

YOM LIMMUD 2010

Presenter Bios

Rabbi Judith Abrams is a Talmud teacher and founder of Maqom: A School of Adult Talmud Study - www.maqom.com.

Rabbi Maccabee Avishur is a graduate of Brandeis University and the University of Cambridge, pursued Ph.D. coursework at UCLA, and recently completed the Tichon Fellowship through the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. A teacher by persona as well as by trade, Rabbi Mac moved to Houston with his family five years ago to teach at The Emery/Weiner School where he currently serves as the Director of Judaics.

Dr. Sam Axelrad has been certified as a Jewish Meditation Teacher by Chochmat Halev Jewish Meditation Center of Berkeley, California. He is Medical Director of Memorial Herman Mind/Body Medical Institute and is certified as a Mohel by the Jewish Theological Seminary. As chairman of the Cancer Committee of Memorial Herman Southwest, he is presenting programs on "The Journey Through Cancer." He serves on the board of the Mussar Foundation Institute, directed by Alan Morinis. Sam has been a physician, community leader and teacher in Houston since 1968.

Paula Eisenstein Baker is an adjunct instructor of cello and chamber music at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, and has published several articles about Leo Zeitlin. She has co-edited with Robert Nelson the volume of Zeitlin's chamber music recently published by A-R Editions, Inc.

Rabbi Annie Belford a native of El Paso, Texas, received a B.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Judaism in Los Angeles in 1998, an M.A. degree in Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 2003 and received her ordination from HUC-JIR in 2004. Rabbi Belford is honored to serve Temple Sinai since July, 2009. She previously served congregations in Missouri, Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, Connecticut, and Mumbai, India.

Elyse Bell earned her B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Colorado, Boulder, a M.T.S. degree from Harvard, and worked toward her doctorate degree in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, specializing in Hebrew Bible, at Brandeis. In addition to teaching Hebrew and Judaic Studies for several years in Houston and in the northeast, Elyse is a freelance writer who has written for several publications, including AMIT Magazine. Elyse teaches at Congregation Beth Israel and is working towards her Texas state teacher certification.

Greta Bernitz has been a teacher at Crossroads School for more than 16 years. She is the art specialist at Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism, and has been a presenter at Yom Limmud for about 12 years.

Judy Blake is the single parent of two special needs kids. Her mission is to increase awareness and raise compassion in a world that has difficulty accepting those with hidden disabilities.

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Ira Bleiweiss is founder of Bridge Houston. Established in April 2008, Bridge Houston is a grassroots, Israel advocacy and education organization. Its philosophy is to publically and constructively challenge anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda, in all its forms. With zero overhead and an all volunteer leadership, Bridge Houston organizes Israel-support rallies and events, sponsors roadside billboards and counters local hate groups and their activities.

Dr. Miriam Bodian (Barish Shabbat Limmud Scholar) is Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin, and an affiliate of UT's Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies. She has a Ph.D. in Jewish History from Hebrew University (1988) and has served on the history faculties at the University of Michigan and Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Bodian has published numerous articles on post-Expulsion Sephardic history and Jews in the Reformation period, as well as two books: *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (1997) and *Dying in the Law of Moses: Crypto-Jewish Martyrdom in Iberian Lands* (2007).

Randy Czarlinsky is the director of American Jewish Committee Houston.

Ariella Davis teaches courses on the development of Jewish law at Beren Academy and the Melton Center and has taught at many schools and programs in New York and Israel. She has a masters degree in Jewish education and administration and has completed fellowships and special courses in advanced Jewish law.

Rabbi Moshe Davis is the assistant Rabbi at United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston. He received his B.A., M.S. and rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University and certification in the laws of family purity and infertility from the Puah Institute.

Cantor Francyne Davis-Jacobs is a native Houstonian. She did her undergraduate work at Brandeis university and received her Cantorial Degree and a Masters Degree in Jewish Education from Gratz College in Philadelphia, PA. She has had pulpits in Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Houston. Currently, Francyne is the principal of the Hillel High School at Congregation Beth Yeshurun and leads services at Beth Yeshurun, Emanu El, and Congregation Beth Jacob in Galveston.

Pamela Levy Diebner has practiced speech/language pathology for the past 15 years, working in a variety of settings from public school and early childhood intervention to University of Houston. She is currently in private practice.

Cantor Diane Dorph

Naomi Duke is a certified financial planner specializing in estate and financial planning for families. In addition to her general financial and insurance practice, Naomi focuses on planning professionals and families with unique and special needs. She serves on the Financial Literacy Committee, sponsored by the FDIC, is a volunteer financial planner for the ALS clinic and Methods neurological institute, and is a member of FPA.

