

Kol HaLev Happenings

The Newsletter of Cleveland's Reconstructionist Jewish Community

JUNE 2013

OBJECT LESSONS: A PESACH SHENI STORY

BY DAVID CONN, KOL HALEV HAPPENINGS "FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT"

Editor's note: Pesach Sheni (פסח שני, or Second Passover) occurs one month after the first night of Passover, as a kind of make-up date for Jews who must miss the Passover observance. In Chabad and other Hasidic movements, Pesach Sheni is associated with second chances.

I was standing at the kitchen table as a moving crew packed up our belongings, some bound for Switzerland, others for a warehouse in Pittsburgh. One of the movers turned to me and said, "You people have two of everything." I looked at him in stunned silence, managed a crooked smile and turned away. My company had hired them to pack, not to pontificate. Slowly I realized he was making an observation, not a value judgment



David Conn, with Cameron and Nathalie, at Rheinfall, Europe's largest waterfall, 3km from their new home.

... and he was 100% correct. In plain view were two stereos, four TVs, several cameras, a combination computer lab-workshop-museum, a pair of rice cookers, a few of coffee machines, German, Russian and Turkish samovars, large and small refrigerators plus his-and-her cars in the garage. Like many Americans, Liz and I had accumulated a lot of "stuff" in our 24 years together.

Our family arrived in Switzerland on March 25 to a completely empty apartment, 20 pieces of luggage among the four of us. In addition to clothes and air [continued on page 12](#)

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Please join us as our daughter

Esther Aviva Millas

becomes a Bat Mitzvah
June 1, 2013 at 9:45 am

Stay for the festive Kiddush
following the service
Please do let us know if you'll be there:
pam.millas@gmail.com or 216-287-8773

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DIRECTORY

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WEEKLY UPDATE
Robin Holzman
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Lynn Liebling
YOUNG FAMILIES/TOT SHABBAT
Rachel Williams

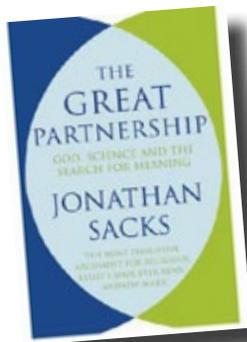
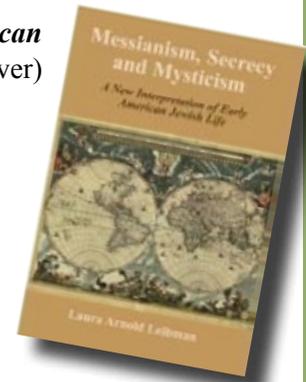
JULY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: MON. JUNE 17

SUMMER READING ROUND-UP

As has been my practice for a number of summers, I have gathered together a list of recently published books on themes related to Jews and Judaism. All of the books below have received very positive reviews and most of them were either finalists or winners in this year's National Jewish Book Award competition across a range of categories. As many of us search for titles to put on our summer readings lists, I submit the following selections as options to which we might give serious consideration.

***Messianism, Secrecy and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life* by Laura Arnold Leibman.** Vallentine Mitchell: 2012 (hardcover) and 2013 (paperback). 416 pp.

In a book that offers a dramatic new interpretation of early American Jewish life, Laura Arnold Leibman introduces us to the culture, beliefs, spaces and objects embraced by the Jewish men and women of the Atlantic world in the port towns of Newport, Rhode Island, Suriname, Curaco, and Barbados, among others. She brilliantly weaves together Conversos' ideas about redemption, Kabbalah, and messianism while resuming their lives as Jews as they build economic and religious worlds. She offers a dynamic vision of the dreams, hopes and ordinary lives of colonial Jews. Leibman helps to rewrite the history of early American Jews by focusing on their work, their ideas and their material world, which created a rich, textured, and committed Jewish life. Leibman's surprising and complex portrait of Jewish life enlarges the history of early American religion, restores the importance of mysticism to American Jewish history, and offers a more thoroughly complex understanding of the lives of Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Atlantic.



***The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, and the Search For Meaning* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.** Hodder & Stoughton: 2011 (hardcover) and 2012 (paperback). 370 pp.

