

# The NEWSLETTER of the FERN & MANFRED STEINFELD Program in Judaic Studies

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**



## From the Head of Religious Studies



Dear Friends,

Once again, Professor Gilya Schmidt has produced a most exciting record of the wonderful intellectual and cultural contributions being made by the Judaic Studies Program. The program is driven by the energy, vision, and fine organizational skills of its Director. The Department of Religious Studies, the UTK campus, the Jewish as well as the wider Knoxville community, are all enriched by the resident and visiting scholars and the compelling lectures and events organized under the auspices of the program. Our gratitude also goes to Dean Bruce Bursten and the local and national donors. Thank you, Gilya!

Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Ph.D.  
Head, Department of Religious Studies

## Dear Friends of Judaic Studies,



**W**ith the beginning of the new year at the university, the new year in the Jewish calendar can't be far

behind. Sometimes our academic lives are settled before the High Holy Days begin, and sometimes, when they are early as they are this year, we are still evolving. It is nevertheless good to know that there is another exciting year ahead of us, a year full of eager students, exciting professors, and powerful programming. This is the eighteenth year of the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic

Studies—a year of life, continued life and new life—and we are grateful to all those who have made our program possible in the past and who contribute to our growth and success in the future. These are difficult economic times, and we are so thankful for your continued support of our endeavors.

We are delighted with our third Schusterman Visiting Israel Professor, our second year of Hebrew classes with a highly competent teacher, and our colleagues here at UT whose continued academic achievements make us all proud.

In the newsletter you will also be able to read about my activities during this past year. This new year promises to be busy with an academic program review for Religious Studies, my involvement

with the Leadership Knoxville curriculum committee, a regional conference as well as several national conferences, service on the UT Press Board of Directors, mentoring, search committees, other university duties, and not least, the Jewish community.

I am also able to make a contribution to the quality of instruction of Arabic at UT. Four years ago, while Head of Religious Studies, I wrote a federal grant to try and rebuild the program to teach Arabic at UT; it was, however, not funded. Two years ago, my colleague Professor Erec Koch, Head of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures, expressed an interest in revisiting the grant, and together we retooled it twice. This year, our proposal was funded by the Department of Education for a

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Dear Friends *continued from page 1*

two-year period. This major effort, supported generously by the College of Arts and Sciences, calls for the infusion of some courses with Arab culture, the enhancement of other courses with more Arab culture, instruction in Arabic language, and the establishment of up to two Study Abroad programs. The initiative will hopefully lead to a minor and eventually also a major in Arabic Language and Arab Culture. My gratitude to Professor Koch for his willingness to collaborate as project co-director.

We are looking forward to exciting programming this year—lectures and readings by poet Marge Piercy, organized by Professor Marilyn Kallet, and a lecture by art historian Alec Mishory. We will also enjoy a visit by Professor Changgang Guo, Dean of the Graduate School

at Shanghai University, who invited me to participate in the Holocaust conference at Shanghai University in 2007. My colleague, Professor Xu Xin, Director of the Glazer Center for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University, will visit us in January of 2011. Please look for information about these events.

Wishing you a Shanah Tovah, a sweet and prosperous year, full of health and of peace.

With best wishes,

Gilya G. Schmidt, Ph. D.  
Director  
The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies and Professor  
Department of Religious Studies

The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies offers two scholarships:

- THE FERN AND MANFRED STEINFELD SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN JUDAIC STUDIES
- DR. RUBEN ROBINSON MEMORIAL FUND

Students interested in the criteria should check the Judaic Studies website at <http://web.utk.edu/~judaic>, or contact any of the faculty affiliated with the Judaic Studies Program.

## JUDAIC STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

### ADAM SCHWARTZ



Adam Schwartz and Gilya Schmidt in Jerusalem

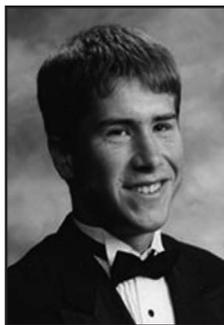
Our first scholarship recipient, Adam Schwartz, received a Dr. Ruben Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship in Fall 2008 towards a semester in Israel. Adam graduated in 2009 and is currently living in Israel. During my visit to Jerusalem in Spring 2010 we met for coffee to catch up on each others' lives.

### RICHARD SCHOW ADAMS

In 2009-2010, Richard Schow Adams was a Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Judaic Studies Scholarship recipient. At the time, he was a senior in Judaic Studies with a Spanish minor at the University of Tennessee. At age 25, he speaks

three languages fluently and is working on his fourth, Hebrew.