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Michael Duke is an award-winning journalist and associate editor at the Jewish Herald-Voice newspaper. He has written extensively about the pro-Israel and anti-Israel advocacy movements in greater Houston. His reports have been published by the Jewish Herald-Voice, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the Middle East Forum's Campus Watch, and have led to positive community actions.

Richard Elbein has been the CEO of the Houston and Southeast Texas chapter of the Alzheimer's Association since 2002. Richard received his undergraduate degree from UT Austin and his Masters degree from Virginia Tech.

Jonathan Fass is the co-director of the Jewish Community Center's Center for Jewish Living and Learning. He directs the Jewish Community Center's educational opportunities including the Melton Mini- School, Kulanu mini-courses, and lecture programs.

Rabbi Stuart Federow has been the rabbi of congregations in Greenville, Mississippi and Lancaster, California and served for six years as Director of Houston Hillel before coming to Congregation Shaar Hashalom in Clear Lake, Texas, where he has been the Rabbi since 1995. Rabbi Federow is the author of the chapter, "Missionaries" in the college student handbook, "Where We Stand," published by the UAHC/URJ. He hosts the live call-in talk show, "A Show of Faith," with a Baptist minister and Roman Catholic priest each Sunday night from 7-9 pm, on KPRC 950.

Charles Foster is the founder of FosterQuan LLP, a comprehensive immigration law firm, and advisor to several American presidents on immigration policy.

Susan Ganc is one of Houston's premier Yiddishists.

Rabbi Barry Gelman is the Rabbi at United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston. He is presently serving as President of the International Rabbinic Fellowship and Vice President of the Houston Rabbinical Association.

Cantor Robert Gerber has been the cantor at Congregation Beth Israel since his graduation from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's School of Sacred Music in 1983. Prior to attending HUC-JIR, Cantor Gerber graduated from the Interlochen Arts Academy and the University of Michigan School of Music. He has performed with opera companies in Israel and Germany and has been a soloist with many prestigious musical ensembles in the United States and abroad including Houston Oratorio Society and the Houston Symphony. Cantor Gerber has been a board member and officer of the American Conference of Cantors, served on various UAHC committees and his communal involvement has included the United Way "Campaign for the Homeless" and the Braes Interfaith Ministries Choir.

Rabbi Dovid Goldstein a native of McAllen, Texas, received his rabbinical ordination from the Central Chabad Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, Israel. He is Associate Director of

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Chabad Outreach of Houston and Director of Chabad of West Houston's CHAI Learning Center. Rabbi Goldstein's involvement in the community includes the establishing of the Living Legacy Hands-On Judaism Programs and The Friendship Circle of Houston whose programs assist Jewish children and adults with special needs. Fluent in Spanish, he also directs the Chabad Outreach Jevra Latina programs for the Latin American Jewish community. Rabbi Goldstein is the Head Consulting Rabbi of the Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice and serves as a chaplain at the Richmond state school and Brenham State school, Federal Correctional Complex in Beaumont, the Harris County Jail and the Menninger Clinic of Mental Health. In 2006 Rabbi Goldstein received the Harold Reingold Yavneh award from the Bureau of Jewish Education for his outstanding educational contributions to the Greater Houston Jewish community.

Josh Gottesman is a Houston native and a teacher at the Emery/Weiner School. He is a graduate of Beth Yeshurun Day School and the Robert M. Beren Academy.

Rabbi Dan Gordon is in his 12th year as spiritual leader of Temple Beth Torah. He received his rabbinic ordination from the Mesifita Adath Rabbinical Academy. He is co-chair for the National Jewish Storytelling Network and co-coordinates volunteers who visit Jewish inmates in prison. His storytelling has been enjoyed by thousands of people in 12 states and four countries. He often presents at public schools, college campuses, senior centers, synagogues and prisons, and leads professional development workshops for teachers, lawyers, therapists and other professions.

Rabbi Marcy Schimmel Greene is the founder and director of the L'Chaim Center, an independent, *hamish* havurah that provides worship and educational opportunities to unaffiliated Jews and other interested parties. She has served in several congregations and has been a Hillel director.

Rabbi Yossi Grossman is dean of the newly founded Jewish Ethics Institute. He is one of the leading Jewish medical ethicists in the Southwest, and has taught a weekly Jewish Medical Ethics class for health-care professionals for ten years. Rabbi Grossman's laid-back style and love of learning help him to reach and teach Jews from all walks of life.

