

# NYMA NEWS

Newsletter of AJL-NYMA

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## Virtual Me

LinkedIn, Sefaria  
& Long Good-Bye

@ Winter Conference

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Photos by TINA WEISS

"We're still alive and active."

These were the opening words heard at NYMA's Winter Conference, held February 24, 2016, at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Many among the three dozen attendees who had to weave through a labyrinth of renovations wondered about the fate of the venerable institution.

But Naomi Steinberger, JTS Library Director, quickly laid these fears to rest.

"The 1983 building was closed and a plot was purchased," she explained, "one half for condos, the other half for a 21<sup>st</sup> century campus." All of this will include a new residential hall plus a new conference center.

Oh, and a library.

Once completed, the new JTS library will contain state-of-the-art facilities and better integrated collections. In the meantime, Naomi and her staff are busy as ever – retrieving archives, digitizing manuscripts, and engaging in conservation work. Naomi has been in consultation with scholars, who appreciate the nearly 10,000 manuscripts that have been recently uploaded into the library website, and the 6400 Geniza fragments that have been completed and uploaded into the Freiberg website.

(Cont'd on pg. 8)

## Hello Safranim!

We at *NYMA News* extend our thanks to our devoted Board members for all of their great work over the past two years. Most of you are wearing two NYMA hats, in addition to fulfilling your daily job responsibilities.

As a group, during the past two years we have hosted six events: two Winter Conferences, two Reference Workshops, a School Librarian's Workshop, and a cataloging workshop – including a tribute to Pearl Berger on her retirement from Yeshiva University and her numerous stellar achievements.

This upcoming academic year looks to be an exciting and enriching time, as plans develop for the next AJL National Convention, slated to take place in New York City.

We extend an invitation to our NYMA News readers to reach and get involved with NYMA programs and projects. For more information, please contact Ina Cohen at [incohen@jtsa.edu](mailto:incohen@jtsa.edu).

Wishing everyone a Shana Tova, we look forward to sharing more NYMA activities ahead.

Ina Cohen  
Rina Krautwirth

(Winter Conference, cont'd)

Naomi also mentioned the loans programs, through which JTS materials hang on display in various institutions – e.g., Queens College, Metropolitan Museum of Art, University of Texas. “We are working with Princeton on the Geniza collections,” she added.

Definitely JTS is alive and active. And as NYMA celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> year, “staying alive” has become a mantra repeated more often at a library than at a disco. The conference -- organized by Ina Cohen, Rina Krautwirth, and Chaya Wiesman, and hosted by Rina Krautwirth – delivered a hard-hitting message: These days, when visibility counts, not only must the library shout, “Hey there!” through smart-phones and social media, but the librarian must become a walking selfie.

### How of “Wow”

In “Hillel – Not Shammai: Learning LinkedIn on One Foot in only a Half Hour,” Nathan Rosen – Manager of Research & Knowledge Services, Herrick Feinstein; and creator and manager of three LinkedIn groups -- “took the Sage” and discussed this renowned and amazing platform of

over 500 million users (which was recently acquired by Microsoft).

LinkedIn has become the cyber “Who’s Who” – *the* place to look up information on a potential employee or colleague. Because it is the first stop for seeking employment and forging professional connections, mastery of this platform is crucial.

