A SPLIT VERDICT AND A WHOLLY SUCCESSFUL TRIAL

On Nov. 16, almost 300 people participated in deliberating the biblical patriarch’s guilt or innocence of the charges of child endangerment of Ishmael and attempted murder of Abraham.

Compelling legal arguments were presented by Geoffrey S. Mearns for the prosecution and Avery Friedman for the defense, based on verses from both the Bible and Koran. The verdict of the jury, read by the Honorable Dan S. Polster, was split – guilty of child endangerment, innocent of attempted murder, reflecting the age-old, ongoing debate regarding Abraham’s intentions and moral actions.

The trial was followed by an engrossing interfaith panel discussion moderated by Dan Moulthrop. Representatives of the three Abrahamic religions -- Rev. Leah C. K. Lewis, Imam Ramez Islambouli...more photos on page 7

WELCOMING WORK
by LEAH KAMIONKOWSKI

October was a very exciting month for me. Several big celebrations and milestones in my family were shared with the entire family, including my brother and sister-in-law from Israel, in Cleveland, New York and Philadelphia. It was a very special time in my life, and I felt profoundly grateful.

I returned to Cleveland to my “other family” and again felt profoundly grateful for my Kol HaLev family. This community has sustained me spiritually and emotionally, stimulated my intellect, and challenged me as a person.

As I am filled with appreciation for Kol HaLev and all it means to me, it becomes very clear that we create community with our...continued on page 6

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INTERGENERATIONAL HANUKKAH PARTY
Wed., Dec. 4, 5:30-7:30

Come celebrate the last night of Hanukkah with singing, dreidel, crafts, lively conversation and laktkes. More info on page 19.
WELCOMING TEAM – Jean Miller
• Hesed – Robin Holzman & Martha Schubert
• Hevre Kadisha – Lois Selker & Rachel Kay
• Security Corps – Open
• Newsletter – Lila Hanft
• Weekly Update – Robin Holzman
• Website – Benjamin Barnett & Brian Miller
• Marketing/PR – Deena Epstein & Halle Barnett
• Tech Support – Brian Miller

SPIRITUAL TEAM – Bill Scher-Marcus
• Religious Practices – Karal Stern
• Holidays – Amy Hogg
• Meditation – Nancy Rubel & Karly Whitaker
• Music – Sue Pelleg & Bruce Jennings

LEARNING TEAM - Sue Kisch
• Youth & Family Education – Lynn Liebling & Sue Pelleg
• Adult Education – Sue Kisch & Art Lieberman
• Young Families/Tot Shabbat – Rachel Williams & Josh Chefitz
• Child Care Coordinator – Traci Elgart
• Torah Study – Ralph and Selma Gwatkin
• Book Group – Kevin Weidenbaum
• Lunch and Learn – Open

INVOLVED TEAM - Karly Whitaker
• Greater Cleveland Congregations – Allen Binstock, Dick & Donna Weinberg
• Interfaith Hospitality Network – Nancy Dudwick
• Israel Dialogue Group – Karly Whitaker & Mike Armin
• Environmental Sustainability – Miriam Geronimus

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY TEAM – Barry Epstein
• Fundraising – Margaret Cohen, Barry Epstein & Greg Selker
• Mock Trial – Glenda Kupersmith
• Cemetery – Mike Armin

PARTICIPATORY TEAM – Leah Kamionkowski
• Membership – Deb Schein & Leah Kamionkowski
• Greeters – Anita Cohn
• Kiddush – Kelli Birch (Office Manager)
• High Holy Days – Marcia Goldberg & Claudia Weissman
• Women’s Group – Happy Wallach
• Interfaith Families – Liz Meachum
• Leadership Development – Greg Selker & Leah Kamionkowski

COMMITTEES DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE BOARD
• Finance – Dick Epstein
• Ratner Liaison – Mike Caputo
• Rabbi Liaison – Selma Gwatkin & Barry Epstein
• Strategic Planning – Greg Selker
• Nominating – Sue Pelleg
IN PEW SURVEY OF JEWISH AMERICA, A GLIMPSE OF DYNAMIC JUDAISM NOT UNLIKE RECONSTRUCTIONISM

The Jewish community in the United States has for some time, and for understandable historical and sociological reasons, been deeply interested in and concerned about measuring itself in all kinds of ways. Surveys of the Jewish community of various sizes and structures have been taking place at least since the 1950s and most likely go back even further. The most famous survey ever done was the national Jewish population study of 1990, which sent shockwaves through the organized Jewish world due to its findings regarding the rate of inter-marriage outside of the Orthodox community and the assumed negative implications of that finding for the medium and long-term flourishing of Liberal Judaism in our country.

We are now in the very beginning stages of digesting the most recent survey of American Jews conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life project (http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/). The first wave of results from this survey were published at the beginning of October and they have, once again, set off a firestorm of debate and discussion all across the Jewish community.

Some commentators have focused on the data that show overall decreases in synagogue affiliation, Jewish religiosity and children’s Jewish education along with a steadily high rate of inter-marriage; they respond to these data with grim predictions about what the next decade or two has in store for this segment of the community. Other commentators, in contrast, have underscored some of the positive information which has been discovered in this process, such as the net growth of the American Jewish population over the past 20 years -- rather than the shrinkage predicted by other studies, of the robustness of attachment to and appreciation for one’s Jewish identity by those who were surveyed across the spectrum of practice and belief.

While nearly every analysis acknowledges that there are challenges to the organized Jewish community embedded within the results of this survey, there are many who view this information as evidence of a fundamental shift or evolution that is currently taking place among American Jews, a shift that we are still too close to and too much a part of for us to really get a clear sense of where things are going to head from here.