We are delighted that Rich



2009-2010 Steinfeld Scholarship recipient Rich Adams

completed his studies at the University of Tennessee in May of 2010. Our program was much enriched by the presence of this excellent and personable student. Rich

was accepted into the Middle-Eastern Studies Program at the University of Utah, where he is working towards an M. A. in Middle-East History, with a focus on the Ancient Near East. He was also awarded a position as a T. A. for the Introduction to Islam course. Rich enjoys swimming, movies, and the mountains, and is active in his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We wish Rich and his wife Natali all the best for the future.

### AMY MARLO CANTER



2010-2011 Steinfeld Scholarship recipient Amy Canter

Amy Canter first received a Dr. Ruben Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship in the Fall of 2008 towards a semester studying at Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva,

Israel. This year she has received the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Judaic Studies Scholarship. Amy is on the executive board of Hillel at the University of Tennessee and a double major in Judaic Studies and Religious Studies, and she also studies Hebrew. She hopes to one day be a professor and is currently the Judaic Studies teacher at Heska Amuna Synagogue. Amy has been to Israel several times since her first trip to study there, most recently she volunteered in the Israeli army through Sar-El this summer

Scholarship Recipients *continued from page 2*

and plans to move there after graduation.

**MARK ASHER KLINE**



2010-2011 Steinfeld Scholarship recipient Mark Kline

In Spring 2010, a Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Judaic Studies Scholarship was awarded to Mark Kline. He is again receiving this scholarship for academic

year 2010-11. Mark's interest in Judaism and Jewish culture began approximately 15 years ago as an informal, personal search for a workable perspective to understanding humanity's function and place in the world. The opportunity to study the history, religion, and culture of the Jewish faith and society in a structured setting is, therefore, very appealing. In conjunction with this personal search, his hope is to eventually teach at the college level in an area related to his current interests.

**MIKE LOUIS DEROCCO**



2010-2011 Robinson Scholarship recipient Mike Derocco

In 2009, Mike Derocco joined the program as a major. Mike is a senior at The University of Tennessee majoring in Judaic Studies and Religious Studies. He is on the swim team for the school and is this year's co-captain. Mike explains that initially, upon entering college, he was not sure of what he wanted to study or even do afterwards for that matter. However, as his first year went by he found that he had a desire to study religion and history. He looked through the catalogue and saw that there was a major for Judaic Studies, and right away it sparked his interest. He is most intrigued with Judaic Studies because Judaism was founded nearly 4,000 years ago with Abraham and Sarah and has existed throughout history up to the present time. Throughout the historic

timeline the Jewish community has had an impact on the world and has survived through times of exile and genocide. They have been, and still are, a target of persecution, and Mike believes that the best hope for peace is the understanding of each other's differences. This is why he is fascinated with the study of religion, since it often serves as the guideline for how people live their lives. As for career goals, Mike has always had a desire to serve in the military and help other people. Swimming has been a major part of his life, as it has opened up many opportunities, and he still wants to pursue it; he is currently in the process of making the decision to join the Navy as a rescue swimmer. With this career, Mike will be able to do the things he loves, which are swimming, traveling, helping others, and more importantly, meeting people from all over the world and sharing the knowledge he has gained from the University of Tennessee.

In 2010-2011 Amy and Mark are receiving Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Judaic Studies Scholarships, and Mike will receive a Dr. Ruben Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship for their studies.

**SCHUSTERMANIA AT UT**

**SCHUSTERMAN VISITING ISRAELI PROFESSOR ALEC MISHORY**



Rosalind Hackett (left), Michela Andreatta, Alec Mishory, Gilya Schmidt, Bruce Bursten at August 2010 Schusterman reception

For a third year in a row, the American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, the College of Arts and

Sciences, and our friends in the Jewish community have joined together to provide the funds for a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor. We were tremendously enriched by the presence of our previous two scholars, Dr. Rivka Ribak from Haifa University and Professor Igal Bursztyn from Tel Aviv University.

A hearty welcome to our third scholar whose activities are highlighted in the UT press release

that follows:

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Department of Religious Studies, has been selected to host a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor for the 2010-2011 academic year.

Professor Alec Mishory is an art historian, author and lecturer at the Open University in Tel Aviv, Israel. Mishory has spent the last year as a Schusterman

Schustermania continued from page 3

Visiting Professor at Rice University in Houston, Texas. During the coming year, he will teach and lecture at UT and participate in outreach efforts to campus organizations and Knoxville's Jewish community.

This is the third consecutive year that UT Knoxville has been selected to host a Schusterman Visiting Professor. Only 20 American universities are chosen each year for the program, which is funded by the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

"We are thrilled that Professor Mishory will be joining us for the next year," said Gilya Schmidt, Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies. "His deep knowledge of art history, including European, American, Israeli, and Jewish secular and religious visual culture, will be a wonderful resource for our students, our faculty and staff, and the entire Knoxville community."