Rabbi Zvi Grumet (Barish Shabbat Limmud Scholar) is a teacher and thinker with vast experience challenging and inspiring teens and adults in North America and Israel. He holds a B.A. in Computer Science from Brooklyn College, an M.A. in Jewish Education and a Specialist's Certificate in Educational Administration from Yeshiva University, and rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanon Theological Seminary. After nearly two decades of serving in a variety of educational roles in New York area schools, he chose Jerusalem as his home. He is currently the Associate Educational Director of The Lookstein Center for Jewish Education, and the Editor of *Jewish Educational Leadership*. Rabbi Grumet also teaches at Machon Pardes and the David Cardozo Institute, and is chair of the Tanakh department at Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi.

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Amir Gwartzman, Israel's top jazz musician for the past 20 years, was introduced to the recorder (little flute) at the age of seven, the clarinet at nine and the saxophone at sixteen. Now, he plays twenty different reed instruments. Amir won a scholarship for his studies at the Mannes College of Music in Manhattan, where he lived between the years 1991-97. During his time in New York he performed and recorded with many artists such as Philip Glass and the Mongo Santa Marias Band. He is also the founder of ESTA, a band proclaimed by music critics as "Israel's most original instrumental band." ESTA's music combines elements of world music, the power of rock and roll and the spirit of jazz into a powerful, energetic new sound that crosses genres, styles and borders. Amir and ESTA have performed in various prestigious festivals and highly respected venues not only in Israel but also throughout Europe and the United States. ESTA's debut album, released by MCI Records, was greeted with great critical acclaim.

Rabbi Robert Haas is a native of McAllen, Texas. After receiving a Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education, he served as a public school teacher in Houston and later as a day school teacher in the San Francisco area. Rabbi Haas was ordained in the first Reform Rabbinical Class at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion on the West Coast. He has almost 20 years of experience as a religious school teacher and youth group leader and has spent 11 summers working at various Jewish camps. After serving for four years as a rabbi at Temple Shalom in Dallas, Rabbi Haas moved to Houston and is currently an Associate Rabbi at Congregation Emanu El.

Rabbi Gavriel Jacknin is the Program Director for TORCH. His humor, energy, and enthusiasm is contagious. Besides his love for Torah, people and spiritual growth, Rabbi Jacknin loves to play tennis and run (which includes his New York city Marathon he ran over ten years ago). Whether in a class or in person, Rabbi Gavriel Jacknin, also known as Rabbi G, would love to get together and schmooze about life and the gift of Judaism.

Scott Kaplan earned a B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from The George Washington University and then studied Jewish texts in the Year Program and the Educators' Program at Machon Pardes in Jerusalem. He is currently a teacher at the Emery/Weiner School.

Rabbi Neal Katz from Congregation Beth El in Tyler, TX, has been involved in Jewish music for over eighteen years. His original folk/rock Jewish music has become part of song-sessions, services, and camps around the country. In 2009, Neal released two CDs – his debut folk CD called "Day Will Come" and "Be a Light," his Chanukah CD. Neal's other projects include his first CD in 2002 entitled "Who am I?" which contains the popular camp song, "Or Chadash" and his second Jewish music CD, the rocking "Strength in Numbers" which was released in 2006. Neal's music has been

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featured in other compilations, and he was involved in producing two CDs to raise funds for a non-profit organization in Tyler.

Rabbi Eli Kaunfer (Barish Shabbat Limmud Scholar) is co-founder, rosh yeshiva and executive director of Mechon Hadar: An Institute for Prayer, Personal Growth, and Jewish Study, and is founder and leader of Kehilat Hadar, an independent, egalitarian community committed to spirited traditional prayer, study and social action. Rabbi Kaunfer was also the founder of Yeshivat Hadar, the first full-time egalitarian yeshiva in North America. (www.mechonhadar.org). A graduate of Harvard College, he was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he received an M.A. in liturgy and is currently pursuing a doctorate in liturgy. Rabbi Kaunfer is the author of *Empowered Judaism: What Independent Minyanim Can Teach Us About Building Vibrant Jewish Communities* (Jewish Lights). The Forward has twice named him one of 50 Top Jewish Leaders, and Newsweek named him one of the top 50 Rabbis in America.

Jane Kliakhandler holds a Masters of Science in Mineral Economics from Michigan Technological University, and works at the Baker Institute for Public Policy as Energy Forum Program Coordinator. She is also a Cantorial Soloist with vast experience in Houston, US and abroad.

