on a Partnership 2000 program in Philadelphia's sister city of Netivot before joining her family for their hiking-filled and stunningly scenic vacation in glorious Mount Rainier National Park before returning to Philadelphia. She is the MASA intern on Penn's campus this year in addition to being a member of Hillel's Education Committee as well as an active member of many campus organizations. She hopes to study abroad next year in an Arabic speaking country. She would like to wish the entire Bronfman community a Shana Tova U'Metuka (a good and sweet new year).

**MOLLY HOISINGTON** I am looking forward to starting my sophomore year at Northwestern University this fall. It will be my first as a member of the fencing team (sabre squad). I will also be volunteering in the pulmonary division of a local hospital, and will further explore various majors compatible with the medical field.

**AARON KRIVITZKY** I am a senior at Middlebury College; a dual Philosophy/English major. I just finished consulting and co-writing a Hunter Press publication: "Educational Opportunities in Integrative Medicine". It's a reference guide to the various career opportunities in holistic medicine and the emerging field of integrative medicine. I am beginning my two term senior thesis on Existentialism and Nihilism in Literature. I also just finished a summer of intensive Hebrew at Middlebury. My reggae/rock band, Yuzimi, is on the upturn. <http://www.yuzimi.net/music.html> if you want to listen to a soundboard recording of our last show. I plan to travel to Israel in December on family trip. I am always looking for work in the non-fiction expository writing venue.

**YITZ LANDES** I am currently finishing up advanced training as a tank gunner in the IDF, and will most likely be starting commander training later this fall. I'm living in Jerusalem, but spending almost 100% of my time in the desert at a base twenty minutes north of Elat.

**JODI MEYEROWITZ** I currently live in Eugene, Oregon and am in my third year at the Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon studying Economics and Planning, Public Policy, and Management. As a Freshman Interest Group Assistant in the Residence Halls, I co-teach a class about credit and micro-lending for first year students, help them adjust to college, and Residence Life. As the student board president of Oregon Hillel, I am often found there talking with staff, students, planning programs, and running meetings. I am extremely passionate about these two organizations and positions, however the endeavor that I'm most excited about is Shomer Achi - a year-long tzedek and Jewish-identity based program that connects Israeli and Diaspora Jewry - that a friend and I developed this summer at the PresentTense Institute in Jerusalem. We're grateful for the support provided through a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant.

**KAITLIN NEMETH** Hey everyone! Last year, I had a Grinspoon Internship for Israel Advocacy with Hillel International. My focus was on Israel travel and I organized events such as benefit concerts and other fun activities, including a Jewish and Christian Alternative Spring Break trip to Israel. After I completed my internship, I decided to study abroad in Israel. Currently, I'm at Tel Aviv University. I'll be back at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA sometime in January.

**ARIELA ROTHSTEIN** I am entering my third year at Yale, beginning the Teacher Preparation Program there, and continuing on as coordinator of Community-Based Learning through Dwight Hall, Yale's Center for Public Service and Social Justice. I'm looking forward to meeting all the entering Bronfmanim, a new POTUS, continuing a Bronfman tradition of support for New Orleans, and hosting dinner parties in my new apartment!

**MASHA SHPOLBERG** I'm currently a junior at Princeton, studying Comparative Literature in Russian and French, and getting a "certificate" (Princeton's equivalent of a minor) in painting. I also just got back from a wonderful summer studying film in Poland and am seriously considering continuing on in film studies. For some reason, I found myself thinking back to Bronfman quite a few times during the trip, particularly during the Jewish cultural festival in Krakow. I hope everyone's doing well, and send all my love,

**2006 Contact Nat Gardenswartz**  
**MATEO ACEVES** Last year I spent a semester living in the Bronfman Bayit and learning in yeshivat erez hatzvi. I started at Brandeis University in the Spring where I returned a few weeks ago. This summer I interned at Blue-Star PR, a pro-Israel non-profit in San Francisco, and attended two AIPAC conferences, one with the Samuel Bronfman Foundation.

**GABE GREENWOOD** lived in Jerusalem for a year with the Bronfman Bayit and is now a freshman at Princeton.

**RIVKAH BLUTSTEIN** lived in Jerusalem for a year with the Bronfman Bayit and is now a freshman at Barnard.

**MADELEINE LEVEY** lived in Jerusalem for a semester with the Bronfman Bayit, worked for a semester at home, and is now a freshman at the University of Michigan.

**TOVA NADLER** reports: last year I spent two semesters studying in Midreshet Lindenbaum, a midrasha for advance women's torah study in Jerusalem. This year I am a first year at Barnard College in New York.

**JONAH FISHER** spent a year at a Mechina program in Israel. He is now a freshman at Brown.

**NATHANIEL GARDENSWARTZ**  
This past year, I lived in Jerusalem as part of the Bronfman Bayit. It was a phenomenal experience. Now I am a freshman at Princeton... an exciting change!