Mishory will teach courses on Jewish and Israeli art each semester during the academic year. He holds a doctorate in art history from the City University of New York, a master's in art history from Tel Aviv University, and a bachelor's in fine art and art education from

Webster University, St. Louis, MO. He has lectured at Hunter College in New York and the State Art Teachers' College and Beer Sheva Teachers' College in Israel.

In addition to his academic posts, Mishory was art adviser to the Office of the President of Israel and served in the cultural affairs division of the Israeli government's Ministry of Education and Culture. He also was the art critic for *Haaretz*, the daily Israeli newspaper, curated several exhibits of contemporary Israeli art and crafts, and published extensively on themes and subjects in Jewish-Israeli visual culture.



Alec Mishory and Michela Andreatta at Schusterman reception

Our gratitude goes to the American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise and to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee who made this undertaking possible. We would also like to thank our donors from the Jewish community:

- Barry and Heidi Allen
- Jeff and Nancy Becker
- Bernie and Barbara Bernstein
- Bruce Bursten
- Arnold and Susan Cohen
- Guilford and Diane Glazer



Stephen Rosen and Alec Mishory at Schusterman reception



Mel and Evan Sturm at Schusterman reception

- Mitch and Margy Goldman
- Heska Amuna Synagogue
- Richard and Jacki Imbrey
- Herb and Elise Jacobs
- Knoxville Jewish Alliance
- Larry and Kay Leibowitz
- Harvey and Marilyn Liberman
- Steve and Evelyn Oberman
- Natalie Robinson
- Pace and Karen Robinson
- Alexandra Rosen
- Stephen and Kim Rosen
- Gilya Schmidt
- Alan Solomon and Andrea Cartwright
- Mel Sturm
- Temple Beth El
- Moshe and Ilana Siman-Tov
- Barry and Annette Winston



Arnold Cohen and Alec Mishory at Schusterman reception

## GOOD BYE TO AND FROM IGAL BURSZTYN

Many of you met last year's Schusterman Visiting Israel Professor, film director Igal Bursztyn, and enjoyed his witty comments and gentle demeanor.

During Professor Bursztyn's time

in Knoxville, we could not resist the temptation to organize a screening of some of his films, and some of you enjoyed the opportunity to attend the screenings and chats with the director.

The steering committee was comprised of Robert Blitt, Michael Booker, Igal Bursztyn, Lynn Champion, Marco Di Giulio, Jeff Gubitz, Daniel Magilow, Bernard Rosenblatt, and Gilya Schmidt (Chair).

Bursztyn continued from page 3



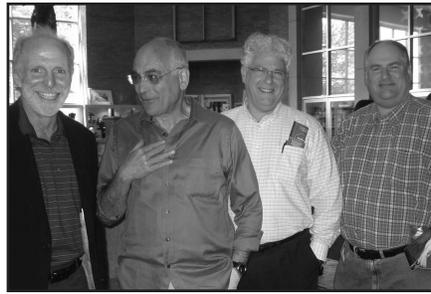
Film Festival Poster 2010

We were delighted with the wonderful collaboration by the College of Arts and Sciences' Office of Outreach and Communications, the Media Service of the university, Graphic Arts, McClung Museum, Ready-for-the-World, and Aramark Catering. The two separate programs, on Sunday afternoon and evening, April 18, and Tuesday evening, April 20, brought about 250 visitors to see Igal's films and hear his interesting and profound explanations and clarifications. Much gratitude to everyone who helped make this event a success.



Audience at film festival listens to Igal Bursztyn

Thank you very much, Igal. We thoroughly enjoyed your stay in Knoxville and the fun film festival. We miss you and wish you and Ruta all the best.



Dean Bruce Bursten, Igal Bursztyn, Jeff Becker, and Stephen Nagler at Film Festival



Mary Linda Schwarzbart, Arnold Schwarzbart, and Moshe Siman-Tov at Film Festival

It appears that Igal misses us as well. He sent this message:

Dear friends,

Months have passed since my departure from Knoxville. Now back in Tel Aviv I feel a bit like the hero of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* who, on a furlough from the trenches of WWI, wonders where his real home is: in the mud among soldiers or in his clean, empty parents house in which he was happily brought up? Except that there is nothing further from the relaxed experience of teaching at the Religious Studies Department than the deadly experience of the battlefields on the Somme. Nor would Tel Aviv (if you follow the news) hold up to a comparison with a clean, happy German household. But the sense of wonder remains. Somehow Knoxville and its university have become part of my intimacy. I still hear Tina's laughter echoing in the corridors of the Religious Studies Department, Rosalind's wise and witty remarks on music (which I often repeat here in Tel Aviv, sometimes as my own), Gilya's lovely smile, scholarly support, and Sabbath songs (which, if I tried to repeat with my horrible musical ear, I would probably be sent back to Knoxville immediately).