This appreciation for the power of the evolutionary dynamic is something many members of the Reconstructionist movement have a greater comfort with than Jews from other denominational orientations because it is built in to our understanding of all Jewish, and for that matter, all religious cultures. From continued on page 5

Rabbi Steve is available to meet with Kol HaLev members on a range of issues by appointment on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. Contact him at 216-320-1498 or at rabbisteve@kolhalev.net to schedule a meeting.
In November, I had the privilege of attending the Reconstructionist Educators of North America (RENA) annual conference which was held at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisertown, MD. The focus of the conference was “Reconstructioning Congregational Education – Keeping Supplementary Schools Relevant and Engaging.” It was three days of learning, collaborating and networking with 25 Reconstructionist educators from all over the United States. Through workshops, panels, and informal discussions, I was enriched with new ideas to bring back to our community.

The Torah portion read during this conference week was Vayetze, which we studied with Rabbi David Teutsch, Director of the Contemporary Year Program at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and the Director of the Center for Jewish Ethics. In this portion Jacob wakes up, stops to reflect on his dream, and discovers that “God was in this place, and I didn’t know it.” Jacob chooses to be there, to recognize this inspiring moment in his life. Rabbi Teutsch shared with us a connection to Jacob’s moment: “This place that I’m in can be a place of wonder. I need to be mindful and fully present in the moment and the place to experience it.” This conference gave us the opportunity to stop and reflect on the rewarding work we do and to connect with colleagues to share successes and problem-solve our challenges.

Some highlights from the conference included:
• Being introduced to new technological methods including Google Drive and creative ways to use web pages.
• Creating an infrastructure of support for madrichim (teacher/leaders).
• Exciting and engaging methods used to help learners personally connect to Judaism.
• Using imagery and puppetry to make Torah stories relevant and engaging.
• Sharing teaching strategies with a Reconstructionist perspective.
• Engaging in a productive discussion with representatives from the newly configured Reconstructionist movement, collaborating on a vision of mutual support between the movement and RENA educators.
• Learning from my colleagues by brainstorming best practices.

I would like to thank you for supporting my professional development. This conference energized me and provided me with knowledge and strategies for creating opportunities for our community to experience learning and living through a Reconstructionist lens.

Kol tuv,
Robyn

CONTRIBUTIONS

Kol HaLev gratefully acknowledges contributions from:
• Abe and Muriel Chasin in honor of Ruth Ness's 85th birthday
• Frank and Phyllis Maris in honor of Ruth Ness's 85th birthday and in gratitude to Rabbi Steve for the baby naming ceremony for their granddaughter, Helina Simone Gusso
• Alan Binstock in honor of Geoffrey S. Mearns's participation in The People vs. Abraham
• Meg Manny in memory of Mary R. Manny
MAPPING OUR FUTURE

Shortly after moving to Cleveland, I got lost in a snow storm while trying to find Ratner for a bar mitzvah and gave up, returning home. One of the first gifts that my son gave to his girlfriend was a GPS device due to the many times she would call him up and ask him to guide her to her destination. There are times in our lives when we need a moral compass, also. We need a place to check in, see where we are headed and find support, insight and guidance.

At a recent oneg, I was asked what is different about Reconstructionism. I could be glib and say that it is the difference between a map and GPS device or the difference between being an audience and a participant in something spiritual. I said that at Kol HaLev we are participating in the service with guidance from the rabbi and that sometimes a member is the service leader. This is also true in our spiritual lives. We gain insight from the questions raised by Rabbi Steve and from what other members have to say.

When our board members responded after being asked to talk about why they joined Kol HaLev, their responses followed a few common themes. They wanted a place that felt comfortable, but offered intellectual challenges. They wanted a community that they would find fun and supportive. Some knew others who belonged and wanted their children to be able to explore Judaism in a way that helps them develop morally and spiritually.

We can list the ways that our community supports us. It is now time for us to support our community with a three year financial commitment. We know that we have financial obligations to our rabbi, our educational director and to our landlords. We know that we need successful fundraisers such as the Mock Trial and the Purim baskets. Robyn has written grants that support our educational program. We also know that these sources are not enough and that we rely on the generosity of our members. With the need to repair our Torah, the board chose to use this as a way to raise money to support our community, highlighting the connection between the Torah and our spiritual community. We would like to be able to map out our future with greater certainty and with guidance, not from a GPS device, but from our rabbi and our members.

Barb

RABBINIC CORNER, continued from page 3

this perspective, I think we can engage with the results of this survey, not from a place of fear or anxiety, but from a place of curiosity and reflection. We can use it to help us ask ourselves important questions about the ways in which we operate Jewishly from a place of strength, and the ways in which we can see our own current challenges reflected in the larger Jewish population, and perhaps find inspiration for new avenues of exploration as we move forward as both participants and observers in the process of an evolving Jewish world.

Rabbi Steve
efforts, and we receive community with our open hearts. Community requires active participation. The more we give, the more we receive.

Actually, research shows that giving, in its many forms, brings “happy” changes to our brains, and a sense of wellbeing. So this is an open invitation, and a request as well, that every member contribute as much as possible, and then some more, to help sustain and grow this community. During services we read: “You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you have.” So I am inviting each and every one of you to love your God and your spiritual community with all you have – your time, your efforts, your resources.

You can start with a simple task: volunteer to stand at the front door or inside the sanctuary on a Shabbat morning, once a year, to greet everybody with an open smile and a welcoming word.

Soon you will receive an email from a new program, Sign Up Genius, that will be managed by Kelli in the office, to make signing up very easy. Please respond by picking an open date from the list below and volunteering to be a greeter.

I look forward to returning your smiles at the door on Shabbat mornings,

Leah Kamionkowski
Participatory Values Team Leader

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OPEN KIDDUSH DATES

While we're on the subject of volunteering, we still need kiddush sponsors for the dates below. Sign up by emailing Kelli at kelli@kolhalev.net.