Rabbi Chaim Lazaroff, a Torah Day School of Houston alumnus, holds a bachelors degree in Rabbinic Studies from the Rabbinical College of America in Morristown, NJ, and a masters degree in Religious Studies from the Yeshivah Gedolah of Greater Miami. Rabbi Chaim is the director of Chabad of Uptown, Chabad Hebrew School of Houston, holds classes and programs for young adults, is the program director for Chabad Lubavitch Center, and administrates their highly acclaimed website, chabadtexas.org. In 2009 he was nominated as a top 20 semifinalist for the national Jewish Community Heroes campaign of The Jewish Federations of North America.

Nitsana Lazerus puppeteer, Hebrew teacher, and lay cantor, has presented and performed a variety of workshops and shows in the Untied States and Israel.

Cantor Mark Levine studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Manhattan School for Cantors. He has served as Cantor and Synagogue Educational Director throughout his career and as a teacher, Middle School Director and counselor at the Solomon Schechter of Dallas. Currently, he is serving as Director of Education at Brith Shalom.

Rabbi David Lipper is presently living in Houston and working at area synagogues. He has served as Rabbi at Temple Israel- Akron, Ohio, Temple Emanuel- McAllen, Texas, and Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Rabbi Lipper has published two volumes one entitled, *Living Mitzvot*, a guide for Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, and *Who Knows the One?* a comparative analysis of Greek Philosophy and Jewish Mysticism. He is quoted in "Three times Chai" in which 54 rabbis share their favorite stories, and in "Keeping the Faith in Ohio", a collection of

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sermons from the Clergy in Ohio. Rabbi Lipper also is co-author of a monograph on the philosophy of Rabbi Moshe Hayim Luzzatto that was published in the Journal of Progressive Judaism. He has been a student of Jewish philosophy and mysticism all his life.

Rabbi David Lyon, a native of Chicago, Illinois, he graduated from the University of Arizona in 1984, with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Rabbi Lyon began his studies at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), Jerusalem in 1985. He earned his Masters of Arts degree in Hebrew Letters at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles, and was ordained in 1990, at HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. Upon ordination, Rabbi Lyon served as Assistant Rabbi and Associate Rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, Texas, 1990-1997. He also served as Rabbi of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, East Lansing, Michigan from 1997 to 2000 and as Rabbi of Temple Shalom, Dallas, Texas, 2000-2004. In June 2004, Rabbi Lyon returned to Congregation Beth Israel to serve as Senior Rabbi.

Stan Marek of Marek Brothers, a commercial and residential interior construction company, is chair of the Diocese Foundation, and board member of Americans for Immigration Reform.

Dena Marks is an Associate Director with the Anti-Defamation League. As part of her responsibilities with ADL, she manages media responses to anti-Israel stories, comments, and blogs. Prior to working for ADL, Dena spent 21 years in TV news.

Marna Meyer was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she attained a B.A. degree in Literature, Sociology, and Psychology. She lectured and taught in Jewish and public schools in South Africa and qualified as a *mashgicha*. Marna has worked in Jewish Education in Houston since 1993. In 2002, she was the recipient of the Bureau of Jewish Education's Yavneh Award for distinguished service to Jewish Education. Marna is the Education Director of Congregation Emanu El's Helfman Religious School.

Debi Mishael earned a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Judaism (now American Jewish University) and has been teaching for more than 30 years. Debi has served in a variety of educational settings as a classroom teacher, Director of Education, Camp Director, Programming and Curriculum Development Specialist and Preschool Director. She currently teaches at Congregation Brith Shalom and lectures locally and throughout the country.

Dr. Alexander Mishory, born in Tel Aviv, is an art historian and a Cultural Studies person. He received his Ph.D. degree in Art History from The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. This year, Mishory is a visiting Israeli professor at the Art History department and The Jewish Studies program at Rice University in Houston. His publications focus on Jewish-Israeli visual symbolism; two of his recent books are *Lo and Behold: Zionist Visual Symbols in Israeli Culture* and *Joseph Budko and H. N. Bialik's Complete Works Edition of 1923, Modern Hebrew Poetry and Art in Harmony*.