What have I learned from my two semesters at UT? Strangely—a little about America and much about Israel. By now I realize (I didn't know before my stay in Tennessee) that America is not New York—an extended, filled with hormones version of Tel Aviv—but a Tel-Aviv dream of relaxation, friendliness, and life in nature. This happy vision would sometimes be marred by the sights of the homeless on the side of the road leading to North Broadway, but even so my overall impression of Knoxville remains a pleasant one.

I've learned even more about Israel. From Heather, one of my favorite second semester students, about Israeli poetry. I envied her remarks and insights into the poems by Rachel and Dalia Ravikovitch and wished they were my own. And from Caleb, my first semester film fan, I got new critical perspectives on Israeli cinema. In Israel I teach cinema—but not Israeli cinema and certainly not Israeli history. Teaching in Knoxville gave me an opportunity to look back both on Israeli cinema and on Israeli history on which I have seldom reflected and have always taken for granted. Now, through these lectures, I've discovered some fascinating new aspects of which I was quite unaware. Israeli cinema, particularly in its last and qualitatively best decade, tends to ignore Israeli history, probably for financial reasons—historical films need big budgets.

So back home, still on vacation from teaching (we start in October), I am at my computer, toiling on a script for a film, the action of which takes place in the Land of Israel in the year 1905. The idea for it came to me as I taught and talked at UT in Knoxville. Well, historical films are expensive and our budgets are tight, but if it ever gets off the ground I should dedicate it to Knoxville and to my wonderful colleagues and students in the Religious Studies Department with whom I had such a good, constructive, and fruitful time.

Igal

## DIANE AND GUILFORD GLAZER TEACHING FELLOW IN MODERN HEBREW



Marco Di Giulio (left) at Film Festival with Igal Bursztyn, Moshe Siman-Tov and visitor

As you will recall, we were excited last year to be able to welcome our first teacher for Modern Hebrew. Due to the generosity of Diane and Guilford Glazer we were able to hire Dr. Marco Di Giulio as the Diane and Guilford Glazer Teaching Fellow in Modern Hebrew. Fortunately for Marco, he received a tenure-track position at another university and left Knoxville. We wish Marco and his family all the best for the future.

Marco sent us this message:

It was exactly a year ago when I first arrived with my family in the States for what we thought was a one-year adventure. I will never forget that day. Gilya came to pick us up at the airport and made us all feel immediately at home. I would have never imagined that that year would be so significant to my career and to my life.

In Knoxville and at UT in particular, I found a supportive environment that helped me make progress both in teaching and research. The students of the elementary and intermediate classes were eager to learn Hebrew and interested in Israeli culture. I also had the opportunity to share my enthusiasm about Israeli literature with the local Jewish community at the Arnstein Jewish Center,

and to travel across the country to participate in major conferences.

With the support of Gilya, and Igal Bursztyn, I received a fellowship for the 2010 summer program of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University and in Israel. Together with 15 scholars, I gained a deeper knowledge of the multifaceted Israeli society, its culture and politics. The ten days spent in Israel were most enriching and included classes and meetings with leading scholars in the field. This has been a wonderful learning experience that will be crucial to develop courses in my new home institution, Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania where I currently hold the position of Assistant Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature.

Marco, Maya, Noam, and Gali

## DIANE AND GUILFORD GLAZER AND LEA AND ALLEN ORWITZ TEACHING FELLOW IN MODERN HEBREW



2010 Glazer and Orwitz Fellow Michela Andreatta

We are delighted that we received new, additional funding for the Modern Hebrew position this year.

Our friends, the Glazers,

are joined by

Orwitz who have

generously decided to help fund the instruction of Modern Hebrew at the University of Tennessee. We are grateful to both families for their support.

Our search for a new teacher of Modern Hebrew was successful. We are joined this year by Dr. Michela Andreatta from Italy. Dr. Andreatta is teaching Beginning Modern Hebrew and Intermediate Hebrew

and is also organizing a Hebrew corner with conversation and text study for additional Hebrew immersion.

Dr. Andreatta received her Ph.D. in Hebrew Studies from the University of Turin (Italy) in 2003. Her books and articles are mainly devoted to Hebrew literature, especially poetry, written in early modern Italy. She has been a Fellow at the Harvard Centre for Jewish Studies and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and an adjunct-fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Recently, she has been a member of the 2010 European Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies, "Reading in Hebrew in the Early-Modern Period," at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. She

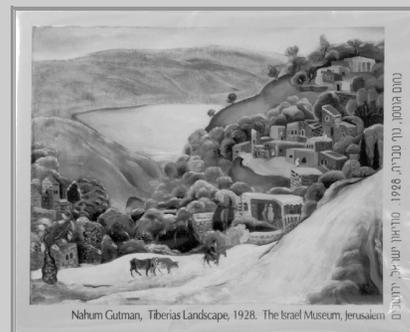
פינת עברית

HEBREW CORNER

Sponsored by the

Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies

Come explore Hebrew language and culture in an informal setting. If you already know some Hebrew and would like the chance to practice conversation, get a taste of Hebrew literature, or discover Israel through film, come join us on Wednesdays at Hodges Library, Room 251 (near the Media Center), 5-6 p.m.