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<td>4/26/14 10:30 A</td>
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<td>5/3/14 10:30 A</td>
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PHOTOS FROM THE PEOPLE VS. ABRAHAM
By Bruce Jennings
SOLES4SOULS SHOE DRIVE A STOMPING SUCCESS

Ninety-eight pairs of shoes were donated by Kol HaLev Members, families, and friends. The first tractor-trailer semi had to leave early because Cleveland had already filled it with 25,000 pairs of shoes! Another 8000 pairs were expected to be collected by the end of the weekend.

Once donated shoes arrive at a Soles4Souls facility, they are sorted by style, quality, and season. Warm or cold climate shoes and boots are distributed in regions that are appropriate for those types of footwear.

All shoes are processed and graded either by S4S staff in Wadley, Alabama or by Village Northwest Unlimited, a nonprofit training facility for people with disabilities located in Sheldon, Iowa.

New and high grade used shoes are immediately earmarked for distribution in the United States or abroad. (To homeless shelters, areas in need and those who have experienced loss or natural disasters).

Lower grade used shoes are sorted and packed for distribution, and some are provided to microenterprise programs in developing countries such as Haiti, Tanzania, and Honduras. The microenterprise participants clean and recondition the shoes to sell locally. Thus, the microenterprise programs provide both a rare employment opportunity to impoverished people who would like to start their own shoe businesses, but lack the capital to do so, and an affordable source of shoes for the impoverished local population.

Shoes in very poor condition are unfit for the microenterprise programs and are sent to recyclers in Pakistan who salvage the usable materials from the shoes. Funds raised by Soles4Souls from the microenterprise and recycling programs are used to sustain its programs, such as covering the processing costs incurred at the Wadley and Sheldon facilities and paying for transporting shoes to crisis areas for humanitarian relief.

By recycling your gently worn shoes with the Soles4Souls, the donated footwear will be given a second chance at life. If you want to contribute shoes, but haven't done so yet, contact Happy Wallach (happyhkw@aol.com) for information about a year-round donation location for Soles4Souls.
We send wishes for a refuah shleyma, a complete and speedy healing, to Jayne Jones and Molly Berger, who are both recovering from recent surgeries.

Every month, one Hesed Committee member takes on the task of Monthly Co-ordinator, which involves staying in touch with those members in need of Hesed support. Yasher Koach to Andy Getz for her work as the November Co-ordinator.

HESED STORIES

Beginning with this month’s newsletter, we invite community members to share stories of how the work of the Hesed Committee has touched your life. These can range from simple shared moments to longer reflections. They can be anonymous or signed. We hope through these stories to bring light to the acts of caring that happen all the time in the Kol HaLev community and are critical to creating connections, but often go unnoticed. Please send to robinholzman@gmail.com.

I have been a member of Kol HaLev for some twelve years, and during that time, I have been nurtured and touched in so many ways by our community. For me, some of the most personal and powerful times have not been during communal celebrations or worship services, but rather have been in small moments of personal connection. Experiencing acts of Hesed, both in receiving and giving, has brought some of the most meaningful of these moments.

When my father died suddenly nine years ago on the morning of Kol Nidre, I was in shock, filled with grief, fear, and a deep sense of isolation. I took my mother from the hospital to her home in Chesterland. At a time when I would normally be with community, I felt alone and afraid. My parents had few friends, and we had no family in town. It would be another day before my brother and his family would get to Cleveland. In an act of pure Hesed, Judy Vida offered to come be with us the next day, which was both Shabbat and Yom Kippur. What she gave us that day, just by being there, sitting with us, holding us with her presence, provided the space to just be in our grief and feel held in love. For me, she was the link to community, and I knew I was not alone in facing the unknown future before me. By giving up her own day at shul, on this most sacred day of the year, she brought the divine into our broken world. That act of loving kindness has stayed with me all these years and truly showed me the power within a simple gesture to bring love, friendship, and a deep spiritual connection. Robin Holzman

For more information or to volunteer for the Hesed Committee, please contact Martha Schubert at schuberger@roadrunner.com or Robin Holzman at robinholzman@gmail.com.
The Kol HaLev board of trustees met on Nov. 11 at the home of Kirby Date. Board members in attendance were: Robyn Novick, Karly Whitaker, Halle Barnett, Kirby Date, Barry Epstein, Peter Robertson, Margaret Cohen, Sue Kisch, Barb Truitt, Jean Miller, Greg Selker, Rabbi Steve, and Bill Scher-Marcus. Congregants present were: Peggy Kitilla, Miriam Geronomus, and Lila Hanft.

The minutes from the October board meeting had not been sent out in advance and could not be approved. They will be revisited and approved at the next board meeting.

**Reconstructionist Movement Plenum**: President Barb Truitt reported on the Plenum phone call that took place on Sunday, Oct. 26. She noted that some of the foci of the plenum are closely aligned with what we are concerned with as a congregation: the future of the Reconstructionist movement, social action, and more. Barb asked people to let her know if they have questions, and she will post them on the plenum message board.

**GCC**: Karly Whitaker gave a report on the current activities of Greater Cleveland Congregations, and the expansion of Medicaid. At the GCC delegate assembly on December 12 at 7 p.m., one of the topics will be gun control initiatives, on which members Chris Antenucci and Mimi Plevin-Foust have been working. The meeting is open to everyone, and members are encouraged to attend. Location to be determined.

**Mock Trial update**: Greg Selker gave an update on preparation and ticket sales for the Mock Trial, which took place on Saturday, Nov. 16. The balcony seating was sold out, and it was hoped that ticket sales would increase throughout the week, as it did last year. At the time of the board meeting, 60% of the tickets sold were purchased from outside of the Kol HaLev community. Due to community calendaring conflicts a date for next year’s trial has not yet been set.