In his new book, Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, sets out a clear and forceful argument for the complementary nature of science and religion, drawing on an eclectic range of historical and philosophical arguments to prove the necessity of both if we are to understand the human condition. *The Great Partnership* is a modern-day version of Saadia Gaon's *Faiths and Opinions (Emunot V'Deot)*, in which the argument is made that belief in religion does not involve an abdication of the intellect or the silencing of critical faculties. Sacks demonstrates over and over again that while sci-

[continued on page 4](#)

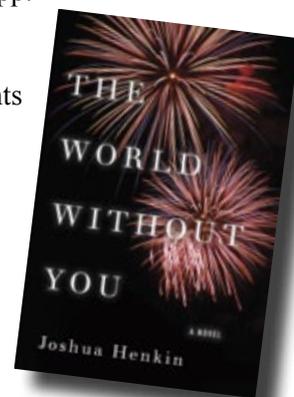
Rabbi Steve is available to meet with Kol HaLev members on a range of issues by appointment on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. Contact him by phone at the office (216-320-1498) or at rabbiSteve@kolhalev.net to schedule a meeting time.

RABBINIC COLUMN, [continued from page 3](#)

ence takes things apart to see how they work, religion puts things together to see what they mean.

***The World Without You* by Joshua Henkin.** Vintage: 2013 (paperback). 336 pp.

A far-flung family; a *yahrzeit* for the untimely death of a man who was a son, husband, brother, and father; and a gathering in a limited space are the elements of Joshua Henkin's beautifully written third novel, *The World Without You*. Henkin writes of the high emotional stakes for a family after its youngest son, a journalist, has been killed in Iraq, in echoes of Daniel Pearl. Like Pearl, this son, Leo, was married and the father of a very young child. The book's epigraph, "Things seldom end in one event," from a short story by Richard Ford, tells readers that the book's subject is how this death has an aftermath for the various family members.



The greatest strength of Henkin's writing here is his ability to create emotionally resonant, three-dimensional characters and his careful control of the narrative, which contains so many points of view. From the young Israeli sons taken with the wonders of America to the dead son evoked so carefully in the recollections of the family who loved him, to the fabulously wealthy ninety-four-year-old grandmother who can, when and if she wishes, use her riches to control almost any aspect of the family life, *The World Without You* has the pain and splendor of an enchanting family with an important story to tell.

***Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Genders* by Joy Ladin.** University of Wisconsin Press: 2012 (hardcover) and 2013 (paperback). 270 pp.



In 2008, Joy (formerly Jay) Ladin made headlines around the world when, after years of teaching at an Orthodox Jewish university as a man, she returned as a woman. In *Through the Door of Life*, Ladin takes readers on a distinctly Jewish journey through the transition process – a process not just of changing genders, but of creating a new self. From her childhood discovery that the God portrayed in the Torah seemed to share her social problems and the condition that caused them – it's hard to make friends when you don't have a body – to her account of visiting the Western Wall first as a woman, then as a man, Ladin's gender identity and Jewish identity are in dialogue with one another – a dialogue that went public when she became the first openly transgender employee of an Orthodox Jewish institution. With unsparing honesty and surprising humor, Ladin wrestles with both the nuts-and-bolts problems of gender transition, such as how to change from female to male on the way to work, and the Jewish tradition that both clarifies and complicates the larger moral, spiritual and philosophical questions raised by the mismatch between the gender of her body and the gender of her soul.

Note: When you're picking up your summer reading, don't forget about Kol HaLev's affiliate account at Amazon.com. Any time you enter Amazon through our [special link](#) and make a purchase, Kol HaLev receives a 4% referral fee on the sale, at no cost to you. You must enter Amazon.com ONLY via [this link](#). You can also find this link on the Kol HaLev website at <http://www.kolhalev.net/amazon>.

Yahrzeits

They are now a part of us, as we remember them
Members of Kol HaLev will mark the following yahrzeits during June:

Lena Chasin (Leah) — mother of Abraham Chasin
Morris Ehrlich — grandfather of Barry Epstein
Rae Ehrlich — grandmother of Barry Epstein
Maurice Epstein — father of Barry Epstein
Ruth Fink — mother of Judy Harris
Ruth S. Friedman — mother of Joyce Wolpert
Anna Goldhirsh (Hannah) — grandmother of Judi Dash
Phillip Hack — father of Maureen Hack
James D. Manny — father of Meg Manny
Janet Mirow — mother of Deena Epstein
Martin Siegel — husband of Renee Siegel

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

HESED

We send condolences to Kol HaLev members **Larry, Jodi, Ilana and Ziv Solomon** on the loss of Larry's grandfather, Murray Solomon, may his memory be for a blessing. May Jodi, Larry and their entire family find comfort at this time of loss along with all those who are in mourning among the Jewish people and the world as a whole.

We send condolences to former Kol HaLev members **Sheryl and Denny Hirsh** on the loss of their daughter, Melissa Koppel, may her memory be a blessing. Sheryl, Denny and Melissa were active members of Kol HaLev for many years. Melissa celebrated becoming a Bat Mitzvah in our community and was part of the initial group of campers at Camp JRF. May Sheryl, Denny and their entire family find comfort at this time of loss, along with all those who are in mourning among the Jewish people and the world as a whole.