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For seven years Mishory served as the art critic of Haaretz, Israel's leading newspaper. He has curated art exhibits in museums and galleries throughout Israel, most recent ones were Visual Israeliness (2007) and 1948: Hebrew Eretz-Israeli Art Leading to the Future (Museum of Art, Ein Harod, 2008). Mishory's publications deal extensively with the origins of Israeli art and its links with Jewish themes and Zionist utopias. The common theme underlying his several research projects is modern Judaism's VISUAL contributions to the overall modern Hebrew renaissance phenomenon; he brings forth and stresses the significance of the visual medium since, in contemporary Judaic and Israel studies publications, it is usually placed in the shadow of the verbal.

Michael Morgan teaches at The Emery Weiner School and has been involved in Jewish education for over 40 years. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Masters of Philosophy from Columbia University. Michael taught at the University of Alberta and was Dean of Jewish Studies for the Washington Jewish Day School. He is translator and editor of *Sepher HaRazim*, a Jewish magical spell book from the 3rd century.

Rabbi Steven Morgen graduated from UCLA School of Law in 1983 and practiced corporate and securities law in Los Angeles for over nine years. He was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1998. Rabbi Morgen has written action papers for United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism on "Courtesy and Civility" and on "Organ Donations" and wrote and edited the text for a CD-ROM on Kashrut for the Conservative Movement. He spent three academic years in Israel on various programs, and is currently an Associate Rabbi of Congregation Beth Yeshurun.

Robert Nelson is Professor Emeritus of music theory and composition at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston. His compositions and arrangements have been performed world-wide. Nelson has co-edited, with Paula Eisenstein Baker, the volume of Leo Zeitlin's chamber music recently published by A-R Editions, Inc.

Rabbi Dov Nimchinsky is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Robert M. Beren Academy where he also teaches middle and high school Judaic studies. He holds a Masters degree in education and has been teaching adults and teens for over 20 years. Rabbi Nimchinsky has been awarded the Irvin L. Samuels Outstanding Teacher Award for Judaic Studies and the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award for Excellence in Jewish education. He was recently awarded a grant from the AviChai Foundation to develop technological tools to assist in the teaching of Judaic studies.

Rabbi Alexis Pearce, a native of Los Angeles, was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia in 1993. She is active in interfaith, social justice, and Jewish-Palestinian dialogue efforts, and served as Rabbi of Congregation Dor Hadash in San Diego from 1996 to 2005. She currently works as a hospital chaplain in San Diego, and visits Houston's Congregation Kol HaLev several times a year.

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Todd Polikoff is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's Southwest Regional Director managing a portfolio of seven states. He is responsible for pro- Israel activity and coalition building in the 63 congressional districts of New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Colorado, lobbying Members of Congress and their staff's annually on pro-Israel legislation and resolutions. Before joining AIPAC in 2005, Todd worked for the Jewish Federations of Las Vegas, Boston and Delaware as a Campaign Director and with United Jewish Communities as the Midwest Director of Network Communities. Todd also live in Israel for 18 months. Part of that time was on the Otzma fellowship, where he witnessed first-hand the effects of the Persian Gulf War, the wave of Russian immigration and the airlift and absorption of 14, 000 Ethiopian Jews during Operation Solomon. He has returned to Israel many times since then, meeting with Members of Knesset, officials from the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Defense. Todd is a graduate of Stockton college in New Jersey, where he focused on Psychology, Jewish Studies and Holocaust Education.

Hazzan David Propis was a featured soloist in the choir of his late father, the distinguished and internationally known Cantor Dov Propis. His father's influence, as well as that of his cousin, Aaron Propis, who founded the Zimriyah in Israel (the original Jewish Choral Festival, later to become the Internationally acclaimed Chassidic Song Festival), have left an indelible mark on him. Hazzan Propis is president of the Cantors Assembly, Inc., the largest and most prestigious governing body of Hazzanut in the world. He is a charter board member of the Holocaust Museum Houston. Hazzan Propis is a recipient of the "Master Cantor Certificate" awarded by the Gila and Chaim Weiner Foundation for the Advancement of Cantorial Arts. In 1997, the State of Israel Bonds honored him with the "Lion of Judah" award, and was honored by the Ben Rogers / Lamar University / Beaumont ISD "I Have a Dream" program in 1998. In 1995 & 1996, Hazzan Propis conceived and co-starred in sold-out performances of "The Three Cantors," a Cantorial symphonic concert at Wortham Opera Center in Houston with his good friends Cantors Meir Finkelstein and Alberto Mizrahi. In June, 1998 he made his Carnegie Hall debut. Hazzan Propis has released several recordings, "Inspirations: Memories of Home" for the Holocaust Museum Houston's Tribute to the Survivors event in February 1997, "Visions in Prayer, Traditional Prayers in Contemporary Settings," composed and arranged by Meir Finkelstein, and "Visions of Shabbat," a compilation of Shabbat melodies composed by Cantor Meir Finkelstein and performed by Cantor Propis with his gifted daughter Dena, Cantor Finkelstein himself, and Cantor Alisa Pomerantz-Boro.