**Group Exercise**: Barb asked participants to take a few minutes and think about when they first joined a Reconstructionist synagogue – what motivated you to do so, and what keeps you going? Everyone had an opportunity to answer the questions. Three reason were prevalent: community, friendships, philosophy.

**Financial Report**: Treasurer Pete Robertson delivered the financial report. The bank balance as of the meeting was positive, however this is a time when revenue exceeds expenses. That will change toward the spring. The finance committee will meet in November/December, and then in January Barb anticipates having a community meeting to discuss financial matters that will require communal input and feedback.

The Torah Campaign is at the heart of a three-year fundraising campaign, seeking to raise $160,000. This will replace the annual campaign for these three years. Our goal is to attain 100% participation, including children. Fiscally Responsible Values Team member Margaret Cohen noted that some of our success in receiving grants has been because of the degree of participation that we are able to demonstrate.

**New Business**: Congregational Education Director Robyn Novick noted that after our first year of Nesiya (our Hebrew/t'fillah program for children), teacher and curriculum co-developer Jodilynn Solomon has won the Libby Braverman Award, the Cleveland Jewish community’s most prestigious teacher award. Teachers must be nominated by parents. The cash prize and certificate will be presented at the

*continued on page 13*
ADULT EDUCATION: LUNCH AND LEARN

After Kiddush on Sat., December 7 (around 1:15 p.m.) our own Rabbi Jeffrey Schein and Dr. Brian Amkraut from the Siegal Lifelong Learning Program of Case Western Reserve University will lead a Lunch and Learn session. Rabbi Jeff has received a Covenant Grant to teach about and explore the intersection of technology and Jewish values in the modern world. The discussion will provide a broad framework for seeing current technologies through the broader prism of Jewish history and civilization. There will also be an opportunity to reflect on how—in response to these latest sea changes—one takes a personal stance about the role of technology in our lives, as well as an exploration of some of the challenges of communication between technology natives and immigrants. RSVPs are encouraged, but not required, to Kelli in the office (Kelli@kolhalev.net).

NEW GROUP: ARE YOU A MEMBER IN THE MIDDLE?

Do any of these sound like you?
- Are you entering a new phase of life?
- Are you recently an empty nester, or adjusting to having young adult children?
- Are you facing new responsibilities for older family members?
- Would you like to connect or re-connect with other members who are also "In the Middle"?

Join us for a winter social evening of connection and re-connection, dessert potluck and Havdalah. January 25, 2014, 7:30 p.m., at the home of Kirby Date and Richard Litwin, 21116 Halburton Road, Beachwood. Please RSVP to Kirby, 216-970-7354. We hope you will join us! We're hoping this can be the beginning of new and renewed conversations.

DECEMBER TORAH STUDY: THE REUNION OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

The next Shabbat Torah Study session will be on Saturday, Dec. 14, at the home of Anita Cohn, 3:30-5:00 p.m.. Art Biaganti will lead a discussion of parashat Va'Yehi (Genesis 47:28-50:26). This is the last chapter in Bereshit in which Jacob reunites with his beloved son Joseph.

ADULT EDUCATION: RECON 101, THE LAST SESSION

Recon 101 with Rabbi Steve examines the core ideas and history of the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism and some of the unique aspects of our movement. The last of the three-session Kol HaLev class on understanding the Reconstructionist movement will be held from 7:30-9:00 p.m. on Sunday December 8 (location TBA in upcoming Weekly Updates). All members are welcome. You can come to this last session without having attended the others.

HAGIGA BONIM (GRADES 3-5) POTLUCK ON DEC. 13

Margaret Cohen and Kevin Rahilly have graciously offered to host a Shabbat dinner potluck at their home for Bonim (Grades 3-5) families on Friday, Dec. 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. Please see the flyer on page 20 for details. Hope you will be able to celebrate Shabbat with the Bonim community!
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY NEWS

The Environmental Sustainability Committee met in November to discuss various options for actions regarding fracking. We decided to pursue a two-pronged effort focusing on clean energy as an alternative to natural gas. We will oppose Ohio Senate Bill 58, which is currently being debated. SB 58 would gut Ohio's standing energy efficiency standards and lead to the outsourcing of clean energy jobs to Canada.

We will also support LEEDCo's pilot offshore wind farm with their power pledge, which shows utility companies that there is market demand for wind energy. Now that we have chosen actions to pursue, the next step is to develop a specific plan and to start making connections beyond Kol HaLev. We invite all Kol HaLev-ers to become involved in this exciting new effort! For more information, go to https://sites.google.com/site/khlenvironmentalteam/ or contact Miriam Geronimus at mgeronimus@gmail.com or 734-645-3647.

NO'AR CHADASH (TEEN) EVENT RESCHEDULED FOR DEC. 7

Instead of the Shabbat dessert potluck planned for Dec. 6 and the event planned for Dec. 8, No'ar Chadash has decided to combine the two into a Havdalah Dessert Potluck on Dec. 7 from 8:00-10:00 p.m. The evening will feature a small program designed by Lila Miller, and the Miller family has graciously agreed to host the evening at their home, where we will hang out, enjoy desserts and more. We hope that you will be able to come. If you have any questions, contact Lila at lila@bmite.com, Ilana at ilanaka7416@yahoo.com, or Zach at either zpekarsk@oberlin.edu or 608-772-3603.

THE PEOPLE VS. ABRAHAM, continued from page 1
and our own Rabbi Steve -- discussed how the story is interpreted by their religions and its meaning for people today.

