

# Voices AND WISDOM

The Newsletter from the **FERN & MANFRED STEINFELD PROGRAM IN JUDAIC STUDIES**

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## A Warm Welcome to the Volunteer Family

I am thrilled to have completed my first year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. It was wonderful to teach a fantastic group of UT students about Judaism, Jewish life and culture, and the Holocaust during the academic year and over the summer. I am pleased to report that in the short time I have been here we have

gained a number of new Judaic Studies majors and that the class on the Holocaust filled to capacity and unfortunately had a waiting list due to space constraints!

In addition to learning about my new position during the past year, I was delighted to get to meet a number of people in the community both near and far. People with long ties to the program welcomed me to the Volunteer community.

This past summer I had the privilege of working on my book on the Krakow Ghetto at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. I presented some of my findings at my inaugural lecture November 8, 2017, at the McClung Museum. It was a great pleasure to see many of you there and to those I have not yet met, I look forward to meeting you soon.

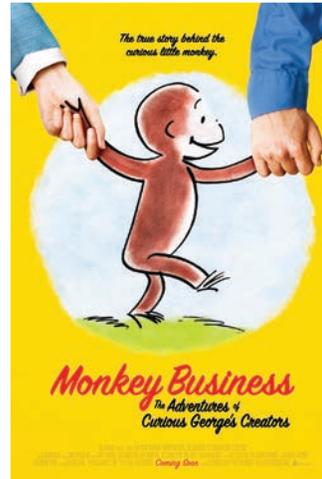
Sincerely,  
**HELENE J. SINNREICH**  
Director

## Diane and Guilford Glazer and Lea and Allen Orwitz Teaching Fellow in Modern Hebrew



Thanks to the generosity of our donors, in particular Lea and Allen Orwitz and the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation, we were able to continue offering Modern Hebrew at UT last year and this year. Our Hebrew Fellow Itsik Pariente taught introductory and intermediate Hebrew to an enthusiastic group of students. In a

move we believe will really boost the profile of Modern Hebrew, it was moved to the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures.



## Monkey in the Museum

This semester, we are offering a course called the Monkey in the Museum for first-year students. Throughout the course, the students work towards creating an exhibition about H.H. and Margaret Rey, the creators of Curious George, and their escape from Nazi-

occupied France. During the course, students learn about Jews and Judaism, the Holocaust, exhibition design, and an adorable monkey named George. The students spent some time in the exhibition space at McClung Museum learning about how exhibitions are created. The students will be exhibiting their creation at the John C. Hodges Library during the first two weeks of December. The opening will be December 4 at 1:30 p.m. and include a small reception and a 2 p.m. screening of *Monkey Business*, the film about the Rey's escape.

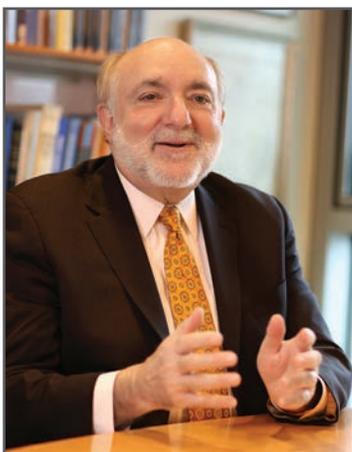
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## Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture on Modern Israel



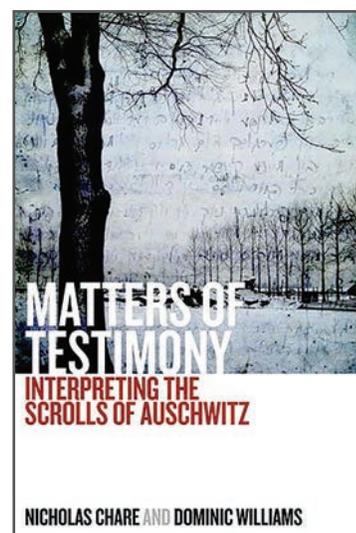
**DAVID ELLENSON**, director of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University, will deliver this year’s Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture on Modern Israel. Ellenson, a distinguished scholar of Judaism, is Chancellor-Emeritus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion where he served as president from 2001-2013. Ellenson has authored or edited seven books and over 300 articles and reviews in a wide variety of academic and popular journals and newspapers. His newest book, *Jewish Meaning in a World of Choice*, appeared in September of 2014 in the University of Nebraska/Jewish Publication Society’s “Scholar of Distinction” series.

The Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture on Modern Israel will take place Thursday, February 22, 2018, at 7 p.m. in the McClung Museum Auditorium. A reception will follow the talk.

## Deciphering Sonderkommando Testimonies

**NICHOLAS CHARE**, associate professor of art history at the Université de Montréal, will be deliver a talk based on his book, *Matters of Testimony: Interpreting the Scrolls of Auschwitz*, which explores the testimonies left behind by the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz.

Sonderkommando were the prisoners responsible for burning dead bodies at Auschwitz. They were condemned to be replaced every six weeks with their replacements’ first duty to dispose of their bodies. He is also the author of *Auschwitz and Afterimages: Abjection, Witnessing and Representation* and *After Francis Bacon: Synaesthesia and Sex in Paint*. Chare will deliver his talk Wednesday, March 7, 2018. For more details, visit [judaic.utk.edu](http://judaic.utk.edu).



### UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE



In 2016-2017, **Brandon McWhirter**, a double major in Judaic Studies and Religious Studies, received both the Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship and the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Scholarship in Judaic Studies. Brandon is in his junior year

at UT. He has taken a wide range of classes in Judaic Studies ranging from Early Judaism to the Holocaust to Biblical Hebrew.

Each year, the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies awards two scholarships: the Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship and the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Scholarship in Judaic Studies. These scholarships go to support undergraduates who are Judaic Studies majors or minors who have demonstrated exceptional academic performance.

### PhD STUDENT LENDS A HAND



We are excited to welcome our new graduate assistant, **John William Rall**, who began working for the Judaic Studies program this fall. He is finishing his PhD in history where he is investigating Nazi responses to poverty in the Third Reich.

Where previous scholarship interprets National Socialist welfare as a professional and impersonal bureaucracy, Rall’s dissertation demonstrates that poor relief was a personal and emotional enterprise woven deep into the cultural life of Nazi Germany. It served as a mechanism by which Germans separated “neighbors” from “enemies” as well as defined and redefined standards of morality. By acting charitably, Germans could think of themselves as “moral” while simultaneously contributing to unprecedented genocide.

Rall’s research appeared in a volume of essays about everyday life in modern Germany titled *Ruptures in the Everyday: Views of Modern Germany from the Ground* published by Berghahn Books in 2017.



**Robert Heller**, professor in the School of Journalism and Electronic Media, had his photographic

portraits of Tennessee Holocaust Survivors and Liberators exhibited at the UT Downtown Art Gallery during June and July. The “Living On” project was created by the Tennessee Holocaust Commission in 2003 and resulted in an exhibit shown around Tennessee and multiple cities in Poland, and a book published by UT Press in 2008. In conjunction with the “Violins of Hope” project, the “Living On” exhibit will be on display in Nashville at several locations, beginning in January 2018.

**Nancy Henry** delivered talks at the Modern Language Association in Philadelphia, the North American Victorian Studies Association Conference in Florence, Italy, the Women, Money, and Markets Conference at King’s College London, and the Dickens Universe Conference at UC Santa Cruz. She was also the lead co-organizer of the 2017 Dickens Universe Conference, which for the first time in its 34-year history was devoted to a book not written by Dickens. Instead, it focused on George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*. Nancy continues in her capacity as the international co-editor of the *Journal of Victorian Culture* (based in the UK) and the associate editor of the journal *George Eliot-George Henry Lewes Studies*. At UT, she continues as the organizer of the Nineteenth-Century British Studies Seminar (funded by the UT Humanities Center).



**Heather Hirschfeld** was pleased to see two essays, both on *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, appear in print – “The

Critical Backstory,” in *The Revenger’s Tragedy: A Critical Reader* (Bloomsbury, 2016) and “Wildfire at midnight’: The Revenger’s Tragedy and the Gunpowder Plot,” in the *Review of English Studies* (2017). She participated in the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in April, where she gave a paper on “Shakespeare and Urban Infernalism” and served as vice-president of the Southeastern

Renaissance Conference. She was honored to receive a Chancellor’s Grant for Faculty Research, which gives her time to research her next project on “The Resources of Hell: Infernal Metaphor and Meaning in Early Modernity.”



**Gregory Kaplan**, Hispanic studies, Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, published *Arguments*

*Against the Christian Religion in Amsterdam by Saul Levi Morteira, Spinoza’s Rabbi* (Amsterdam University Press 2017). This is the first book to offer a translation into English, as well as a critical study, of a Spanish treatise written around 1650 by Rabbi Saul Levi Morteira, whose most renowned congregant was Baruch Spinoza. Aimed at encouraging the practice of halachic Judaism among the Amsterdam-based descendants of conversos, Spanish and Portuguese Sephardic Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity, the book stages a dialogue between two conversos that ultimately leads to a vision of a Jewish homeland—an outcome that Morteira thought was only possible through his program for rejudaization.