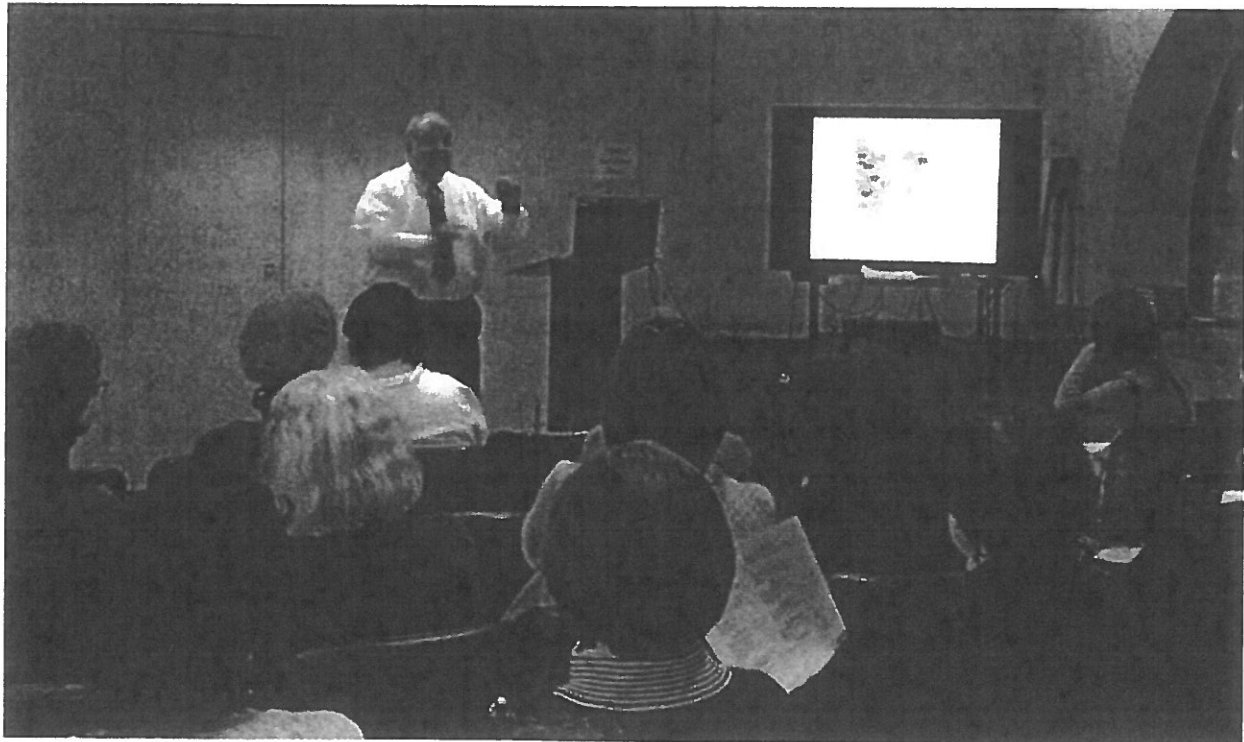
“Your name and reputation are most important,” Mr. Rosen explained. Today, LinkedIn is more than your resume – it is your entire lifeline of jobs, achievements, and interests.

Throughout his presentation Mr. Rosen listed the “five commandments of LinkedIn profile development,” ways in which to skillfully navigate the platform:

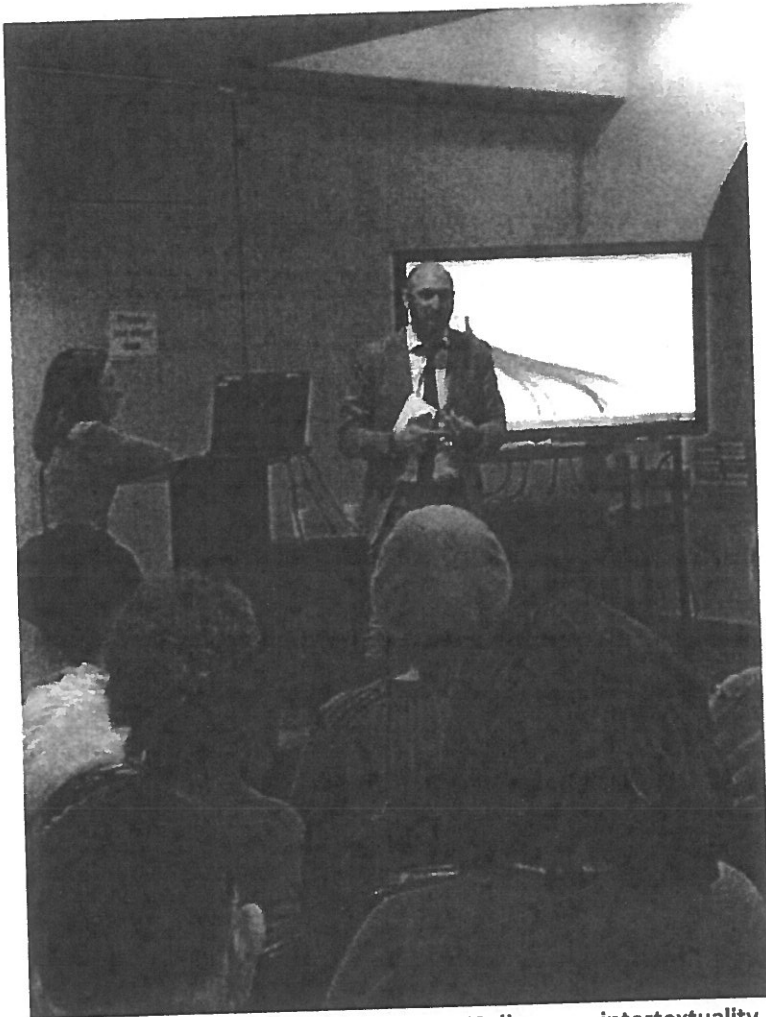
1) **Create complete, compelling profile.**

“Grab attention,” he commanded. “You must vaunt your successes and say things about yourself.”

Think you have nothing important to say? You’d be surprised. Everyone, when prompted enough, can bring up something. There are enough milestones and events to draw attention – and enhance marketability.



“BE A TORTOISE.” – With both feet on the ground, NATHAN ROSEN explains LinkedIn.



**FREED UP: Sefaria CEO DANIEL SEPTIMUS discusses intertextuality.**

In short, a good page must have a “wow” factor – something to create a killer profile. This means a good professional summary, highlighting your talents and experience. A good photograph helps, preferably a cropped headshot with a smile, and a good tagline – a headline with other than current employment title.

“Have a personalized URL,” Mr. Rosen added, along with endorsements and recommendations. Include words that will enhance SEO – search engine optimization.

An example was the LinkedIn page of NYMA member Stephanie Gross, which displays the title of Past President of New York Library Club, Inc. Alongside her smiling face is a listing of her current place of employment (Yeshiva University), both her professional and educational backgrounds, and, in the lower right-hand corner, the number of her connections (500+). Scroll down, and more detailed descriptions of her experiences emerge. In addition, she includes a Twitter handle.

## 2) Craft settings.

These can be personalized to block out certain individuals or information. This might include exaggerated or too enthusiastically endorsed skills.

You can customize certain fields. “Signatures can be embedded,” he added, showing other various tricks. “Better yet, make a signature block.” The headline creator helps to draw attention to articles or issues, and the background can even embed visuals.

“You have control,” Mr. Rosen stressed. “You can make sure you are at a level that is comfortable.”

## 3) Connect to people you know.

LinkedIn is the ultimate network. From one person can spring many introductions. Be it old friend or high school basketball team member – you can reconnect or revive. In addition, LinkedIn is marketing heaven for its ability to target certain people or subcultures.

Mr. Rosen warned about blind solicitations. Instead, when wanting to contact someone specific, write within the LinkedIn site or a personalized e-mail that you had heard about him or her from a mutual friend.

Likewise, never blindly reciprocate. Never endorse someone simply because he or she endorsed you; never offer recommendations just to be nice.

“This affects credibility,” he said. “It makes you suspect.”

As with other social media, care must be taken to avoid any embarrassing posts, especially when tagged with your name.

## 4) Contribute – give to get.

“Facebook is where you go to show pictures of your cat,” he said. “LinkedIn is more serious.”

Contributing means showing how you *add value*. You possess  
(Cont'd on next pg.)



