

Kol HaLev Happenings

The Newsletter of Cleveland's Jewish Reconstructionist Community

AUGUST 2012

A YOUTH DIRECTOR, A SPRING SHABBATON & MORE

BY ROBYN NOVICK

It has been a very busy summer in the Kol HaLev office. Many changes are in the works for youth and families for this coming year. While many details are still being hammered out, we are excited to share new initiatives that are in the works. These initiatives include our biannual Shabbaton (which

HAGIGA HAPPENINGS

will take place April 26-28), special projects at Hagiga, summer camp programs, a Hebrew program, as well as reinvigorating our high school youth group. These initiatives are possible due to significant funding from the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland and the Jewish Community Federation, for which we are very grateful.

Over the past few years, the youth group has been dwindling. Recognizing the importance of infor-



Ma'ayan Marcus

mal education, as well as the need for a venue for our teens to connect to Kol HaLev, we made rebuilding the youth group a priority. We realized that first we needed to find the right person, one who knew the Kol HaLev community, related well with our teens, as well as had a background in youth work. After many

months of searching, we hired Ma'ayan Scher-Marcus to join our education team as our Youth Director, working with our high school youth group, grades 8-12.

Ma'ayan has a great deal of experience working [continued on page 4](#)

BAR MITZVAH

Please join us as our son
MAXWELL SCHUBERT

is called to the Torah
as a Bar Mitzvah

Saturday, August 25, 2012
at 10:00 a.m.

The whole Kol HaLev community
is invited to join us for a kiddush
luncheon following the service.

Please RSVP by August 11, 2012 to
schuberg@roadrunner.com

DAVE AND MARTHA SCHUBERT

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DIRECTORY

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Anita Cohn

David Conn

WEBSITE

Benjamin Barnett

Brian Miller

WEEKLY UPDATE

Art Lieberman

YOUTH AND FAMILY EDUCATION

Lynn Liebling

YOUNG FAMILIES/TOT SHABAT

Rachel Williams

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15

CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH, PART 3

This month, I would like to continue to explore the categories of congregational growth described by Episcopal priest Loren Mead in his book, *More than Numbers*, as they apply to Kol HaLev. Last month, we took a look at what he calls “maturational growth,” which deals with the extent to which members of a religious community have a vibrant and meaningful relationship with their religious tradition.



This month, I would like to focus on what Mead calls “organic growth.” This type of growth is measured by looking at the development of the structures and practices that bring coherence to the collective life of a congregation at both the institutional and interpersonal levels.

Reflecting on the path that Kol HaLev has taken over the past several years, I think we have seen significant growth in this arena. We have become mindful of the importance of having more than a short-range set of goals and have invested much time and energy in the creation and use of a strategic plan, which we recently revised and updated. In addition to the strategic plan, we have created Values Teams which draw on the synergies and creativity that results when we bring together distinctive but related community functions on regular basis. As a group, the leaders of the Values Teams have become responsible for guiding the programmatic end of KHL activities. This allows the board to dedicate its time in the appropriate areas of policy, visioning and fiscal well-being.

In addition to these important structural developments, we’ve grown organically in another important way over the past several years: we’ve increased our capacity to care for one another when one of us is going through a challenging time. A large amount of time and energy has been invested in strengthening the Hesed (or loving kindness) dynamic within the Kol HaLev community over the past two years and we have reinstated the role of the monthly Hesed coordinator: each month a different Kol HaLev member serves as the go-to person when someone is in need of support in any way. We have been learning how to make use of a wonderful internet tool, called Lotsa Helping Hands (<https://www.lotsahelpinghands.com/c/630370/>) which provides an easy and powerful way for members to learn of and our other members’ needs and take part in helping to address those needs.

But perhaps most impressive of all is that the number of people involved in coordinating Hesed activities and participating in them has increased, and I think there is no better sign
[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.

HAGIGA HAPPENINGS, [continued from page 1](#)

with youth. She is a former USY member and youth leader, BBYO advisor, as well as Hillel peer leader. Her youth group days began in Dallas, Texas where she was the freshman representative to the USY board at her synagogue. When she reflects on that time, she shares that USY gave her the space to build strong peer relationships in a Jewish context, as well as gave her the opportunity to simultaneously grow religiously and socially.