We send wishes for a *refuah shleimah*, a complete and speedy healing, to **Nina Glueckselig** and **Jodi Solomon**, who both are recovering from recent surgeries.

REMINDER:

THE KOL HALEV ANNUAL MEETING

SUN., JUNE 2, 2:00— 4:00 P.M.
AT THE RATNER SCHOOL

2013-14 KIDDUSH SIGN-UP

It's that time of year again – time to sign up to be for the Mitzvah of being a Kiddush Sponsor. Kiddush sponsorship is an obligation of each member, as voted on by the Board, and is fulfilled on a fiscal year basis (July 1 – June 30).

Below are the dates that are available. These are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, so please give your top three choices to Robin Shell at rshell@bernssockner.com or [216-482-6100](tel:216-482-6100).

The dates are subject to change due to ceremonies or special events not known at this time. **Please note that if you are unable to fulfill your Kiddush Sponsorship, it is your responsibility to find a substitute.** The deadline for requesting dates is **June 30**.

This year we have more Kiddushim than ever. **If you are able to either host a Kiddush on your own or would like to co-host more than one, please let Robin know.**

2013	2014
July 6	January 15 (Wed.) Tu B'Shvat Intergenerational program
July 13	January 18
July 20	January 24
July 26	January 25
July 27	February 1
August 3	February 8
August 10	February 15
August 17	February 22
August 24 Shabbat in the Park	February 28
August 31	March 1
August 31 Selichot Evening Service	March 8
Overall HHD Kiddush Coordinator	March 15
September 4 (Wed.) Erev Rosh Hashana	March 15 Purim Intergenerational Evening program
September 5 (Thu.) 1st Day RH	March 22
September 6 (Fri.) 2nd Day RH	March 28
September 7	March 29
September 14 (Sat.) Yom Kippur Neila	April 5
September 19 Sukkot	April 12
September 21	April 15 (Tues.) Passover Service
September 21 Sukkot pm program	April 19 (Passover)
September 25 (Wed.) Simchat Torah	April 21 (Wed.) Passover Service
September 26 (Thu.) Shemini Atzerat	April 25
September 27	April 26
September 28	May 3
October 5	May 10
October 12	May 17
October 19	May 17 Lag B'Omer evening program
October 25	May 24 Shabbat in the Park
October 26	May 30
November 2	May 31
November 9	June 4 (Wed) Shavuot (Dairy)
November 16	June 7
November 22	June 14
November 23	June 21
November 30	June 27 Shabbat in the garden
December 4 (Wed.) Hanukkah	June 28
December 7	
December 14	
December 21	
December 27	
December 28	

BOARD REPORT

MOLLY BERGER, SECRETARY

The board met on May 13 at the home of Molly Berger. After a D'var Torah by Barb Truitt with additions from Sue Pelleg, the board approved the April 2013 minutes. The board then approved a motion that enabled Barb to distribute the nominating committee's report via email during the next week, asking for the board's response via email as well.

Pete distributed a copy of the FY 2014 proposed budget. While the current FY's books are not yet completely reconciled, it looks as though we will have a surplus this year due to unexpended budget lines. Pete's plan for the FY14 budget is to streamline the number of budget lines. He is also in the process of researching old accounts so as to allocate funds appropriately into the various funds. There was a discussion about setting an inviolable threshold for the reserve fund and members suggested that this discussion be considered as a near-term agenda item for the board. Guidelines for managing the Presidents' Fund will be considered by the five past-presidents who now control the fund. Pete is also going to create a third account to physically separate restricted funds from the general fund.

The board then considered a number of proposed additions to the FY14 budget. They approved the following: 1) \$200 to co-sponsor a day-long dialogue and deliberation skills training session about Israel among Jewish community members from across the political and religious spectrum. 2) An addition of \$600 to the adult education budget for the Mock Trial education program 3) An increase of \$800 to the budget line for co-sponsorship of community events. Co-sponsorships still require board approval. 4) An additional \$1000 for marketing and outreach. 5) An additional \$1000 for camp scholarships and 6) \$150 for the Unity Mosque Sukkot dialogue. All declined wish list items will remain on the wish list for future consideration.