WOMAN OF VALOR: Honoree PEARL BERGER

*(Conference, cont'd from pg. 9)*

skills that are needed or appreciated by others. This includes honors, awards, hobbies – even volunteer, i.e. mentoring, community work. Your blogs, PDF articles, or PowerPoint presentations can be uploaded. By emphasizing your top skills, you show not only your knowledge but your enthusiasm.

“Give to get!” he cried. “Show your commitment and you’ll get back contacts or validations.”

Today, when “staying alive” means staying employed or relevant, you never know who might toss you a raft. Ultimately, you the LinkedIn member must do all you can to stay afloat.

#### 5) Congratulate other people’s successes.

Did someone get a promotion? Start a new business? Give him or her a cyber pat on the back. All of you may jointly celebrate milestones, be it a new job or a new degree.

“The goal is to build bridges,” Mr. Rosen stressed.

And, as an advanced tip:

#### 6) Commit to daily progress.

LinkedIn is a steady process, Mr. Rosen explained. It is something you go on occasionally – not every day, as with other websites. While a virtual human resource center, it is not a “water cooler” for gossip or gripes. Rather, it is used to record sporadic but significant progress.

Nevertheless, posts must be regularly updated, more than once a month. Mr. Rosen recommended investing time every week to build and maintain a network. You will need to change or add information.

“As your life evolves,” he declared, “so should you.” Your LinkedIn page becomes not only a resume, but a virtual scrapbook of noteworthy achievements.

Mr. Rosen’s handouts included a bibliography of LinkedIn guides and resources, as well as various social media – i.e. Twitter, YouTube, etc. – their particular features, advantages, and usages.

He ended his lively talk with a picture of Aesop’s tortoise and the hare. Both stare boldly ahead, determined to get to the end first.

“Be a tortoise,” he declared. “Slowly but surely wins the race.”

#### Text Liberation

Truly “network, network, network” might be called the LinkedIn mantra. In “Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts Online,” Daniel Septimus -- Executive Director of Sefaria – demonstrated alternate forms of sharing.

Mr. Septimus described the digital initiative he launched in 2013 to create an infrastructure for the future of Jewish study and conversation. “Sefaria,” he said, “is building the future of Jewish learning in an open and participatory way.”

Founded by “two regular dudes” who wondered why it was so hard to



**TRIBUTE: Colleague EDITH LUBETSKI lauds "Pearl of Wisdom"**

to get inside traditional texts, Sefaria offers curiosity and exploration on a public platform. How does Sefaria differ from competitors like Bar Ilan? On Sefaria, commentary can be gleaned and arranged on the user's terms, not Bar Ilan's.

Sefaria offers the following:

**1) Access to text.**

Through Sefaria, the user can create his or her own source list, or locate citations on various Torah topics. Classic, rather than esoteric, commentators are the focus, although publishing from non-commercially viable sources (i.e. yeshiva presses, etc.) is included.

**2) Access to translation.**

"Language should not be barrier," Mr. Septimus explained. Texts are presented in English-Hebrew, although other languages may soon be in the works. When choosing content to

digitize, he relied on the best translation, although "a bad translation is better than none."

**3) Liberation of text.**

Sefaria is open source and free for use. Because it is non-profit, Mr. Septimus spends much of his time raising money – and, indirectly, raising the issue of whether information should be completely free.

Texts are indexed, and source sheets can be created for knock-out *divrei Torah*, scholarly research, or content analysis. Sheets can be converted to PDF and shared publicly to see what other users have taught or compiled. This is a special boon for students, educators, and others seeking collaboration.

Mr. Septimus opened the "Link Explorer" to reveal Spirograph swirls over a global map and the "Talmud and Tanach (Bible)" connection. The four most used books were Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Esther, and (surprisingly) Malachi. Social media is involved here as well: links can be shared through Facebook and Twitter (or ordinary e-mail). The official website can be found here: <http://www.sefaria.org/>.