Ma'ayan's enthusiasm and energy is contagious, which you can feel just speaking with her. Ma'ayan shares that she always enjoyed being an advisor because it makes her hold herself to a higher standard. If she is to be a role model for youth, she is conscious that she is living the values that she is teaching. She also deeply likes the role of a youth advisor, as it allows her to provide guidance to teens, as they are going through a period of rapid growth, on their way to becoming independent young adults.

Ma'ayan is presently pursuing a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from Cleveland State University. Her goal is to become a midwife, so she can utilize her love of science, as well as her desire to help others. Her desire came after shadowing Rachel Kay for her Senior Project while at Shaker Heights High School. To enhance her time at CSU even further, Ma'ayan is going to be the president of the CSU Hillel board this year.

In June, Ma'ayan organized an end of the year event, a trip to Cedar Point, where 13 teens spent the day socializing with each other and having a great time. We look forward to many more great events! The first event of the 2012-2013 school year will be an ice cream social on **Sunday, August 26 from 2-5 p.m. at the Scher-Marcus home**. Keep an eye out for a youth group facebook page, which will have all the details.

Welcome Ma'ayan! We look forward to a great year!

Kol Tuv,

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

of organic growth for our community. We live in a society that tends to divide the people we know into the categories of friends and acquaintances, but one of the values for many religious communities, including Kol HaLev, is the affirmation of a third category that falls somewhere in between friend and acquaintance: that category is fellow community member. Of course there are (and should be) overlaps between friends and fellow members, but the somewhat countercultural message of our group is that you don't have to be someone's friend in order to play the role of supportive community member when they are in need. It's clear to me that more and more of us are feeling open to that perspective, especially after we have been on either the giving or receiving end of this kind of communal support. (You can read more about our High Holy Days Hesed initiative on [page 10](#)).

As we prepare to conclude this year of our sacred calendar and to begin a new one, may we continue to grow in this important and life enhancing way.



The month of Elul, which starts August 19, is a traditional time for reflection in preparation for the High Holy Days. Throughout the month, the shofar is blown after morning prayers, its sharp sounds a call to reflect upon how our actions affect others and the world around us. If we take the time to observe others near to us, if we take the time to listen to what others have to say, and if we take the time to realize the impact our decisions have on the environment, we will be richer.

When I was asked to join the board four years ago, I agreed, knowing that I would be becoming more involved and that I would be spending time in meetings and doing more for the community. My increased involvement has led to a growing appreciation of and gratitude for the work our members do for Kol HaLev. We are the beneficiaries of the many talents of people.

For example, I occasionally leave our services to walk around the building, often discovering that there are as many if not more Kol Halev members engaged in other areas of the building. Rachel Williams and Robin Shell might be leading the Tot Shabbat service, which they have done for a number of years. In addition, our *magshimim* -- the parents, grandparents and other volunteers who teach in our unique Hagiga program -- may be busy in classrooms and open areas of the building, creating educational experiences for our younger members

When we have services in the larger auditorium, as we do during the High Holy Days and for many b'nai mitzvah, the services can be live-streamed to members of our congregation and families who are prevented by physical constraints from attending in person. Local members of our congregation whose health or transportation issues make it difficult to attend in person now have the option to watch from home. Far-flung friends (like Judy Vida in California) and family (like the members of the extended Scher-Marcus family in Israel) have been able to watch services. Many thanks Brian Miller for the set-up and web-hosting of our live-streaming.

Those are just a few examples of how members give back to Kol HaLev. If you're wondering how you might give back, keep in mind that new in this year's budget is a "provisional" category, a wish list of items which are not currently funded but are considered important to our community in the long run. Your time is also a valuable donation; our programs are sometimes more limited than we'd like because we run short on people power.

Think about what you value most in our community and then consider finding a way to support that activity and ways to improve it. Many thanks to all those who are already involved in making our congregation a community.