The program was not only a successful fundraiser for Kol HaLev, but a fun, thought-provoking event which highlights who we are and what we are about. Remarkably, just under 60% of the attendees at this year’s and last year’s trial are from outside the Kol HaLev community, underscoring the importance and success of the Mock Trial series in raising awareness of Kol HaLev and in engaging the broader Cleveland Jewish and secular community in the concepts of Reconstructionist Judaism.

Many thanks go to the wonderful committee members who used their talents and worked so hard to make the evening possible: Alan Weinstein, Celia Jennings, Greg Selker, Halle Barnett, Heidi Robertson, Jennifer Finkel, Maxine Collin, Pam Millas, Glenda Kupersmith and, of course, Rabbi Steve. Thanks also to all the other volunteers, especially those called upon in the last minute to help with the reception.

The program will be broadcast on WCPN 90.3 FM on Friday evening, December 6 at 9 pm, and most likely one other date and time in the last two weeks of December. Post broadcast, the audio file will be accessible from the Kol HaLev website. Watch the Weekly Update for more information.
KVELLS

Leah Kamionkowski had a lot to be kvelling over in October. First, her granddaughter Tali, daughter of Tamar Kamionkowski and Jennifer Rackow, was called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah on Oct. 19. Interviewed in the October issue of the newsletter of Mishkan Shalom, the Reconstructionist synagogue in Philadelphia, Tali noted that, "My grandmother recently had a bat mitzvah at 79. She wasn't allowed to have one when she was young. I think if I didn't have one, I'd regret it."

Also in October, Leah's son Marc, a theoretical physicist reknown for his work in cosmology, astrophysics, and elementary-particle theory and a Professor of Physics at Johns Hopkins University, was the the recipient of two honors, awarded on two consecutive days. First he was in Boston for induction into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; the next day he was in Cleveland for induction into the Shaker Heights Alumni Association Hall of Fame.

Mazel tov to Ruth Ness, who celebrated her 85th birthday on Nov. 1. Ruth's daughter, congregant Leah Gilbert, reported that the Nov. 2 gathering at the Map of Thailand restaurant to celebrate Ruth's milestone birthday was attended by friends and family, including Leah's brother Alan and his family, who came in from out of town.

at the annual meeting of the JECC (Jewish Education Center of Cleveland) in January, 2014. The next board meeting will be on Dec 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Leah Kamionkowski. Board meetings of Kol HaLev are open to all members of the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Scher-Marcus, Spiritual Values Team Leader
(on behalf of Molly Berger, Board Secretary)
The December book group meeting will be Thurs., December 26, at the home of Abe and Muriel Chasin. We will discuss *A Seat At The Table: A Novel of Forbidden Choices* by Joshua Halberstam. (304 pages, a Kindle version exists)

A brief book description from Amazon.com: *A Seat at the Table* is Halberstam's first novel, a deeply felt portrayal of the chasidic community of Borough Park in the early 1970s, reflected through the relationship of a young man coming of age and his father, a leading rebbe. Elisha tucks his payses behind his ears and heads to college in Manhattan, with his father's blessing, while continuing his Talmudic studies in Brooklyn. He soaks up information about jazz, Kafka, anthropology and city streets, all the while making new friends including Katrina who comes from Wisconsin, wears pink sneakers with iridescent green laces, loves literature and gets him to dance. Questioning his faith and identity, he struggles, torn between his love and respect for his father and their conversations over a page of Talmud, and the allure of ideas, people and places beyond Brooklyn. In the background, the war in Vietnam looms.

The book for January will be determined after the book club votes on its books for all of 2014. Look for the list in mid-December on our webpage (see next paragraph).

All KHL members are welcome to attend. For more information about the group, look at our webpage ([http://www.kolhalev.net/book_group](http://www.kolhalev.net/book_group)) and contact Kevin Weidenbaum ([KJW@oberlin.net](mailto:KJW@oberlin.net)) to be added to the group’s email list.

---

**Yahrzeits**

_They are now a part of us, as we remember them_

Members of Kol HaLev will mark the following yahrzeits during the next month

- **Marguerite Dresden** — aunt of Phyllis Maris
- **Adolph Kohn** — father of Ron Kohn
- **Doris Kittila** — grandmother of Peggy Kittila
- **Joseph Peter Vainner Jr.** — father of Joseph Vainner
- **Jerome Pincus** — father-in-law of Joyce Goldstein
- **Charles R. Friedman** — father of Joyce Wolpert
- **Alfred Rosenberg** — father of Sue Biagianti
- **Julius Kelman** — father of Sam Kelman
- **Sadie Ritz (Sussel)** — mother of Muriel Chasin
- **Eli Samplin Marks** — father of Phyllis Maris
- **Jo Hana Goldberg** — daughter of Judy Vida
- **Herman Gordon (Haim Ben)** — father of Margy Weinberg

Kol HaLev members may include the yahrzeit of family members in *KHL Happenings* by submitting the name of the deceased, the relationship to the member, and the date of death, including the year, in either the secular or Jewish calendar to [kelli@kolhalev.net](mailto:kelli@kolhalev.net). (Please note: When you submit the yahrzeit date, select either the secular date or the Hebrew date. You can find a calendar converter at [http://www.hebcal.com/converter/](http://www.hebcal.com/converter/).
By Barry Epstein, Financially Sustainable Team Leader

Editor’s Note: This is the second in a series of articles about Kol Halev's Value Teams -- what they are, why they exist, and which programming, committees and activities fall under the aegis of each value team. The series was inaugurated in the November 2013 newsletter by Spiritual Values Team leader Bill Scher-Marcus. In future issues, other Value Team Leaders will describe the committees grouped under their value teams and invite members to participate in programming and volunteer opportunities.