The board then entered into a lengthy and spirited discussion about the congregation's future direction and the recommendations of the Rabbi Support Task Force that focused on the need for rabbinic support. Several KHL past presidents attended the meeting to express their concerns that not enough informed discussion among the community has taken place as well as for the financial implications of the proposed increased staffing. Rabbi Steve explained that in the next year or two the community will need to address issues of growth and programming and whether or not we have adequate staffing to continue to function in the way that we would like to. Rabbi Steve noted that our current processes are rooted in an organizational structure that was far smaller and less complex. After a long discussion, three needs became apparent:

- 1) relieving some duties from Rabbi Steve
- 2) planning for the future
- 3) restructuring our organizational processes

The board advised that the task force write a clearer statement of needs and deliverables that addresses the concerns of financing and wider community involvement. The task force will continue its work keeping in mind the above stated goals. No action on the part of the board is needed at this point. The board will amend the budget at such time that a recommendation is made and accepted that requires additional funding. (For more detailed information on this issue, please see the president's letter on [page 8](#).)

[continued on page 8](#)

CHOOSING A FUTURE

As individuals, there are times when we are on automatic. We get up and do the same things every morning with a little variation, but basically on automatic. This is a good thing, because if we had to make conscious choices every second, every minute of every day, we would not function very well. Our brains are busily making automatic decisions and we are able to function and make the conscious decisions that make each day different and that allow us to grow as individuals and plan for our future.

The same is true for an organization. Our volunteers and staff are busy behind the scenes doing the routine and some not so routine things that help us to function so very well and to have interesting programs and services available throughout the year. Periodic conscious assessments about our future need to be conducted and need to involve many different people.

We have grown in numbers and programming through the past 18 years, changing from a havurah to a congregation. The choice to hire a full-time rabbi has allowed and encouraged our congregation to grow into a vibrant and creative community. The degree of involvement of our members in the programming and planning is extremely high. As a small community, we can be flexible so that if a member wants to start a new program, it can happen fairly easily. However, as we have grown, our structure has not changed significantly and we are finding organizational things have become more difficult.

The work of the Rabbi Congregational Review Committee that Greg Selker described in the [March issue of *Kol HaLev Happenings*](#) (page 11) focused not only on assessing our wonderful Rabbi, but on assessing *our community in its relationship to our Rabbi*. The report and its conclusions described in the article made it clear that because of our natural growth and commitment to specific strategic initiatives, Rabbi Steve needs to adjust how he allocates his time, and the community needs to now consider alternatives to how we can both support Rabbi Steve better, and introduce needed structure around some of our core programming.

To better identify the alternative approaches for us to do this, a task force was formed and the initial discussion was broadened to include a few more individuals to be representative across our community. This task force has met twice since March to discuss these issues and recently recommended to the board the consideration of hiring a consultant who could help us improve our organizational structures around volunteer management and communication so that we can make better use of our many members throughout our community who volunteer their efforts, and to provide Rabbi Steve more assistance in performing his functions.

At the current time, Rabbi Shawn Zevit is also exploring various options for his future. Due to their existing friendship and Rabbi Shawn's experience with JRF in providing assistance to communities and Rabbis at critical junctures of growth, Rabbi Steve reached out to Rabbi Shawn and they have begun discussing the possibility of Rabbi Shawn working together with Rabbi Steve and the Kol HaLev community as a consultant. This joint discussion has already begun to help Rabbi Steve clarify his thoughts on his rabbinical needs and how he views as our organizational needs for the

[continued on page 8](#)

FROM OUR PRESIDENT, [continued from page 7](#)
future.

It is important that the Kol HaLev community understand that the discussions about hiring a consultant who would be able to help us best plan for our organizational future is still in the early discussion stage. The Rabbi Support Task Force is still meeting and looking at alternatives. These will in turn be brought to the board for discussion. It is important to improve our organizational infrastructure to better support Rabbi Steve so that our continued growth will maintain our communal culture.

We will be holding several parlor meetings to better inform the community and discuss these issues as we move ahead with one or more alternatives that will be recommended by the task force and approved by the board. If we do move ahead with engaging a consultant to help address some of these issues, we want to have clear goals and structures in place to maximize the benefits that we can gain from the consultation. We will need to have a committee to work with the consultant so that the recommendations will be fully understood by the community and implemented in the most sustainable manner.

We are a caring, co-creative and active community. As we move together into our future, we need to have a strong foundation organizationally so that we can work effectively together. We have come a long way from when Rabbi Jeffrey first met with our founding members and formed a havurah. We are a growing and thriving full service congregation and community which has a strong future with many more programs and much personal growth possible. I look forward to walking down this path with you as we collectively create and explore our expanded future.

BOARD REPORT, [continued from page 6](#)

Bill Scher-Marcus brought the final agenda item up for discussion, that of staffing for second Shabbat services. The Religious Practices Committee proposes to hire a congregant to lead the service because we do not have members who can take on this monthly commitment. The board approved a motion to add \$1200 to the budget to fund a stipend for the Second Shabbat service leader. Applications for the position will be solicited.