HESSED

We send *refuah shleimah* and continued healing to **Ginny Nadler** and **Lynn Liebling**, who are both recovering from surgery. In addition, *refuah shleimah* to **Sandy Rosenfield**, who is recovering from fractured ribs sustained in a car accident earlier this month.

THE HIGH HOLY DAYS ARE COMING

Rosh Hashanah begins the evening of Sun., Sept. 16. Yom Kippur starts the evening of Tues., Sept. 25. All services will be held at Ratner School. High Holy Days information and registration packets will be emailed to members in August with details about the times and locations of services and related events. Please contact Judy Herdering in the office (216-320-1498 or judy@kolhalev.net) if you do not receive your packet by the end of August. If you have any questions, please call one of the chairs of this year's High Holy Days committee, Marcia Goldberg (marcia.goldberg@gmail.com) or Claudia Weissman (cweissman@overdrive.com or 216-321-2774).



During the High Holy Days, Kol HaLev members draw together to reaffirm our community and to welcome others who would like to join us during this season. As always, we will host a kiddush after each Rosh Hashanah service and after the final Yom Kippur service. And once again this year we will host a Rosh Hashanah potluck-plus-catered luncheon after services on the first day. The Tashlich service will follow the luncheon, and maps to the site will be available at Monday's Rosh Hashanah services.

As the weeks go by, watch for additional information about the High Holy Days on the Kol HaLev website (<http://www.kolhalev.net>) and in emailed Weekly or Special Updates.

TISHRI MEMBERSHIP

Our Tishri membership is a warm and welcoming way to invite nonmembers to share the month of Tishri and the High Holy Days with us. A description of our Tishri members' benefits will be included in your High Holy Day packet. If you know anyone interested, please contact Judy Herdering at the Kol HaLev office, 216-320-1498 or judy@kolhalev.net.

HIGH HOLY DAYS PRAYER BOOKS

Kol HaLev members are expected to own their HHD *mahzorim* (prayer books). Those that Kol HaLev owns are reserved for Tishri members and our guests. Mahzorim may be purchased from the Reconstructionist Press (<http://stores.jewishreconbooks.org/StoreFront.bok>) or by contacting Beverly Vitek at JewishReconBooks@rrc.edu or 215-576-0800.

HIGH HOLY DAYS CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

All children's programming on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur will begin at 10:30 a.m. Tot-par-

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ent programming will start at 11 a.m. Parents, please bring games, toys and books for children to enjoy while they're not in services. And please also bring parve snacks and beverages for the children.

HIGH HOLY DAYS INFORMATION TABLES

Any team leader, committee chair or other member who would like to display or distribute information on tables set up for the High Holy Days should contact Marcia Goldberg (marcia.goldberg@gmail.com). Mazon envelopes will be available on the information table for those wishing to make a financial contribution to combat hunger.



HIGH HOLY DAYS FLOWER FUND

The High Holy Days are an appropriate time to honor loved ones and memorialize those who are no longer with us. A contribution in honor or in memory of someone can help cover the cost of flowers for our bima. Please mail your donation, along with a note about your loved one, to Kol HaLev, 2245 Warrensville Center Road, Suite 215, University Heights, OH 44118. All donations will be acknowledged in a fall issue of this newsletter.

HIGH HOLY DAYS KIDDUSHIM AND ROSH HASHANAH LUNCHEON

Our High Holy kiddushim will be organized again this year by Maureen Hack. She and Robin Shell, our kiddush coordinator, are looking for volunteers to provide hallah, apples, honey, wine, juice and desserts or snacks for all three Rosh Hashanah services and for the conclusion of Yom Kippur. In addition, every other member of the congregation is asked to bring at least ONE finger-food treat or snack on at least ONE day. We have never let each other down.

The congregational luncheon following services on the first day of Rosh Hashanah has become a Kol HaLev tradition. This year we are planning to once again combine our very best potluck contributions with some purchased or catered food. If you would like to serve on the luncheon committee, please contact Claudia Weissman (cweissman@overdrive.com or 216-321-2774) or Marcia Goldberg (marcia.goldberg@gmail.com).