**Milestones**

The final segment celebrated NYMA's history and sea change, when 30 years ago an ad hoc committee evolved into the vibrant AJL chapter of today. There was also private change – from one of NYMA's founders, who has now begun a (no pun intended) new chapter of her life.

The NYMA board paid a tribute to Pearl Berger who, after 35 years at Yeshiva University, had officially retired last summer. During a good part of those years Pearl served as dean of YU libraries and majorly aided in their incredible growth.

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*(Conference, cont'd from pg. 11)*

The audience, many of them staff from YU's Mendel Gottesman and Hedi Steinberg Libraries, watched a PowerPoint presentation filled with YU and AJL archives (thanks, Shuli Berger and Rita Lifton!), among them photos of Pearl at her early days at YU; and the first NYMA newsletter (Fall 1985), featuring an advertisement for Pearl's cataloging workshop -- and (gasp!) an exciting new Hebrew word processor.

The speaker, Edith Lubetski -- Head Librarian, Hedi Steinberg Library, and herself first president of NYMA and past president of AJL -- reminisced on her relationship with Pearl that extended far beyond the library stacks.

***Pearl ended with a final comment on NYMA: "I am proud to see its direction."***

"Pearl was my boss," she said, "but she has always treated me as a colleague, a friend."

Using an acrostic over a screen shot of an oyster shell and -- get it? -- string of pearls, Edith lauded Pearl's tireless dedication to YU and her numerous achievements.

#### **P -- Professionalism.**

As dean of the YU libraries, Pearl paid uncompromising care, not only to development, but to prestige. Because of her refusal to place the card catalog online until Hebrew could be integrated into the catalog record, YU became a pioneer, working in the forefront with VTLS to produce a system eventually copied by Judaica libraries the world over.

#### **E -- Enhancement.**

Pearl encouraged the growth of library collections through preservation and digitization, most notably the Prague Bible, YU Past President Rabbi Norman Lamm's sermons, undergraduate yearbooks, and now synagogue materials. She also arranged the cataloging of special Sephardic and rabbinic texts.

#### **A -- Acquisitions.**

In addition to print, thousands of e-books and e-journals have been acquired, as well as a multitude of databases. Pearl's careful hand steered the libraries toward Patron Driven Acquisition.

#### **R -- Renovation.**

During the lengthy and laborious renovation of the Pollack/Mendel Gottesman Libraries, Pearl saw to every detail. This year YU library staff celebrated the reopening.

#### **L -- Leadership.**

"Pearl has made sure the libraries were at the forefront of innovative trends," Edith declared. Envisioning learning centers, Pearl commanded the creation of LibGuides, YUFind, Ask a Librarian, chat, blog, and, most recently Twitter -- as well as an IT department and a redone library website.

While inspirational to her staff, Pearl was also very sensitive, especially during the university's darker times. "She agonized how to balance the cuts with the needs of the library and the lives of those working in the library," Edith remarked.

In short, Pearl was a *mentsch*.

"It is not only within the university that Pearl has achieved such standing," Edith concluded. "As Past President of both the Association of Jewish Libraries and METRO, she has earned the admiration of those who have worked with her." Screenshots included tributes from national, as well as local, AJL members.

After being presented by NYMA Past President Tina Weiss with a gift (bowl from the Jewish Museum) and a donation to Yad Sarah in her honor, Pearl herself spoke.

"Thank you all for making this a happy day with me. The Cataloging Workshops that I was involved in showed that there was ample mandate for bringing together the area's librarians for professional enrichment. NYMA's success is the proof." She reminisced over many fulfilling years at YU, and with Edith.

Pearl ended with a final comment on NYMA: "I am proud to see its direction."

Over the past 30 years, NYMA has seen many changes, all of them forward. The afternoon of topics showed how NYMA continues to do everything possible to keep up with the times and the trends. *Yasher koach*, Ina, Chaya, and Rina, for a moving tribute and a wonderful conference!