Rabbi Joseph Radinsky was Rabbi of United Orthodox Synagogues from 1976-2003. He now is the Rabbi Emeritus. Rabbi Radinsky is the author of 10 books: *Torah Concepts 1 - 10*.

Cantor Lance Rhodes received his Bachelors of Music from the University of Miami in 2003. For a brief period after graduation, Cantor Rhodes worked as a free-lance arranger for Warner Bros. Publications, composed a theme song that was used for the national television show, "National Lampoon's Comedy Night School" and worked

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on board the Rhapsody of The Seas ship (out of Galveston, Texas) for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. Beginning in August of 2004, Cantor Rhodes attended the H. L. Miller Cantorial School at the Jewish Theological Seminary. and served as a student cantor for many different synagogues including Temple Beth El in Oakhurst, NJ, Congregation Sons of Israel in Nyack, NY, Congregation B'nai Torah in Ormond Beach, FL, the Midway Jewish Center in Syosset, NY, and Temple Israel in Daytona Beach, FL. Cantor Rhodes was invested as a hazzan and received his Masters in Sacred Music from JTS in May of 2009 and is excited to have now begun his career journey as the Cantor for Congregation Brith Shalom.

Rabbi David Rosen is the Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Yeshurun. Ordained at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1980, he continued his rabbinical studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Jerusalem, and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Rabbi Rosen has served on the Executive Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, the Rabbinic Cabinet of the United Jewish Communities, and the board of the local chapter of the American Jewish Committee. and the Board of the American Jewish Committee (Houston Chapter). He has co-chaired the Anti-Defamation League's Coalition for Mutual Respect, which coordinates pulpit and teaching exchanges among Houston's rabbis, priests, ministers and imams. In 2004, he received the Julie and Ben Rogers Ecumenism Award from the Anti-Defamation League. In March 2006, Rabbi Rosen and his family were honored by the American Associates of Ben-Gurion University with the creation of the "Rosen Family Career Development Chair in Judaic Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev." Rabbi Rosen was also honored by American Red Magen David for Israel in 2003 for his support of Israel during the Intifada, and by Congregation Moreshet Yisrael in Jerusalem in 2007.

Marcie Rosen received a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Cincinnati and has over 20 years of experience as a teacher and educational consultant, teaching students from preschool through middle school. She has provided seminars and workshops for a wide variety of parents at day care centers, preschools, schools and corporations in Texas, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including MD Anderson, Baylor College of Medicine and KIPP Academy Day Care. Marcie is currently in her 11th year as a teacher at the Crossroads School, a school for students with learning differences, in Houston. Her down-to-earth, animated presentation style, enthusiasm and sense of humor make her workshops truly enjoyable as well as educational. Her practical, easy-to-implement suggestions, activities and materials will benefit students long after the workshop has ended.

Dr. Sheldon Rubinfeld is a Clinical Professor of General Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and a Fellow in the American College of Endocrinology. He has published two editions of *Could It Be My Thyroid?* as well as scientific papers on thyroid and other endocrine diseases. Dr. Rubinfeld has been in private practice for 31 years. He has taught Jewish Medical Ethics at Baylor College of Medicine for seven years and also taught "Healing by Killing: Medicine in the Third Reich" for three years. In 2007, Dr. Rubinfeld created a program called Medical Ethics and the Holocaust,

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which included a six-month exhibit entitled "How Healing Becomes Killing: Eugenics, Euthanasia, Extermination" at Holocaust Museum, and a 17-part lecture series, The Michael DeBakey Medical Ethics Lecture Series. He edited *Medicine After the Holocaust: From the Master Race to the Human Genome and Beyond*, a book of manuscripts from this lecture series that was published in early 2010.

Rabbi Deborah Schloss enjoys serving Temple Beth Tikvah in Clear Lake and being a chaplain at the MEDVAMC. She loves learning about other cultural and spiritual traditions, travel, and photography. She wishes there were additional hours in each day to take in even more of life's beauty.

Rabbi Adrienne Scott is an associate rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel. She graduated from the University of Cincinnati and was ordained from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2004. She currently serves as the southwest regional representative of the Women's Rabbinic Network.