**Jack Love** continues to pursue his doctorate in history. His dissertation is on the Passover

in history and memory. For the second year in a row, his introductory course in Biblical Hebrew had a full enrollment. This year, he is delighted to report that we also had record retention into the second year. The first-year students are enthusiastic and engaged, and he has high hopes that we will see most of them continue. Unlike students in other more common foreign languages (such as Spanish and French), Biblical Hebrew students often include linguistics program majors and seniors looking to broaden their knowledge. It is a delight to see students engaged deeply with classical texts.



**Dan Magilow**, associate professor of German, spent two weeks in Washington, DC, this past

June participating in the workshop “Regarding Atrocity: Photography, Memory, and Representation,” sponsored by the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Magilow has also been commissioned by Rutgers University Press to edit and annotate a new edition of *Out Of The Ashes: The Story of A Survivor*, a 1961 Holocaust memoir by Rabbi Leon Thorne. In addition to his scholarship, Magilow took on two new administrative roles. As of fall 2017, he is serving as the new associate director of the UT Humanities Center. In 2018, he will be leading the first iteration of the newly reconstituted Normandy Scholars Program, an interdisciplinary undergraduate honors program that examines World War II and the Holocaust in the wider context of memory studies. The program consists of an honors seminar in the spring 2018 semester and a 13-day study abroad trip to selected memorial sites in England, France, and Germany.



**Tina Shepardson** was sorry to see her NEH Fellowship year come to an end, but is excited to be

back with students and colleagues. Shepardson spent a lot of last year working on her next book, reading sixth-century Syriac-language sources that tell us about the Christians who never accepted the religious orthodoxy decided at the Council of Chalcedon (451) in the late Roman Empire, and whose teachings survive today in the Syrian Orthodox Church. Last year, she accepted invitations to present research in Lexington, San Antonio, and Chicago, and this year in Ottawa; Durham, North Carolina; and Boston. On campus, she is grateful to have received a Midcareer Research Award from the College of Arts and Sciences and to have been named a Lindsay Young Professor for 2017-19.

**JUDAIC STUDIES PROGRAM**

501 McClung Tower  
Knoxville, TN 37996

[judaic.utk.edu](http://judaic.utk.edu)

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## Giving Opportunities

Over the years, we have been fortunate to receive generous donations from a variety of supporters. These gifts have made it possible to offer scholarships, invite prominent scholars to campus, and offer specialty courses in Jewish Studies.

 Please consider making a gift to Judaic Studies.

Your contributions, no matter the size, play a critical role in supporting academic achievement and research by our students and faculty.

To contribute online, please visit [judaic.utk.edu/friends](http://judaic.utk.edu/friends).

You can also send a contribution to:  
**Fern and Manfred Steinfeld  
Program of Judaic Studies  
513A McClung Tower  
Knoxville TN 37996**

## Voices AND WISDOM

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### JUDAIC STUDIES UPCOMING EVENTS

We hope you make plans to join us for one or all of our upcoming events. Each one is free and open to the public.

THURSDAY  
**November 30, 2017  
4:30 PM**

Strong Hall, Room 103  
Why Didn't Curious  
George Speak?  
*Speaker: Yuliya Komska*

MONDAY  
**December 4, 2017  
1:30 PM**

Hodges Library, Room 253  
**Student Exhibition  
and Film Screening**

MONKEY BUSINESS:  
Curious George's  
creators escape  
from Nazi Europe

SUNDAY  
**February 11, 2018  
3 PM**

Paul Robeson's  
Yiddish Music  
**Tabernacle Baptist Church**  
2137 Martin Luther King Jr.  
Ave., Knoxville, TN 37915

THURSDAY  
**February 22, 2018  
7 PM**

McClung Museum  
Auditorium  
*Karen and Pace Robinson  
Lecture on Modern Israel*

From Brandeis  
and BG to Bibi:  
End of an Era in  
Israel-Diaspora  
Relations?  
*Speaker: David Ellenson*

WEDNESDAY  
**March 7, 2018  
5:30 PM**

McClung Museum  
Auditorium  
Out of the Ashes:  
Testimonies from  
the Crematorium  
of Auschwitz  
*Speaker: Nicholas Chare*