The Fiscally Sustainable Value Team, which is responsible for maintaining the financial stability of Kol Halev, works in a number of ways to achieve that goal. It is comprised of three committees:

- Fundraising Committee (led by Margaret Cohen, Barry Epstein & Greg Selker)
- Mock Trial Committee (headed up by Glenda Kupersmith)
- Cemetery Committee (chaired by Mike Armin)

Our budget for the current year is about $290,000. The budget is determined in collaboration between the Treasurer, the Finance Committee and our Board. Our major source of income is member dues which accounts for about 60% of our revenue.

Our annual fund raising effort -- which this year is embodied in our Year of the Torah campaign -- also contributes a large portion of our budget. Beyond the fiscal importance of this effort, we have created an integrated comprehensive plan this year that includes visits, teaching, and demonstrations by Rabbi Kevin Hale, the Reconstructionist sofer (scribe) who will repair our Torah. We are hoping for 100% participation of our membership and so have created a wide variety of participation levels. (100% participation is very important: When we apply for grants, like the education grants we're received recently, grantors see it as a measurement of member commitment and a predictor of the success of the program they're funding.)

This year is also the third year of our mock trial which raises our profile in the broader Jewish and general Cleveland community. It provides great entertainment and raises additional funds as well. Another, somewhat smaller source of income is the Mishloach Minot gift baskets we offer during Purim. This allows members to give gift baskets to friends for Purim as well as allowing the community to raise funds.

Of course people are encouraged to and do make contributions in honor of various joyous events as well as get well wishes and in memory of loved ones. In short, we as members of our blessed community share the responsibility of keeping Kol Halev on sound financial footing.

Also under the umbrella of the Fiscally Sustainable Value Team is the Cemetery committee. In early 2006 Kol Halev bought a section of Hillcrest Cemetery and although most have been sold to members, 13-14 are still available. You can learn more on the Kol Halev website (http://www.kolhalev.net/content/cemetery) by contacting Cemetery Chair Mike Armin (michaeljarmin@ymail.com).

If anyone would like to be more involved in our fundraising efforts please let Margaret Cohen (margaret.cohen@gmail.com) or me (barry1@eppco.net) know. When you respond to our Fund Raising appeal we know you will do all you can to be sure we raise the funds necessary. Thanks to all of you who contribute to the best of your abilities.
NEW TRADITIONS: A BLESSING OVER WATER

A couple of years ago, when members of our family couldn't drink grape juice or wine, we worked with Rabbi Steve to write a blessing for water, which we use at our weekly Shabbat evening table.

Over time this has grown in meaning for us, since we are more and more aware (in our work lives as well as community and recreational life) of the importance of water to our existence, and to the natural world of which we are a part. It always struck us as interesting that there is no traditional blessing for water. One reason for this may be that people over the historic years did not drink much plain water, for health reasons, since good sanitation in urban settlements is only a relatively recent product of modern technology. The lack of reliable sanitation still holds true in many parts of the world, which makes it all the more relevant, for those of us who are blessed with drinkable water, to acknowledge that gratitude in some way. In Northeast Ohio, we are also reminded of the potential threat to our drinkable water that new industrial technologies are presenting. A blessing for water seems like it is some small weekly way to acknowledge all of this.

When we offer the blessing on Shabbat evening, we use a wine glass which shows the clarity of the water, and we use filtered water that we have set out the night before, so as much of the modern water additives are removed/evaporated as possible. It might also be nice to collect water from a natural source for the blessing, as long as you're sure it's drinkable. We usually give it after the blessing over the wine and before the blessing over the bread, as a parallel to the wine for the non-wine-drinkers.

When we sponsored kiddush on Nov. 2, we offered the water blessing after the wine. Several members asked if we could put the blessing in the newsletter so they could use it. With Robyn Novick's and Rabbi Steve's help, here is the blessing:

Baruch Atah Adoshem, Elokeinu melech ha-olam, oseh mayim m'chalkhel kol chai.

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלוהינו מלך העולם, אשר יוצר כל החיים.

Blessed are You, the One, Source of the Universe, maker of water, which sustains all of life.

We hope you give it a try, and let us know what you think!

Yours, Kirby Date and Richard Litwin

Do you or your family have a "new tradition"? It could be a special blessing passed down in your family or a newly-crafted ritual created to reflect a heightened awareness of the natural world, an evolving connection to divinity, or something else entirely. Tell us about it! Email newsletter@kolhalev.net.
PUBLICLY JEWISH

My friend Jay visited our office one day in late October. Jay lives in suburban Washington, DC, is Orthodox and by day wears a black velvet kippah. After our meeting, we decided to walk through town and grab some lunch. Leaving our office building, I put on the black suede kippah I had brought from home that morning. Jay was slightly surprised; I told him I simply could not let him be the only guy on the street wearing one. He laughed and I think appreciated the public display of solidarity. Two guys wearing kippot out on the street would hardly be unusual in Cleveland Heights, but it is a rare sight indeed in Schaffhausen, Switzerland (Jewish population less than 30). The exception is Café Vordergasse--our lunch destination--which is a milchig (dairy/parve only) restaurant, in this case essentially a kosher establishment but lacking rabbinical supervision. The Orthodox and kippah-wearing owner came out to greet us at our outdoor table and we were treated like royalty by the entire staff. A couple of Israeli customers came over to introduce themselves; it turned out that Jay knows one of their coworkers in Israel. It is a small world indeed, but visibly identifying as Jewish made it even more intimately connected.