**SHANI ROSENBAUM** spent a year at Midreshet Lindenbaum, also known as Brovenders, in Israel. She is now a freshman at Brandeis.

**EMMA SOKOLOFF-RUBIN** I just started my sophomore year at Yale, where I'm enjoying taking classes in as many areas as possible and meeting new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I'm still playing clarinet and ultimate frisbee whenever I can, and I've also started learning salsa and serving on the ed board of the undergraduate international affairs magazine. I spent the summer researching race and domestic violence in Northeast Brazil, a project that will continue as I incorporate my research into coursework and magazine articles this year.

**BENAMY YASHAR** After an amazing, life-changing year spent in the Bronfman Bayit in Israel and traveling Europe, I am starting my first year of studies at Stanford University with focuses on math, science, and engineering.

**2007 Collected by Yael Zinkow**  
After diplomas were finally handed out in early summer, the 2007 Bronfman fellows all embarked on their own separate journeys, beginning the next important phases in their lives. **ELIOT ABRAMS** spent this past summer staffing the Wheeling, IL Ramah Day Camp, bringing a bit of the Bronfman spirit along with him. And this fall, he is starting at the University of Chicago as a potential Economics and Philosophy double major, but the school is so close to home that he plans on returning and spending the High Holidays with the family. **GABE FRIEDEN** is at Princeton where he has eight roommates, six of whom are Asian, one of whom is also named Gabe. He's planning on studying math or some sort of science. **REBEKAH JUDSON**, who graduated high school in the spring of 2007 spent the year volunteering at a public school in the Bronx with City Year, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving education in New York City schools. **BEN SCHENKEL** was selected as a Presidential Scholar and spent two weeks traveling through China and living with host families while on the Student Leaders Exchange. Now he starts at Yale.

**ANYA VAN WAGTENDONK** is also at Yale, taking wonderful and exciting classes, meeting incredible people, and, she reports, "trying to take full advantage of all the opportunities, Jewish and otherwise, that come my way." **ARI ATKINS**, also a 2007 graduate, spent the year traveling around Europe, South America, and India. **JORDAN YADOO** is at Cornell University, where he plans to pursue a degree in Industrial and Labor Relations, with a minor in Law and Society. He spent a week of this past summer in Washington DC to attend AIPAC's summer Saban leadership seminar, which included forums with Senators Barbara Boxer and Jon Kyl, congressional representatives Robert Wexler and Mark Kirk, as well as White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten. The program enhanced his understanding of the situation in Israel and the Middle East and developed his skills in the area of political lobbying. He was also one of roughly fifty incoming freshmen to be named a Hunter R. Rawlings III Presidential Research Scholar. As 5769 begins, a good number of the 2007 fellows will head off to some of the country's top colleges, including Yale, Brown, Stanford, and Cornell to pursue degrees in a broad range of fields. Some of the other fellows will embark on international adventures. **ELIANA ROBERTS GOLDING** and **ELYSSA KAPLAN** will spend the year in the Bronfman Bayit in Jerusalem, studying and doing community service. **EITAN LEFKOWITZ**, **NOAH LINDENFELD**, **ARIELLE LEWIS**, **JULIE MEYER**, and **HODY NEMES** are also returning to Israel to study in Yeshivah, he starts

Yale in 2009. **ISAAC WILDER** will participate in a cultural exchange by living with a Maharaja in Udaipur.

**2008**  
Tobah Aukland, Tamar Blanchard, Zach Bleemer, Briah Cahana, Aaron Clayton-Dunn, Serena Covkin, Julie Cronan, Jack deTar, Alana Fichman, Kayla Foster, Benjamin Friedman, Jacob Grunberger, Alixandra Heiman Kriegsmann, Jacob Hutt, Jana Kozlowski, Rebecca Margolies, Elie Peltz, Andreas Rotenberg, Daneel Schaechter, Justin Shechtel, Jake Spinowitz, Shira Telushkin, Samuel Telzak, Grace Wallack, Aaron Weinberg, Olivia Wind

## YOZMA

**SARA HEITLER BAMBERGER** is currently the Director of the Religion, Politics and Globalization Program at UC Berkeley (rpgp.berkeley.edu). She lives in Berkeley, California with her husband, Kenneth Bamberger, who is a law professor at UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law, and their three children, Max (5), Isaiah (4) and Niva (2).

**JUDITH SHAPERO** is the Head of the Department of Jewish Thought at TanenbaumCHAT. She teaches Jewish Ethics, History and Women's Studies and is a lecturer in the Religious Studies and Linguistics departments at York University. She is living in Toronto and married to Darren Phillipson with two children, Marni (6), and Jacob (4).

Send us your updates: [ava.charne@byfi.org](mailto:ava.charne@byfi.org)



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