Rabbi Jack Segal is Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Beth Yeshurun, after serving the congregation for over 30 years. He has a B.A. degree from New York University, B.S. from the University of Pittsburgh, M.Ed. and M.A. from Oregon State University, D.H.L. from Hebrew Union College, and Ed.D. from the University of Houston. He received Semicha at Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin. Rabbi Segal is a member of the Rabbinical Assembly of Conservative Rabbis and the American Psychological Association.

Rabbi Laura Sheinkopf was ordained in 2002 and received a Master of Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was a Wexner Graduate Fellow, an Eisendrath Fellow at the Religious Action Center of Washington, DC, a New York State Summer Scholar and a Teaching Fellow at Northfield Mt. Hermon School. Rabbi Sheinkopf was an Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Emanu El here in Houston. Currently, she is teaching a year-long seminar entitled "The Art of Torah Study" which she designed for B'nei Mitzvah students, as well as tutoring special needs students in Hebrew and study skills. As the rabbi-in-residence at Shwayder Camp, she developed a curriculum for teaching Judaics through hands-on art projects using recycled objects. Rabbi Sheinkopf's articles and book reviews have appeared in the Jewish Herald-Voice, the Wexner Foundation Magazine, American Jewish Book World, and the Northfield Mt. Hermon News

Barb Shepard is the coordinator of the American Jewish Committee's Bridging America Project.

Rabbi Pamela Silk is an associate rabbi at Congregation Emanu El. Born in Stamford, Connecticut and raised in the Detroit area, Rabbi Silk came to Houston in 2003 after completing Rabbinical School at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. While in school she completed over 400 hours of clinical pastoral education and continues to make pastoral care and support a priority in her rabbinate. At Congregation Emanu El, Rabbi Silk works closely with the Continuing

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Education and Outreach programs to create and offer vibrant and meaningful programs.

Rachel Stern, MAJE/MAJSC, is the Director of Education for the Institute of Southern Jewish Life. Rachel is thrilled to be back in her home state of Texas and looks forward to building partnerships with the Houston Jewish Community.

Rabbi Ranon Teller was born and raised in a traditional Jewish home in Southfield, Michigan. After high school, Rabbi Teller spent two years of intense yeshiva study in Israel. Although both his parents are Jewish educators, Rabbi Teller initially pursued scriptwriting as a career. He graduated from Columbia College with a B.A. in television writing. His writing career began in Chicago, led him to Los Angeles, and then continued in Jerusalem. Finally, he embraced his calling and enrolled in a joint rabbinic and education program at the University of Judaism. Rabbi Teller earned a master's degree in Education from the Fingerhut School of Education in 1999 and received the Fingerhut School of Education Award for Outstanding Achievement. Upon rabbinic ordination in 2002, he received the Chancellor's Award for Academic Excellence. Rabbi Ranon Teller began his career in the pulpit as an Assistant Rabbi at Congregation B'nai Amoona in St. Louis, Missouri. In 2004, he was recognized and honored with a promotion to Associate Rabbi. He joined the Brith Shalom family in 2005.

Rabbi Moishe Traxler is the director of Chabad Outreach of Houston. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a B.S. in Pharmacy. Rabbi Traxler attended the Rabbinical College of America and Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch yeshivos in Morristown, NJ and Brooklyn, NY. Rabbi Traxler was ordained at the Central Lubavitcher Yeshivos and continued post-rabbinical studies at Chabad Kollel in Brooklyn for one year. He returned to Texas in 1980 to direct the Chabad House at UT-Austin and then Chabad Houston at Houston's Medical Center.

Cantor Vadim Tunitsky, Cantor of Congregation Emanu El since 1995, was invested at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion School of Sacred Music in 1993. Cantor Tunitsky came from Russia where he received dual bachelors and masters degrees in Engineering from Kharkov Polytechnical Institute. He graduated with honors in violin music in 1980 from Kharkov Musical College and entered the Kharkov School of Arts, graduating with honors in vocal arts in 1985. Cantor Tunitsky arrived in the United States in 1988 and enrolled at HUC-JIR School of Sacred Music where he realized his dream of becoming a cantor and singing the music he had come to love. He has been the Cantor at Congregation Emanu El since 1995.

Cantor Renee Waghalter is the Cantor-Educator at Congregation Jewish Community North. Her commitment to fostering active participation in all areas of Jewish life led her to become a Jewish educator in 1988 and a cantor in 1996. Cantor Waghalter has been involved in classroom teaching, supervision, curriculum development, bar/bat mitzvah programming and preparation, pastoral counseling, adult education,

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family education, and creation of innovative worship services in congregations in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont and Houston.