Although our family does not keep a kosher kitchen, I follow a "strict kosher-style" diet--a Reconstructionist concept to be sure--as I find it a meaningful spiritual discipline. I do try to eat "proper" kosher food whenever it is available, so when I registered for a conference recently in nearby Rome, I naturally checked the kosher meals option under "dietary requirements." Evidently I was the only person among the 200 attendees to do so. It was a bit surreal to be standing alone, microwaving my special boxed meal in full view of 199 peers queued up at the buffet. The meals were very tasty and included a 375 ml bottle of kosher wine, which I happily consumed along with the food. I think my peers were a little jealous. Several times I was asked about my special meal and I explained it was kosher. People were especially interested in what makes wine kosher. One day a young man sitting immediately to my right, noticing my kosher meal, made a comment about Kiddush wine (i.e. wine used on Shabbat or a holiday when reciting the Kiddush blessing, often very sweet in keeping with the notion that life itself is sweet). I immediately suspected what he confirmed moments later: that he himself is Jewish. We hit it off and talked for two hours there at the table. I shared the lunch with my new friend and together we took the opportunity to recite the appropriate berachot (blessings) over the wine and bread in front of everyone at the table. It was a special moment and again, one that was made possible by identifying publicly as Jewish.

One of the nights at the conference featured a 90-minute walking tour of historical downtown Rome, followed by dinner at a restaurant just a short walk from the Pantheon. I assumed kosher food would not be available outside the confines of the hotel hosting our conference. Inspecting the restaurant buffet that had been set up for our group, I was surprised by a burly cook who had just come out of the kitchen, heading straight for me. He carried a tray of steaming hot pizza in his hand, fresh...
A big thank you to Kol HaLev members **Anne Adamson**, **Art Biagianti**, **David Bortz**, **Adina Davidson**, **Miriam Geronimus**, **Peggy Kittala**, **Donna Weinberger**, **Karly Whittaker** and **Sue Pelleg**, gathered signatures for the Medicaid Expansion petition effort. Kol HaLev members had collected over 100 of the 270 signatures we’d pledged to deliver when, in mid-November, the signature-gathering was suspended because Cuyahoga County already had its allocation of signatures. GCC produced 2500 signatures in a two-and-a-half week period. We are very hopeful that the State Supreme Court will confirm the State Controlling Boards’ decision to approve the use of federal funds for Medicaid Expansion in Ohio. To that end, Medicaid Enrollment will be starting in Ohio on Dec. 9.

The **GCC Education Team** has been busy with its three-prong approach to education in Cleveland. We continue to work with Case Elementary on supporting educational improvement in the school by getting parents involved and stopping the poaching of students at Case by a new subpar charter school nearby. (Read more about the poaching problem at [http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2013/10/charter_school_recruiting_gimm.html](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2013/10/charter_school_recruiting_gimm.html)). GCC is working on developing good relations with the Charter School Administrators and helping them work with the Cleveland Board of Education on improving Cleveland’s schools.

The **Gun Violence Reduction Team** is meeting with local mayors and police chiefs, gaining momentum on Metro IAF’s “Do Not Stand Idly By” ([http://metro-iaf.org/sites/default/files/DoNotStandIdlyByPledge.pdf](http://metro-iaf.org/sites/default/files/DoNotStandIdlyByPledge.pdf)) gun violence prevention campaign. To get involved in this campaign, email **Chris Antenucci** at cantenucci@metrohealth.org.

Please attend the **Human Rights Shabbat** at Kol HaLev on December 21. The service will be led by **Alan Binstock** and **Rabbi Steve**. We hope to have a guest speaker that day. The theme of the service will be the human right of an education for all children. We will have a lunch and learn after the service.

Updated GCC information is available at [http://www.greaterclevelandcongregations.org/](http://www.greaterclevelandcongregations.org/).

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**CONNECTIONS, continued from page 17**

from their oven. He set it down on the buffet table in front of me and proudly announced in thickly accented English, "Kosher pizza!" "Kosher pizza?" I asked, dumbfounded. "Si," he said with the wave of a hand, gesturing toward the steaming tray below, "Look...mozzarella, tomato and bread: kosher pizza!" "Enjoy!" he added, smiling broadly and, I dare say, lovingly as he turned and headed back into the kitchen. "Grazie!" I called after him, "Thank you!" And in that moment, the unassuming little white pizza before me--cooked with love by non-Jews in non-kosher kitchen using non-kosher ingredients--became the best kosher pizza ever.

So often being Jewish is an aspect of ourselves not intentionally hidden, yet public only within a few narrow concentric "rings" of people around us. On the occasions we increase our public "visibility" as Jews, we risk an all-too-familiar array of benignly ignorant as well as negative responses. At the same time, doing so facilitates unexpected and deeply meaningful connections with other people, Jewish and otherwise. In my opinion, the immensely positive potential outcomes are well worth the downside risk.
Kol HaLev
Intergenerational
Hanukkah Party

Wednesday,
December 4, 2013
The last night of Hanukkah
5:30 - 7:30 pm
The Ratner School

Come celebrate the last night of Hanukkah with the Kol HaLev community! There will be singing, dreidel, crafts, lively conversation & friends.

Bring your favorite instrument to play, your family’s hanukkiah for our communal lighting and a parve/dairy dish to serve 10-12 people. Please NO NUTS.

A-H Main Dish; I-P Dessert
& Q-Z Salad/Side Dish

SPECIAL TREAT — FRESH LATKES WILL BE FRYING AT
THE PARTY ALA BRIAN MILLER

Questions? Contact Robyn
robyn@kolhalev.net or 216-320-1498
Bonim Potluck Shabbat Dinner

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2013
6:00 – 8:00 PM

All Kol HaLev Bonim (grade 3-5)
Families are invited to attend
and participate in Shabbat
joy together at the
Cohen-Rahilly Home
2701 Eaton Rd, Shaker Hts.

Please let us know how many
are coming from your family
and what you plan to bring.
Please bring a dairy or parve dish to serve 6-8
people. No nuts or strawberries please!