Some texts will be available in English translation, but discussions will focus on the Hebrew texts and films, so some reading knowledge of Hebrew will be necessary. For more information, please contact the instructor, Dr. Michela Andreatta (mandreat@utk.edu), or call (865) 974-6484.

Wednesday, 5-7 p.m., Hodges Library, Room 251

is currently working on a book exploring the literary aspects of Hebrew epitaph writing in 16th-18th century Italy.

For the Spring semester, Dr. Andreatta has been offered a fellowship as adjunct fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The fellowship will allow her to attend some of the weekly seminars organized at the Center on this year's theme,

"Converts and Conversion to and from Judaism".

Dr Andreatta will also be attending the conference, "Patronage and the Sacred Book in the Medieval Mediterranean," organized by the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas of Madrid and the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry, to be held at Brandeis University on October 18-19, 2010 (program at [http://www.congresos.cchs.csic.es/patronage\\_and\\_the\\_sacred\\_book/content/program](http://www.congresos.cchs.csic.es/patronage_and_the_sacred_book/content/program)).

At the conference she will deliver a paper entitled, "The Translator and His Patron: Flavius Mithridates, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and the Hebrew-Latin Translation of Gersonides' *Commentary on Song of Songs*."

Later this semester, Dr Andreatta will present at the Association for Jewish Studies 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference, this year to be held in Boston, December 19-21.

## JUDAIC STUDIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We are very fortunate to have the support of several departments at UT and are grateful for the outstanding faculty who serve on our Advisory Committee and whose courses are cross-listed with Judaic Studies. It is always a source of pride to read about each colleague's wonderful achievements during the previous year.

### ● Robert Blitt

In addition to making numerous presentations in Tennessee and elsewhere around the United States in 2009-2010, Professor Robert Blitt of the College of Law participated in international academic conferences in Malaysia, Hungary, and the Russian Federation. In October 2009, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's radio program, *The Spirit of Things*, featured an hour long interview with Professor Blitt, where he discussed issues relating to the internationally-recognized right to freedom of religion or belief enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments. His most recent scholarship forthcoming this fall in the *Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights* and *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* addresses the challenge of "Defamation of Religion" within the context of

international law and developments related to church-state relations in Russia.

We congratulate Robert, Stephanie, and Noah on the new addition to their family, baby Idan!



Baby Idan Eli Blitt 2010

We're thrilled to share news of the arrival of a beautiful baby boy...

### **Idan Eli Blitt!**

October 3, 2010 at 12:18 am  
7 pounds, 13 ounces  
20 1/4 inches long  
*Mom & baby are doing great*

### ● Palmira Brummett

Professor Brummett spent the year as an American Council of Learned Societies Fellow, working on a project on the Ottoman Adriatic 1500-1700, and as a Visiting Scholar at Brown University. She presented the following papers during the last year:

"The Ottomans: Inheriting, Creating, and Projecting Empire," for the panel, "Empire in the Middle East,"

World Congress of Middle East Studies, Barcelona, July 2010.

"Placing the Ottomans in the Mediterranean World," for the symposium, "Beyond Dominant Paradigms in Ottoman and Middle Eastern/North African Studies: A Tribute to Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj," Binghamton, State University of New York, April 24, 2010.

"Mapping The Early Modern Ottoman Empire: Imagination, Circulation, & the Image/Text Interface," Brown University, Providence, October 2009.

### ● Nancy Henry

Professor Henry continues work on her "Life of George Eliot" to be



Nancy Henry (right) with Amy Billone and Andrew Lallier at Dickens Universe conference



Nancy Henry at Cambridge University

published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2012. She recently completed an article entitled, "The Romola Code: 'Men of Appetites' in George Eliot's Historical Novel," forthcoming in the journal *Victorian Literature and Culture*. This year she presented papers in Vancouver, Austin, TX, and Glasgow, Scotland. In August, she attended the Dickens Universe conference in Santa Cruz, California with colleague Amy Billone (Dept. of English) and graduate student Andrew Lallier. In September, she was a Visiting Fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge where she conducted research on George Eliot's connections to Cambridge.