BREAKING-THE-FAST INVITATION

Kol HaLev would like to invite you to a potluck dinner in a member's home for the Break-the-Fast meal after Yom Kippur services. If you are interested, please indicate this on your registration form and please also indicate whether you prefer an early meal or one that begins after the conclusion of the Neilah service. You will be notified about which host home to contact.

BOARD REPORT

The July 9 board meeting at Halle Barnett's home began with a short D'var Torah by Alan Weinstein and a general discussion about the goals and responsibilities of the newly installed board, both individually and collectively.

The board discussed GFS Marketplace, an open-to-the-public food service/grocery chain with a new store near Cedar Center, which offers a variety of fundraising programs to benefit customers' organizations of choice. Halle Barnett will contact the store to learn more about programs that may be of benefit to Kol HaLev and our member families, in particular a program in which Kol HaLev earns a rebate based on member family purchases at the store (<http://www.gfs.com/en>).

Robyn Novick reported that we were approved to receive funding from the Retreat Institute to support our Shabbaton. Israel-based educator Jen Glaser will be making a short presentation at our August board meeting about youth educational methods for teaching of the weekly parashah. Robyn filed an application with the JECC for a new \$12,000 educational grant; based on early feedback she is optimistic of approval. The board unanimously approved a policy permitting KHL to hire members on a case by case basis to perform defined job functions for our congregation. The board unanimously approved a motion authorizing Robyn Novick to hire members as Hebrew tutors at her discretion once funding is in place.

The religious practices and executive committees will be starting an assessment of the level of administrative and rabbinical support needed by our growing congregation. The next board meeting will be at Mon. Aug. at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Molly Berger, 19744 Chagrin Boulevard, Shaker Heights. All Kol HaLev members are welcome to attend.

GREATER CLEVELAND CONGREGATIONS

GCC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jobs: The Job Hunter's Group continues to meet Tuesdays at 7 p.m., and Thursdays at 8 a.m. at Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Ave., Cleveland. This is an invaluable resource for those looking to update their resume, network with others or get advice on all aspects of job seeking.

Education: Now that the contents of the levy for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District has been made public, we will begin a process of discernment within our congregation around whether GCC should formally support it. With that in mind, you are invited to attend a House Meeting on Thurs. Aug. 16 at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Karly Whitaker. It is important for us to hear what the members of the Kol HaLev community think about the levy. Please RSVP to karlywhitaker@yahoo.com.

Save the Date!

Some of the most rewarding experiences in GCC come through the relationships we have developed with members of other faith communities. We are pleased to announce that we have been invited to participate in a worship service and post-service dialogue at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church on Sun. Aug. 26. Details to follow!

For more information, please contact: GCC chair Allen Binstock, Rabbi Steve, Rabbi Shawn, education chairs Karly Whitaker and Lynn Liebling, healthcare chairs Donna and Dick Weinberger and jobs chairs Allen Binstock and Greg Millas.

Yahrzeits

They are now a part of us, as we remember them

Members of Kol HaLev will mark the following yahrzeits during August:

Arthur Cowles – stepfather of Kirby Date
Ethel Calvert – mother of Julie Handler
Ralph L. Gwatkin – father of Ralph Gwatkin
Albert Lawrence Dangler – father of Roberta Tonti
Edward Katz – father of Barbara Epstein
Harry Abraham Dudwick – father of Nancy Dudwick
Minnie Epstein – grandmother of Barry Epstein
Victor Gilletz – grandfather of Michal Scher-Marcus
Irving Louis Landau (Yehuda Lev Landau) – father of Susan Golden
Walter Chabot – father of Audrey Warner
Lily Brunschwig Marks – mother of Phyllis Maris
Emanuel H. Hecht – father of Nancy Hecht
John Date – father of Kirby Date
Lewis Weidenbaum – father of Kevin Weidenbaum

Kol HaLev members may include the yahrzeit of family 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 Judy@kolhalev.net.