The Annual Meeting will be held at Ratner on Sunday, June 2, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. All members are requested to attend.

The next board meeting (Old/New Board) will be on Monday, June 10, at Barry Epstein's home. The dates and hosts for FY 2014 board meetings will be determined at that meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly W. Berger



KVELLS: Grads and Granddads (and Grandmoms) Edition

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES:



Taylor Elgart

Congratulations to **Taylor Elgart**, son of **Traci and Scott Elgart**, who will graduate from Shaker Heights High School on June 13, 2013. Taylor plans to study business in the fall at Baldwin-Wallace College.

Mazal tov to **Isabel Robertson**, daughter of **Pete Robertson and Heidi Gorovitz Robertson**, who is graduating from Shaker Heights High School. She will be attending Northwestern University (Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences) in the fall. Isabel received a National Merit award from Northwestern.

Yasher koach to **Maxwell Barnett**, son of **Halle and Benjamin Barnett**, who is graduating from Beachwood High School. He will attend Ithaca College honors program on a Presidents' Scholarship. Maxwell is also a National Merit Finalist and the recipient of this year's Agnon Alumni Scholarship.

Congratulations to **David Litwin**, son of **Kirby Date and Richard Litwin**, who is will graduate from Beachwood High School on June 9, 2013. David plans to attend the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the fall and to double-major in physics and double bass performance.



David Litwin

COLLEGE GRADUATES:

Yasher koach to **Rebecca Lieberman**, daughter of **Karel Stern and Arthur Lieberman**, who graduated from The Ohio State University with Honors Distinction in Neuroscience. She will be attending University of Cincinnati Medical School in the Fall.



Jacob Rapport

Mazal tov to **Jacob Rapport**, son of **Ken and Barbara Messinger-Rapport**, who graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Music degree. Jacob's major was jazz piano. He has taken a job with Standard Register in Dayton, Ohio where he will be working in customer relations.

Susan Golden writes: "Kudos to my nephew, Dr. David E. Sloane, newly-promoted Assistant Professor at the Harvard Medical School, who received his Master of Education degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education on May 30. David is planning to transform medical education, applying complex dynamical systems to the medical encounter. I am not quite sure what a "complex dynamical system" is, but if more physicians-in-training came out doctoring as David does, we could all relax about getting old!"

NEW GRANDKIDS:

Congratulations to **Rabbi Jeffrey and Deb Schein** on their new grandson. He is named Aryeh Tzvi in honor of maternal grandmother Alice Goldman and in memory of his cousin Steven Kanee. He and his brother, Ilan (age 5) and sister Talia (age 3) live with their abba and mom in Minneapolis.

Mazal tov to **Leah Kamionkowski**, whose granddaughter, Alexandra, was born to Jennifer, the partner of Leah's daughter Tamar. Leah says that the new baby has become part of the "girls gang on Cedar Road" — Tamar, Tali, Jennifer and Alexandra — and that, "All four girls are very happy, but could use a bit more sleep."

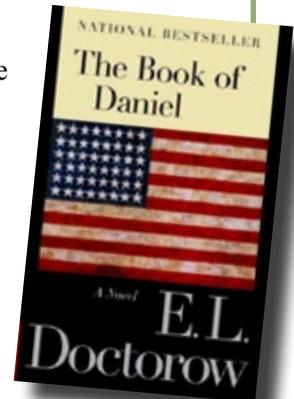


Did you miss our call for Grad Kvels? Send news of your graduate to newsletter@kolhalev.net for next month's newsletter.

HUG HASEFER: BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The June book group meeting will be Thursday, June 27 at the home Anna and Sam Kelman. We will discuss *The Book of Daniel: A Novel* by E. L. Doctorow. (320 pages, a Kindle version exists)

From the inside flap: The central figure of this novel is a young man whose parents were executed for conspiring to steal atomic secrets for Russia. His name is Daniel Isaacson, and as the story opens, his parents have been dead for many years. He has had a long time to adjust to their deaths. He has not adjusted. Out of the shambles of his childhood, he has constructed a new life: marriage to an adoring girl, who gives him a son of his own, and a career in scholarship. It is a life that enrages him. In the silence of the library at Columbia University, where he is supposedly writing a Ph.D. dissertation, Daniel composes something quite different. It is a confession of his most intimate relationships: with his wife, his foster parents, and his kid sister Susan, whose own radicalism so reproaches him.