#### ● Heather Hirschfeld

Professor Hirschfeld devoted the academic year 2009-2010 to her book project, "The End of Satisfaction: Drama and Repentance on the Early Modern Stage," for which she received an NEH Fellowship. The manuscript, whose i's and t's will be dotted and crossed by the end of the year, includes a chapter on *The Merchant of Venice*, a version of which appeared in the Winter 2010 issue of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* under the title "'And he hath enough': The Penitential Economies of *The Merchant of Venice*." In addition to this article, Heather published a brief essay on *King Lear*, "'Am I in France?': *King Lear* and Source," in the venerable journal *Notes and Queries* (2009) and a study of *The Revenger's Tragedy* for the *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Tragedy* (2010). She expects an additional solicited essay on Thomas Middleton and dramatic collaboration, for the Cambridge volume *Thomas Middleton in Context*, to be in print by the end of the year, to be followed by another essay for a similar Cambridge volume, this time on the under-rated Caroline playwright Richard Brome. Other highlights from 2009-2010 include

overseeing the English Department's prize-winning undergraduate thesis, on the image of Jephthah's daughter in English Renaissance drama, and giving a presentation for the UT Alumni Summer College in July. She is looking forward to assuming the directorship of Marco, the University's Medieval and Renaissance Center, at the start of 2011.

#### ● Vejas Liulevicius

Professor Liulevicius (History) published his second book, *The German Myth of the East, 1800 to the Present* (Oxford University Press), a study of how German culture has perceived the lands and peoples of Eastern Europe over the last two centuries and the concept of a "civilizing mission." This summer he was promoted to full professor. He was also elected president of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies.

#### ● Daniel H. Magilow

In connection with the University of Alabama, Huntsville's exhibition, "Dora and the V-2: Space Labor in the Space Age," Professor Magilow lectured in both Huntsville and in Knoxville about a rare collection of color images by the German propaganda photographer Walter Frenz. Frenz's photographs depict concentration camp inmates conscripted into forced labor to help build the V-2 rocket, which formed an important technological basis for the post-war American space program.

Professor Magilow also organized a panel for the 2009 German Studies Association Conference about the use of images of Hitler, Nazism, and the Holocaust in exploitation cinema. This work, which he also presented to the Faculty Research Seminar on Germany and Central Europe at UT, will appear in a forthcoming essay collection *Nazisploitation!: The*

*History, Aesthetics, and Politics of the Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema*.

Professor Magilow's current work in Jewish Studies concerns the private correspondence of the 19th-century German-Jewish legal theorist Eduard Gans. Gans was one of the first Jewish professors at a German university and an important force behind the movement known as the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* ("the science of Judaism"), an attempt to apply critical scientific methods to Jewish culture. Gans famously quipped, "I belong to that unfortunate class of human beings, which is hated because it is uneducated, and persecuted because it tries to educate itself."

And finally, Professor Magilow has continued his work as the Managing Editor and Book Review Editor of the *Journal of Jewish Identities*, a peer-reviewed journal that considers all aspects of Jewish identity, past and present.

#### ● Amy Neff

Professor Neff's article (co-written with Anne Derbes) on the imagery of the bleeding devil was published in a group of essays honoring the Byzantinist Thomas F. Mathews. This strange image is seen in a group of late medieval Italian paintings, in which the demons, the embodiments of evil, are given characteristics that make them seem related to groups perceived as minorities or "others"—women and Jews. She also presented a paper on this topic at the 45<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University.

In the summer, Professor Neff continued research on Byzantine and Venetian influences on northern Italian painting in the best way possible, with a trip to northern Italy. She was able to visit many small, relatively inaccessible castles and churches in the Dolomites and Alto Adige, regions rich in medieval wall-paintings.

● **Marilyn Kallet**

Professor Kallet is directing the creative writing program again, after a hiatus of a few years. Among other well-known authors, Marge Piercy will be a guest of the creative writing program, in association with the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies, Ready for the World, the Commission for Women, and Temple Beth El of Knoxville. Marge Piercy's residency is October 17-19th.

Marilyn Kallet taught another poetry workshop in Auvillar, France, for the Virginia Center for the



Marilyn Kallet at cafe in Auvillar, France

Creative Arts in France. "O Taste and See: Writing the Senses in Deep France," took place in May. Poets in attendance included UT alums Janet Warman and Tomi Wiley, who also edits *Milk & Ink*, an anthology of poetry about mothers who write; UT

doctoral students Melissa Rack and Darren Jackson were in attendance, as was undergraduate poet John Vaught. University of Nebraska/Lincoln professor Grace Bauer participated in the workshop, as did Professor Barbara Bogue of Ball State University.

Five of Professor Kallet's poems are in the Fall 2010 issue of *Prairie Schooner*. Her poems have appeared recently online at *Blue Fifth Review* and *Rougarou*, among others. Her interview at *Milk & Ink* (September, 2010) can be found online at <http://milkandink.com/milk-ink-spotlight-marilyn-kallet>.