QUESTIONS? CONTACT MARGARET
MARGARET.COHEN@GMAIL.COM
OR 216.849.5510
PLEASE RSVP BY 12/9
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Dec. 4</td>
<td>5:30-7:30 p.m</td>
<td><strong>Kol HaLev Intergenerational Hanukkah Party and Potluck</strong> at the Ratner School. Come celebrate the last night of Hanukkah with the Kol HaLev community! There will be singing, dreidel, crafts, lively conversation and friends. Special treat!!! Brian Miller will be frying latkes at the party for all to enjoy! Bring your favorite instrument to play, your family’s hanukkiah for our communal lighting and a parve/dairy dish to serve 10-12 people. Please NO NUTS. A-H salad/side dish, I-P dessert, and R-Z main dish. If you are able to help with set up, clean up or during the program, please let Robyn know at <a href="mailto:robyn@kolhalev.net">robyn@kolhalev.net</a> or 216-320-1498.</td>
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<td>Sat. Dec. 7</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Shabbat Service, at the Ratner Chapel</strong>, preceded by Torah discussion at 9:30 a.m.; <em>Vayigash</em>; discussion and service leader: Rabbi Steve; kiddush sponsored by Deena and Dick Epstein. This is our monthly percussion-free service.</td>
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<td>9:15 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Philosophical Inquiry</strong> for 5th-7th grade Hagiga students. Light breakfast will be provided; please be prompt</td>
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<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Hagiga</strong></td>
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<td>10:45 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Tot-Parent Shabbat Program</strong> for families with children in preschool and under in Rooms 113 &amp; 114. The program is about a half an hour. Babysitting is available before and after Tot Shabbat, also in Rooms 113 &amp; 114.</td>
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<td>1:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Lunch and Learn</strong> following Kiddush. Explore the intersection of technology and Jewish values in the modern world. Led by Rabbi Jeff and Brian Amkraut. Please bring a dairy/parve dish to share for lunch. Read more about this event on page 11.</td>
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<td>8:00-10:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>No’ar Chadas (Teen) Havdalah Dessert Potluck</strong> at the home of Brian, Jean and Lila Miller. More info on page 12.</td>
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<td>Sun., Dec. 8</td>
<td>10:00-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Nesiya: Aleph/Bet</strong> at the Ratner School</td>
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<td>10:30-12:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Nesiya: Gimmel</strong> at the Ratner School</td>
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<td>7:30-9:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Recon 101, location tba</strong> (see page 11).</td>
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<td>Mon, Dec. 9</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Board Meeting at the home of Leah Kamionkowski.</strong> All members are invited to attend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Dec. 11</td>
<td>7:00-8:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Mindful Jewish Practice</strong> at the office of Nancy Rubel, 24755 Chagrin #305. All are welcome, whether or not you have had any meditation experience. Please RSVP to <a href="mailto:karlywhitaker@yahoo.com">karlywhitaker@yahoo.com</a>.</td>
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<td>Fri., Dec. 13</td>
<td>6:00-8:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Bonim Shabbat Dinner</strong> at the home of the home of the Cohen-Rahilly family. See the flyer on page 20.</td>
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<td>Sat. Dec. 14</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>**Member-Led Shabbat Service at the home of Karal Stern, 24100 Hazelmere Rd., Shaker Heights; <em>Vayehi</em>; Service and Discussion Leader: Larry Solomon. The Torah discussion will take place within the service. Kiddush sponsor: Karal Stern</td>
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<td>3:00-5:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Torah Study</strong> at the home of Anita Cohn (see page 11).</td>
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<td>Sun., Dec. 15</td>
<td>10:00-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Nesiya: Aleph/Bet at the Ratner School</td>
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<td>10:30-12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Nesiya: Gimmel at the Ratner School</td>
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<td>Mon., Dec. 16</td>
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<td><strong>Deadline for the December issue of Kol HaLev Happenings.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Dec. 21</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Human Rights Shabbat Service at Ratner Chapel. <em>Sh'mot</em>; Discussion Leader: Miriam Geronimus; Service Leaders: Alan Binstock and Rabbi Steve. Kiddish co-sponsored by Mark and Adina Davidson and Bruce and Brenda Goodman</td>
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<td>Philosophical Inquiry for 5th-7th grade Hagiga students. Light breakfast will be provided; please be prompt</td>
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<td>10-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Intergenerational Learner’s Service, led by Rabbi Steve. We will discuss the overall structure of the service, take some time each session to delve into some of the specific language and ideas in selected prayer texts, and focus on learning some of our most common melodies. These conversations will be most appropriate for adult Kol HaLev members who are interested in learning more about how the Shabbat morning service is put together and younger members of Kol HaLev who are at least in third grade. Please contact Rabbi Steve with any questions.</td>
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<td>Sun. Dec. 22</td>
<td>10:00-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>No Nesiya: WINTER BREAK</td>
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<td>Thurs. Dec. 26</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Hug HaSefer Book Group at the home of Abe and Muriel Chasin. More information on page 14</td>
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<td>Fri., Dec. 27</td>
<td>6:00-8:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Steve and member musicians. Kiddush sponsored by Renee Siegel and Eda Weiss. Followed by Community Potluck Shabbat Dinner. Please bring a dish that is vegetarian/dairy or parve, feeds 8-10 people and DOES NOT CONTAIN NUTS. A-H: main dish, I-P: salads/side dishes Q-Z: dessert or drink In keeping with our goal of becoming a more sustainable community, we encourage members to bring their own reusable plates, cups, utensils and napkins to our potluck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun., Dec. 29</td>
<td>10:00-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>No Nesiyah: WINTER BREAK</td>
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The newsletter calendar is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication. For the most current information, check Kol HaLev’s [website calendar](#) and the Thursday Weekly Update email.