Contributions

Kol HaLev gratefully acknowledges contributions from:

- **Mario and Roberta Tonti** in celebration of our children's graduations: Jenni received an MBA from HAAS School of Business, University of California, Berkeley and Mathew & Julie Tonti have completed their two year programs from Shalom Hartian Institute, Melamdim School for Teacher Education, Jerusalem, Israel
- **Nancy Rubel and Daniel Klein** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Nancy's father, Herbert Rubel
- **Barbara and Barry Epstein** in memory of Marianne Lax's father, Marty Lax
in memory of Anne Adamson's husband, Charles Adamson
in memory of Beth Friedman-Romell's father, Seymour Friedman
in memory of Judy Harris's mother, Ruth Fink
- **Ruth Ness** in memory of Anne Adamson's husband, Charles Adamson
- **Happy Wallach** to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in honor of Leah Kamionkowski's new grandson and in honor of Rabbi Shawn Zevit and Halle Barnett and their contributions to the Reconstructionist movement
- **Nancy Dudwick** in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Nancy's father, Harry A. Dudwick
- **Dick and Deena Epstein** in memory of Judy Harris's mother, Ruth Fink
in memory of Beth Friedman-Romell's father, Seymour Friedman
in honor of the birth of Leah Kamionkowski's grandson

JOIN OUR HIGH HOLY DAYS HESED DRIVE



As many of you know, the Hesed committee has been working to revitalize and organize our efforts as well as to integrate the values of Hesed (loving-kindness) more deeply into the culture of Kol HaLev.

As part of this effort, we are initiating our First Annual “Hesed Drive.”

In the same way that we engage in fundraising efforts, we would like to deepen our community’s commitment to caring for one another. Our goal is to sign up 36 new Hesed volunteers by the end of the High Holy Days to join in our efforts.

What is a Hesed volunteer? Someone who can be called upon to fulfill particular needs as they arise. You can sign up to help with whatever area fits your availability and interests. These areas currently include:

- child care
- transportation
- social calls and visits
- shopping
- hospital calls and visits
- meals/meal delivery
- shiva visits/minyan attendance
- moving households/belongings
- computer tech support



Be on the lookout for other components of the KHL Hesed drive in the months leading up to the Holy Days and beyond. And remember that you don’t need to wait to join us! Contact Hesed Chair Jane Arnoff Logsdon at janealogsdon@gmail.com or 216-375-0093. You can also learn more at the KHL Hesed coordination site: <https://www.lotsahelpinghands.com/c/630370/>.

ADULT EDUCATION

ELUL

The adult education committee has planned two workshops for the month of Elul, the time of self-reflection leading up to the Days of Awe. Look for topics and locations to be announced in the Weekly Update:

Elul Session 1: Sun. Aug. 19, 7:30 p.m

Elul Session 2: Sun. Aug. 26, 7:30p.m

RECON 101 AND 201

Recon 101 and 102 will also be offered this year. on Sundays at 7:30 p.m.:

Recon 101 will meet Nov. 4 and Nov. 18

Recon 201 will meet Dec. 2 and Dec. 16

EVE

Tamar Kamionkowski will present “The Unauthorized Bio of Eve” on Sun. Oct. 28, time and location to be determined. This will lead into Kol HaLev’s major fundraiser, The People vs. Eve..

Other events are still in the planning stage, including group tours of special exhibits at the Maltz Museum.

The committee is looking for new members, especially younger members, and hopes to broaden the appeal of its programs. We also need volunteers to host events. Contact Arthur Lieberman at 440-893-0712 if you are interested.

HUG HASEFER: BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The August book group meeting will be Thurs., Aug. 23, at 7:30 at the home of Ruth Ness. We will be discussing *Cain* by José Saramago. (176 pages, a Kindle edition is available).

From Amazon's Reviews: In his final slim novel, the late José Saramago gives a cheeky modernist update to a timeworn biblical tale. After killing his brother Abel in an exasperated rage, Cain makes a deal with a CEO-like God and escapes with little more than a donkey and a few snacks, doomed to nomadic immortality. As he wanders through time and space, the handsome itinerant interferes with the dealings of a familiar cast of characters—Noah, Moses, Isaac—forever altering the course of legend along the way. Deeply flawed and all too human, despite the eternal life granted him, Cain also struggles openly with the idea of faith in the face of an equally flawed God. By turns philosophical and hilarious, Cain shows off the scope of Saramago's talent and makes a fitting coda for a superlative writing life. --Mia Lipman



There will be no book group meeting in September. The book for October is *When the Crocodile Eats the Sun* by Peter Godwin.