**Leaving the House**

*Auvillar, France*

You leave the house in search of a newspaper and a poem. Poems *partout*, some invisible. Ashes have been censored by American newspapers. Best not mention ashes too soon. At certain altitudes, day is black like night, says *Le Monde*. Volcano sky.

French crows grow three times bigger than American, size of hawks. And the constant bird song? "*Merles*," someone said. Madame Merle inhabits an apartment in the town square with her cats. Madame Blackbird.

Best not to arrive at blackbirds so soon. Creep up on them like the old cat, Vegas. Maybe that cat will get lucky. She senses you near the window and scats—she knows where the hidden storehouse of poems resides.

You search for Baudelaire at the end of your alley but only tourists and pilgrims are revealed. Some of the pilgrims have rented fat donkeys. They are cheaper to run than your Citroën. Another cat runs by with a small black creature in its jaws.

You have not contacted the aging French survivors who live in Florida. What are you afraid of? Are you waiting for them to die-- *Je suis desolée!* They are Jews like you. There! We have arrived at the ashes and those still breathing.

A few Righteous families in Auvillar hid Jews. The Hidden Children are in their eighties and nineties now. They have email in Florida. What will you say to them? Say hello, I am in the village that hid you but not others?

*C'est la vie*, the old women say. Since last year one of the pretty girls has run away from her husband with a pilgrim. To the north of France. She sends email that she's cold. Her ex says he's over it, but when he goes to serve the American a glass of rosé, he pours olive oil instead. Do Americans pretend less? "I love you or I do not live at all," Bill says. "Changing of meats gladdens the pigs," quoth the blackbird, Benjamin Péret.

Marilyn Kallet

### ● Tina Shepardson

This past year Professor Shepardson had the good fortune to receive an ACLS Fellowship, which allowed her to be on leave for the year to work full-time on her book about fourth-century Christianity. Although she missed the energy and excitement of teaching, she admits that it was not hard to get used to having the extra time to research and write that usually goes into preparation for class lectures and grading student papers and exams. Professor Shepardson remarks that if only we could live concurrent parallel lives, she would happily devote one to teaching and the other to writing and research. As it is, this fall she returns to the bifurcated world in which her full-time interest in each must somehow fit into one very busy life.

While on leave Professor Shepardson continued to run the faculty seminar on "The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity," since it remains a highlight for her of working at UT. The opportunity to discuss works in progress with the interdisciplinary group of scholars in related fields, and to hear about their work and the new work of other colleagues around the country, facilitates and improves her own research. Professor Shepardson was, therefore, very pleased to win a Regional Development Grant from the American Academy of Religion that, together with funding from UT's Marco Institute and Humanities' Initiative, allowed her to organize a second annual Southeast Regional Late Antiquity Workshop on campus last spring, a series of lectures by regional scholars that was well-attended by local as well as regional students and faculty. It was through this project that Professor Shepardson had the opportunity to meet Dr. Elizabeth Alexander (UVA), who presented her work "The Textualization of Ritual and the Ritualization of Text in Ancient Judaism," and looks forward to remaining in touch with her in the future.



Tina Shepardson (right) in the souq in Aleppo.



Tina Shepardson (center) wading in the Euphrates.

Happily, this past year Professor Shepardson also received an Individual Research Grant from the American Academy of Religion, which allowed her to spend three weeks in Syria and Turkey conducting some of the remaining research for her current book project. Although she had been to Antakya in southern Turkey before for work, she had never had the opportunity to travel to Syria, and it was an incredible experience. In addition to studying the early Christian remains in and around Aleppo in the north, Professor Shepardson also travelled along the Euphrates River toward the Iraq border in order to see the remains at Dura Europos, a Roman city destroyed in the third century C.E., where scholars discovered a breath-taking early synagogue. Having viewed the architectural remains *in situ*, she continued on to Damascus (via Palmyra) where the National Museum houses the ancient synagogue's breath-taking frescoed plaster walls and tiled ceiling. When she returned to Istanbul she also saw for the first time two famous inscriptions from Jerusalem that are in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum: the famous Temple stone that is inscribed with a warning to prevent Gentiles from

entering into the next courtyard, and the famous Siloam Inscription from the eighth century B.C.E. Between the early Christian sites, the sites of significance in Islam such as the eighth-century Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, and these Jewish artifacts, the trip provided an abundance of rich material not only for her research but for her teaching as well.

Professor Shepardson continues to present papers on her research, and she accepted an invitation this past year to present her research at a conference in Paris, in addition to her annual presentation at the North American Patristics Society's meeting in Chicago. Her article "Burying Babybas: Meletius and the Christianization of Antioch" appeared in print, and her article "Interpreting the Ninevites' Repentance: Jewish and Christian Exegetes in Late Antique Mesopotamia" is forthcoming in 2011.