It is a book of memories: riding a bus with his parents to the ill-fated Paul Robeson concert in Peekskill; watching the FBI take his father away; appearing with Susan at rallies protesting their parents' innocence; visiting his mother and father in the Death House. It is a book of investigation: transcribing Daniel's interviews with people who knew his parents, or who knew about them and logging his strange researches and discoveries in the library stacks. It is a book of judgments of everyone involved in the case: lawyers, police, informers, friends, and the Isaacson family itself. It is a book rich in characters from elderly grandmothers of immigrant culture to covert radicals of the McCarthy era to hippie marchers on the Pentagon. It is a book that spans the quarter-century of American life since World War II. It is a book about the nature of Left politics in this country: its sacrificial rites, its peculiar cruelties, its humility, its bitterness. It is a book about some of the beautiful and terrible feelings of childhood. It is about the nature of guilt and innocence and about the relations of people to nations.

The book for July is *Major Farran's Hat: The Untold Story of the Struggle to Establish the Jewish State* by David Cesarani. The calendar of books for all of 2013 is listed at the web page shown below. All KHL members are welcome to attend. For more information about the group, look at our web page (http://www.kolhalev.net/book_group) and contact Kevin Weidenbaum (KJW@oberlin.net) to be added to the group's email list.



No'ar Hadash teenagers gather at the Segar-Getz home before heading out for a day of fun at Kalahari water park last month.

Kol HaLev Absentee Ballot Board of Trustees Election 2013

This absentee ballot is to be used by all members unable to attend the annual meeting to be held on June 2nd, 2013 at 2 - 4 pm. Please return the attached ballot to the Kol HaLev office, or email your vote to Kelli Birch at the KHL office by May 30, 2013.

Slate of Officers and Board Members

New Officers and Board Members

Values Team Leader Welcoming and Caring – Jean Miller for two-year term
Member at Large – Kirby Date for two-year term
Member at Large – Julio Pelsmajer for two-year term

Continuing Board Members

President – Barb Truitt for second year of two-year term
First Vice President – Halle Barnett for second year of two-year term
Secretary – Molly Berger for second year of second term
Treasurer – Pete Robertson for second year of first term
Values Team Leader Learning – Sue Kisch for second year of first term
Values Team Leader Democratic & Fiscally Responsible – Barry Epstein for second year of second term
Values Team Leader Participation & Volunteering – Leah Kamionkowski for second year of second term
Values Team Leader Spiritual – Bill Scher-Marcus for second year of first term
Member at Large – Elise Hagesfeld for second year of second term
Member at Large – Margaret Cohen for second year of first term
Member at Large – Lynn Leibling for second year of two-year term

Ex Officio Board Members

Immediate Past President – Greg Selker
Founding Rabbi– Rabbi Jeffrey Schein
Rabbi – Rabbi Steve Segar
Educational Director – Robyn Novick

_____ I vote in favor of Nominating Slate

_____ I vote against Nominating Slate

Member Name (s) _____

Submit this absentee vote by May 30, 2013 by

1. Emailing this ballot to Kelli Birch at kelli@kolhalev.net or
2. Mailing a paper copy of this ballot to Kelli at 2245 Warrensville Center Rd Suite 215, University Heights, OH 44118

CONNECTIONS, [continued from page 1](#)

mattresses, we had packed a melamine seder plate, stainless Kiddush cup, copies of *The 30-Minute Seder* and a box of matzah in our checked luggage that miraculously arrived intact. We had an intimate and slightly reconstructed seder sitting cross-legged on the floor of our apartment, feeling a little like the Israelites who had just fled *Mitzrayim* (Egypt), also carrying matzah but with fewer pieces of luggage.

The pain began when our pint-sized shipping container arrived on April 12. We had packed no more and no less than what we needed for life in a 175-square meter apartment (read: way smaller than the house we had just vacated) . . . or so we thought. Midway through the unload, I began to wonder where we were going to put everything. As we unboxed everything over the coming days and



Unpacking the shipping container and finding a home for all the “stuff.”

weeks, the mover’s words rang in my ears: “Two of everything.” Whatever I touched seemed to pose questions. “Why did we bring this?” “Did we need BOTH of these?” “Where are we going to put all of these clothes?” “How many times are we going to even touch that item?” “What were we thinking when we bought / kept / packed that?” And so on. It became—and remains—a very painful process that led to a second layer of philosophical, ethical and existential questions. “How and why did we accumulate so much?” “What else could we have done with that \$100?” “Are we bad people, greedy, acquisitive or something else?” “Do we put too much value on physical possessions?” My heart ached and my head hurt.

“What to do? Well, I have not yet given away all my material possessions or cut up my credit cards . . .”