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 e-mail list.

Save the Dates!



The People vs. Eve: A Trial

Saturday, November 17, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

Was it only an apple? Or was it a crime? Charges have been brought –
Look for the official indictment in the September newsletter!
Tickets on sale in early September • Sponsorship opportunities available

PLUS: A special adult education session with Dr. Tamar Kamionkowski
"Eve's Story: An Unauthorized Biography"
Sunday, October 28, 7:30 pm

Dr. Kamionkowski is Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and a prodigious author on biblical literature, feminist readings of biblical texts, and the intersection between scholarship and social justice.

GREETER AND SADRANIM SIGN UP

KHL provides Greeters (those friendly people who greet you at the front entrance to Ratner) and Sadranim (those people at the door of the sanctuary who greet you and hand you a prayer book, if you need one) for the FIRST, SECOND (September-June) and THIRD Shabbatot of the month.

All members are required to sign up for a date to provide one of these services each year, in the same way that you sign up to host a Kiddush each year.

The current list of available dates is below - please make your choice now as later on you may simply be assigned to a date. RSVP to Anita Cohn at iccohn@roadrunner.com.

2012	2013
Sat., Aug. 4 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Jan. 5 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Aug. 14 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Jan. 12 – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Sept. 8 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Jan. 19 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Sept. 15 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Feb. 2 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sun., Sept. 16 (Erev Rosh Hashanah) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Feb. 9 – Greeter & Sadran
Mon., Sept. 17 (Rosh Hashanah) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Feb. 16 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Tues., Sept. 18 (Rosh Hashanah) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Mar. 2 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Tues., Sept. 25 (Erev Yom Kippur) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Mar. 9 – Greeter & Sadran
Wed., Sept. 26 (Yom Kippur) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Mar. 16 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Oct. 6 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Apr. 6 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Oct. 13 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., Apr. 13 – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Oct. 20 (Hagiga) – Greeter	Sat., Apr. 20 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Nov. 3 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., May 4 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Nov. 10 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., May 11 – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Nov. 17 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., May 18 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Dec. 1 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., June 1 – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Dec. 8 – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., June 8 – Greeter & Sadran
Sat., Dec. 15 (Hagiga) – Greeter & Sadran	Sat., June 22 – Greeter & Sadran

CONNECTIONS

COMFORTING MOURNERS

This past June, the sad experience of losing my beloved father, Seymour Friedman *z'l*, showed me the wisdom and beauty of one of the classic forms of kindness in Jewish tradition, *nichum avelim*, or comforting mourners. The Talmud states that consoling the bereaved is one way for us to “walk in God’s ways,” and Maimonides considered this practice a way to fulfill the commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The Hebrew word *nichum* comes from the Hebrew root letters resh, chet, mem, which are used to form the words for both “compassion” and “womb.” Nurturing those who are grieving shows them that they are neither abandoned nor alone. I believe this is an important way that we experience God’s presence in the world.

Often when we learn of someone’s death, we feel our expressions of sympathy are inadequate. We don’t know what to say, we think that words on a card cannot assuage the pain of the loss. But what I learned is that these gestures really do help. Our presence speaks volumes; the hugs, cards, calls, emails and food sent let the mourners know they are “loved by an unending love,” as Rabbi Rami Shapiro puts it in his adaptation of the prayer *Ahavat Olam*. Seeing and hearing from members of the Kol HaLev community during the funeral and shiva period was tremendously comforting to me.

As I began reciting the Mourner’s Kaddish at the shiva minyan, my voice began to falter. I was not sure I could complete it. My cousin Barbara came over to me and rubbed my back. Her touch gave me strength and enabled me to continue. Afterward, she told me she wasn’t sure if she was doing the right thing, but she “just couldn’t help herself.” I assured her it was exactly right. Even if her reaching out to me had triggered my bursting into sobs, it still would have been right.