Linda Wallace is host of Cultural IQ, a blog where conservative and liberal cultural problem solvers gather.

Rabbi Benno Wallach is Houston's oldest Rabbi with the youngest ideas. He is Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth Tikvah in the Clear Lake area.

Rachel Weisblatt was born and raised in Jerusalem, and began dancing at the age of five. Since coming to the United States, she has led Israeli dance classes and directed performing groups for adults and children at Brown University and here in Houston. For the past 20 years Rachel has taught a weekly dance class at Beth Yeshurun. Recently, she organized a weekly woman's only class at United Orthodox Synagogues. Rachel has been involved in Jewish Education for many years, currently teaching Hebrew and Bar Mitzvah classes at Congregation Beth Israel and Beth El.

Rabbi Amy Weiss is the founder and executive director of The Initiative for Jewish Women (www.ijwtexas.org). She is the co-creator of "Shmirat HaGuf: Irreplaceable You", a unique program to grow Jewish children ages 6 through 22 who value their bodies, understand actions and consequences related to how they treat their bodies combined with medically accurate information regarding anatomy and sexuality. Rabbi Weiss also teaches in the Melton School and blogs for the Houston Chronicle, www.houstonbelief.com.

Dr. Steven Windmueller (Barish Shabbat Limmud Scholar) was appointed Director of the School of Jewish Communal Service of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1995. Over the course of a twenty-eight year professional career, he has held a number of prominent positions within the Jewish community. Most recently, Dr. Windmueller served for ten years as the Executive Director of the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles. A specialist on political issues and American Jewish affairs, he has appeared on CNN, PBS, NBC, and other nationally syndicated media offering commentaries on Jewish public affairs matters. His more than thirty articles and monographs have appeared in such publications as the Los Angeles Times, Sh'ma and Moment magazines, the Jerusalem Letter, and the Journal of Jewish Communal Service. In addition, Dr. Windmueller has consulted with government officials and political candidates and has had the occasion to represent the Jewish community on various international missions. At HUC-JIR, he serves as Dean of the Los Angeles campus and Adjunct Professor of Jewish Communal Studies.

Renee Wizig-Barrios is the Lead Organizer of the Metropolitan Organization (TMO), an organization of congregations dedicated to developing power and leadership among citizens in order to transform the city. She has been organizing with the Industrial Areas Foundation for 13 years in Austin, El Paso, and now in Houston. Renee was a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Nicaragua and is a graduate of Washington

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University in St. Louis, Missouri. She was recently awarded the 2009 Cornerstone Award by the Jewish Funds for Justice Organization which recognizes Jewish leaders building a just nation.

Rabbi Aryeh Wolbe is Executive Director of TORCH. Born in Jerusalem and raised in New York, he has learned in the most prominent Torah centers of the world, including Mir Jerusalem and Beth Medrash Gevoha in Lakewood, New Jersey. He holds several Rabbinic ordinations including from former Chief Rabbi of Israel Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu. Rabbi Wolbe has been active in Jewish outreach for over ten years in the US, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Canada and Israel.

Gil Ya'ari is the *shaliach* for Young Judaea. He has a M.S.L. in Environmental Science from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Gil is from Midreshet Ben Gurion in the Negev.

Michael Yohay (Barish Shabbat Limmud Scholar) has directed and produced 16 award-winning films and managed the Film and News Production Branch in the Spokespersons' Division of the Israel Defense Forces between 1993-2005. Heading the unit, he was responsible for news footage of IDF activities and their distribution to the mass media in Israel and abroad. Prior to his work with the IDF, Yohay served as film director of El Al airline's educational branch, as well as freelance film director of Israel's national television station. In 2008, he produced and directed "The Case for Israel: Democracy's Outpost," a documentary film that presents a vigorous case for Israel- for its basic right to exist, to protect its citizens from terrorism, and to defend its borders from hostile enemies- in a highly accessible multimedia format. The film is based on Alan Dershowitz's book the *Case for Israel*.

Dr. Yair Zakovitch (JCC Horvit Scholar) is the Father Takeji Otuski Professor of Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He received his education at the University of Haifa (B.A. in Hebrew Literature, Hebrew Language, and Biblical Studies) and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (M.A., Ph.D. in Bible) where he then remained on the faculty. Professor Zakovitch served as Head of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University from 1995-1997 and Dean of Humanities from 1997-2001.