Pesach Sheni, the Second Passover, fell on April 24 this year. Traditionally, we eat some matzah on this day along with our “normal” foods that include chametz (the leaven forbidden during the “first” Pesach). A few days prior to Pesach Sheni, the weekly Chabad e-newsletter arrived with a featured article “[Addicted to Chametz?](#)” by Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum. I felt as though he had written it just for me. In the article, he likens chametz to our personal obsessions like caffeine, smart phones and e-mail. His is not an anti-technology or anti-Starbucks rant.

Merely he argues: (1) everything in moderation, (2) we should not become overly reliant on physical things to the detriment of our relationships or our real tasks in life and (3) it may be necessary to go “cold turkey”—as we do with chametz during Pesach—in order to maintain control over our would-be obsessions. As I munched my matzah on Pesach Sheni, the truth hit me like ice water in the face: I am addicted to chametz. My life is too focused on possessions. They are mostly good and legitimate things, but the problem is that sometimes they consume too much of my attention, energy and resources and distract me from people and situations that need and deserve that attention instead.

What to do? Well, I have not yet given away all my material possessions or cut up my credit cards. However, I have acknowledged my problem and, I believe, begun to think differently about how “stuff” fits into my life. This new perspective has started to influence my decision-making process. Perhaps that translation of thought into action is the most important part of confronting this object lesson. It’s amazing how an offhand comment and a little matzah can stimulate your thought process.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Kol HaLev gratefully acknowledges contributions from:

- **Rachel Kay** in honor of Sarah Moritz's Bat Mitzvah and appreciation to Rabbi Steve
- **Marjory Klein** in memory of Paul Gellman
- **Julio and Aurelia Pelsmajer** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Julio's mother, Dora Pelsmajer
- **Mario and Roberta Tonti** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Roberta's mother, Charlotte Dangler
- **Caryn Groedel** in memory of Helen Zipper, Lynn Liebling's mother
- **Arnie Berger** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Arnie's mother, Pauline Zuckman
- **Ralph and Selma Gwatkin** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Selma's sister, Sylvia Oken
- **Frederick and Beth Friedman-Romell** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Beth's father, Seymour Friedman
- **Frederick and Beth Friedman-Romell** in memory of Lynn Liebling's mother, Helen Zipper
- **Frederick and Beth Friedman-Romell** in honor of the births of Jeffrey and Deb Schein's grandson and Leah Kamionkowski's granddaughter
- **Dick and Deena Epstein** in honor of Esther Millas's Bat Mitzvah
- **Happy Wallach** in memory of Helen Zipper and of Jerry Cowherd.



GCC Health Care Team Action: The political situation in Columbus is in flux but looking somewhat positive for Medicaid expansion, thanks in part to our continued efforts. There is some movement to do the Ohio Plan version of "Medicaid Reform" (basically expansion) outside of the budget process. In late May, GCC volunteers, including quite a few Kol HaLev members, went out to canvass with phenomenal success! Through face-to-face conversations with neighbors at their doorsteps in Solon, we found over 120 people who pledged to call State Representative Marlene Anielski encouraging her to support extending health care coverage through Medicaid reform. The canvassing initiative was included in [this terrific story on Medicaid Expansion in the Plain Dealer](http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2013/05/kasichs_medicaid_expansion_wou.html). There have also been recent articles highlighting the rally GCC helped organize in Columbus and the positive impact of possible Medicaid expansion for Ohio's veterans and working poor:

http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2013/05/kasichs_medicaid_expansion_wou.html
http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2013/05/ohio_house_bill_would_expand_m.html#incart_river

We could really accomplish this by July if we stay with it!

GCC Criminal Justice Team: Work is progressing on the gun violence prevention research team towards an action related to gun shows in our region. For more information or if you would like to work on this campaign, please contact Donna Weinberger at drw508@gmail.com or 440-781-8662.

CALENDAR

For the most up-to-date Kol HaLev calendar, please visit <http://kolhalev.net/calendar>.