When my mother, siblings and I attended the Shabbat morning service at the conclusion of our shiva period, people reached out to us with kindness and sensitivity, helping to soothe our grieving spirits. Though they don’t belong to Kol HaLev, I know my family felt like members of the community that day.

We Reconstructionists believe God acts in the world not supernaturally, but through moments of human connection like these, “Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled . . . ours are the arms, the fingers, the voices; ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles; We are loved by an unending love” (Rabbi Rami Shapiro).

As I contemplate the absence of my dad from this world, I nevertheless think of his love as “unending.” He lived his life with joy, kindness, humor, honesty, passion, curiosity, generosity, and, as my siblings and I all explained at his funeral, with an unconditional love of his family. I hope I will be able to embrace and share his values in the years to come. In this way, as we indicate when we write *z'l* after a deceased person’s name, *zichrono l’vracha*: “May his memory be for a blessing.”

Connections is David Conn’s ongoing series about how we connect with our community, traditions and the Divine. If you’d like to contribute a story -- or simply want to share your thoughts, questions or practices -- David would love to hear from you at david@estophile.com.

CALENDAR

Sat. Aug. 4	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Service preceded by Torah Discussion at 9:45 a.m at Ratner Chapel; <i>Va'etchanan</i> ; Service leaders: Fred Chenin and Rabbi Steve; Discussion leader: Rabbi Steve; kiddush co-hosted by Sharon Agopian and by Mordy and Sue Pelleg
Mon. Aug. 13	7:30 p.m..	Board Meeting at the home Molly Berger, 19744 Chagrin Boulevard, Shaker Heights, 216-752-5434; all Kol HaLev members are welcome.
Sat. Aug.18	10:30 a.m.	Shabbat Service preceded by Torah Discussion at 9:45 a.m at Ratner Chapel; <i>Re'e</i> ; Service leader: Rabbi Steve; Discussion leader: Kol HaLev member; kiddush co-hosted by Chip May and Audrey Warner and by Michael and Kareen Caputo in honor of their wedding anniversary
Sun. Aug. 19	7:30 - 9:00 p.m	Elul Workshop 1 , first of two workshops for the month of Elul, the time of self reflection leading up to the Days of Awe. Location to be announced.
Wed. Aug. 22	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Mindful Jewish Practice at Nancy Rubel's office, 24755 Chagrin Boulevard, #305. As always, we welcome everyone who is interested, whether or not you have any meditation experience.
Thu. Aug. 23	7:30 p.m.	Book Group at the home of Ruth Ness, 2328 Miramar, University Heights, 216-932-5579. (See more on p. 11)
Fri. Aug. 24	6:00 p.m..	Kabbalat Shabbat and Potluck at Ratner Chapel; kiddush co-hosted by Nancy Dudwick and Barb Truitt
Sat. Aug. 25	10:00 a.m	Shabbat Service and Bar Mitzvah of Max Schubert at Ratner Chapel; Service Leaders: Max and Rabbi Steve; Shoftim; kiddush sponsored by David and Martha Schubert in honor of their son Max's bar mitzvah. Please RSVP by Aug. 11 to schuberge@roadrunner.com
Sun. Aug. 26	2:00 – 5:00 p.m	Youth Group Ice Cream Social at the Scher-Marcus home, 3362 Maynard Road, Shaker Heights, 216-752-1713; Keep an eye out for a youth group facebook page, which will have all the details
	7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Elul Workshop 2 , second of two workshops for the month of Elul, the time of self reflection leading up to the Days of Awe. Location to be announced.

The newsletter calendar is accurate at the time of publication. Changes are published in the Weekly Update, which is emailed to members on Thursdays. In addition, event details can be confirmed on Kol HaLev's [website calendar](#).

Kol HaLev Happenings is the newsletter of Kol HaLev, Cleveland's Jewish Reconstructionist 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](#).

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Kol HaLev Happenings

The Newsletter of Cleveland's Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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