Sat., June 1	9:45 a.m.	Shabbat Service and Bat Mitzvah of Esther Millas; <i>Shelah</i> ; Service leaders: Esther and Rabbi Steve. Kiddush hosted by Greg and Pam Millas in honor of Esther becoming a Bat Mitzvah
Sun., June 2	2:00-4:00 p.m.	Kol HaLev Annual Meeting at Ratner School
Mon., June 3	7:30– 8:30 p.m.	Executive Committee Meeting.
Sat., June 8	10:30 a.m.	Member-Led Shabbat Service at Ratner Chapel; <i>Korach</i> ; Service and Discussion Leader: Larry Solomon; The Torah discussion will take place within the service. Kiddush hosted Barb Truitt
	3:30-5:00 p.m.	Torah Study Location and study topic TBA
Mon., June 11	7:30 - 8:30 p.m	Board Meeting at the home of Barry and Barbara Epstein, 24530 Twickenham Drive, Beachwood. All Kol HaLev members are welcome to attend
Tue., June 12	8:30-9:30 a.m.	Schmooze with the Rabbi at the Stone Oven on Lee Rd. (Note: This is the final schmooze until after the 2013 High Holy Days.)
Sat., June 15	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Service , preceded by Torah Discussion at 9:30 a.m.. at Ratner Chapel; Shabbat Service; <i>Chukat</i> ; Discussion leader: Kareen Caputo; Service Leaders: Leah Kamionkowski and Rabbi Steve. Kiddush cohosted by Emory Petrack and Sammy Greenspan and by Maxine Collin
Mon., June 17	Deadline for the July issue of <i>Kol HaLev Happenings</i>.	
Wed., June 19	7:30-9:00 p.m..	GCC Core Team Meeting
Sat., June 22	10:30 a.m.	Musical Shabbat Service at Ratner Chapel; <i>Balak</i> ; Discussion and Service Leader: Rabbi Steve. Kiddush co-sponsored by Hannah and Daniel Baxter in honor of their wedding anniversary and by David Roberts and Lila Hanft in honor of their wedding anniversary.
Sun., June 23	7-8:30 p.m.	Wrestling With Prayer at the home of Karly Whitaker and Steven Tanner, 1171 Sylvania Rd. Cleveland Hts., The topic is “Prayer and Non-Dual Judaism-Part II.” Note from Rabbi Steve : “Discussion will be based on the reading we did not get to last time from Jay Michaelson’s book, <i>Everything is God</i> . If you did not get the reading last time or if you no longer have it, let me know and I can send it out to you.”

CALENDAR

Wed., June 26	7-8:30 p.m..	Mindful Jewish Practice at Nancy Rubel's office, 24755 Chagrin Blvd., #305. Please RSVP to karlywhitaker@yahoo.com
Thu., June 27	7:30-9:00	Hug HaSefer Book Group at the home Anna and Sam Kelman, 2072 Campus Road, South Euclid. Discussion of <i>The Book of Daniel: A Novel</i> by E. L. Doctorow (more information on page 11)
Fri., June 28	6-8:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat and Potluck at the home of Julio and Aurelia Pelsmajer, 24615 Sittingbourne Lane, Beachwood. Kiddush sponsor: Aurelia and Julio Pelsmajer and Jonathan and Amy Herzenstein. Potluck dishes should serve 8-10 peopls, be vegetarian/dairy or parve and SHOULD NOT CONTAIN NUTS. A-H: main dish I-P: salads/side dishes Q-Z: dessert or drink <i>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</i>
Sat., June 28	10:30 a.m.	Experiential Shabbat Service at Ratner Chapel; Pinchas; Service leader: Rabbi Steve; Kiddish co-sponsored by Susan Golden in memory of her mother, Fay Bauer Landau, whose birthday is 6/29, and by Julie and Louis Handler

DISCLAIMER: *The newsletter calendar is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication. Be aware, however, that dates and venues for Kol HaLev events do sometimes change. To keep abreast of changes, you can open and read the Weekly Update email which is sent to all members each Thursday (Don't get the update? Email kelli@kolhalev.net). Alternately, you can check Kol HaLev's [website calendar](#).*

HOW TO MAKE SURE YOUR MEETING OR SPECIAL EVENT IS LISTED ON THE KHL CALENDAR:

To submit an event or meeting to the calendar, send the event information -- the title of the event, with the date, time, location, and contact information -- to calendar@kolhalev.net (if you don't use email, you can give the information to Kelli at Kol HaLev office at 216-320-1498).

Once your meeting or event is entered into the Kol HaLev calendar, it will automatically be included in the calendars published in the newsletter, the weekly update and on the website.

To include a longer article or flyer about an upcoming event in this monthly newsletter, please send text and images to newsletter@kolhalev.net by the 15th of the previous month.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Kol HaLev Happenings is the newsletter of Kol HaLev, Cleveland's Reconstructionist Jewish Community. This digital newsletter can be read onscreen in Adobe Reader or printed out on paper. Please email newsletter@kolhalev.net with comments, complaints, corrections, suggestions, or notices for upcoming issues. [Back issues of Kol HaLev Happenings](#) can be downloaded from the [Kol HaLev website](#).

Kol HaLev Happenings

The Newsletter of Cleveland's Reconstructionist Jewish Community

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