Tina Shepardson taking a float plane to the beginning of the canoe trip.

Hiking, kayaking, canoeing, biking, and a new love for "hot power yoga" help Professor Shepardson to keep life in perspective, and she ended her summer with a fantastic three-week canoe trip in the Canadian arctic, something that she used to do more often and was glad to have the chance to do again. This trip travelled through the stunning mountain views of the northern Yukon and was filled with the usual pleasures and adventures that such trips always bring, from startled grizzly bears to the peaceful simplicity of having nothing more (and nothing less) to do each day than get yourself safely further down the river, fed, and settled into

a new campsite. She is enjoying being back in the hustle and bustle of campus life, including presenting a recent lecture for the Pregame Faculty Showcase to football fans before a home game, and she looks forward to sharing the new information and insights that she has gained this year.

● **Thank you to Charlie Reynolds**

Last year, Charlie Reynolds wrote his swan song for the newsletter. As an afterglow of his time at the university, we want to go on record as noting that we miss Charlie a lot, but report that he has enjoyed himself and continues to find plenty of fulfilling activities during his retirement years.

● **Johanna Stiebert**

Professor Stiebert has been on leave for the Fall and Spring semesters of 2009-2010. In this time she has been exploring the possibility of accepting a full-time post at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds, England. She has taught one course each semester (a Level 2 course on the Hebrew Scriptures and a Level 3 course on Ideologies of Hebrew Bible texts and readings), as well as overseeing courses on Key Texts for Religious Studies, which are taught in small groups by graduate students. Additionally, she has been personal tutor to the students taking the one-year taught Masters program. Several of these students come from other parts of the world—such as the Philippines, Nigeria and Ghana, as well as one student from the USA. Johanna has enjoyed being back in Great Britain, though it has also made her appreciate how fortunate she has been at the University of Tennessee. Professor Stiebert visited Knoxville for the month of August 2010 and heartily enjoyed catching up with colleagues and friends. This year, Professor Stiebert is on research leave for two consecutive semesters, completing a book on the father-daughter relationships

depicted in the Hebrew Bible. The book combines a range of philological, social-scientific and literary approaches. She has also published one article in the journal *Missionalia* (on the term “holocaust” and its inappropriateness for discussing the HIV/AIDS pandemic in southern Africa) and has another forthcoming in *Biblical Interpretation* (on a postcolonial reading called “Imbokodo,” Lemuel’s mother of Proverbs 31 and a new Bible called “The Peoples’ Bible”); a third paper (recently presented at

the European Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Tartu, Estonia) reflecting on Ezekiel’s temple vision (Ezekiel 40-48) in the light of the fantastic architectural design for the One World Center on Ground Zero by Daniel Libeskind is also being considered for publication. Alongside her paper at the SBL, Professor Stiebert has also presented at research days at the Universities of Leeds and Derby and presented a series of lectures to the York William Temple Association.

## J.P. DESSEL ACTIVITIES MANFRED AND FERN STEINFELD PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT JEWISH HISTORY

Dr. Dessel has been on leave this past year.

## JUDAIC STUDIES LECTURE SERIES

### RECENT LECTURES

During academic year 2009-10, the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies organized or co-sponsored four lectures in addition to the Igal Bursztyn film screening.

On October 1, 2009 Schusterman Visiting Israel Professor **Igal Bursztyn** from Tel Aviv University spoke on “Film and Zionism: Cinema in Jewish Cultural Renewal from 1896-2009.” This lecture was cosponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, Departments of Religious Studies and History, Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Fund, University of Tennessee, along with the Knoxville Jewish Alliance, and the Jewish Community of Knoxville.

On November 22 and 23, Professor **Alvin Rosenfeld** of Indiana University presented two lectures in Knoxville. His first lecture was entitled, “The Return of Antisemitism,” and another on, “What is the ‘New’ Antisemitism; and What Can We do about it?” The

lectures were co-sponsored by the Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Fund, Departments of Religious Studies and History, Hodges Better English Fund, College of Law, Howard Baker Center for Public Policy, University of Tennessee, and the Knoxville Jewish Alliance.

On March 4, 2010 Professor **Alec Mishory**, Open University of Israel, and 2009-2010 Schusterman Visiting Israel Professor at Rice University, presented a lecture on “Zionist Eroticism for ‘The New Jew’ as Advocated by Boris Schatz and Ze’ev Raban.” The lecture was co-sponsored by the Departments of Religious Studies and History, the Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Fund, School of Art, University of Tennessee, along with the American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, and the Knoxville Jewish Alliance.

On March 18, **Laura Levitt**, Professor of Religion, Temple University, presented “Revisiting My Father’s Visual Archive.” This lecture was sponsored by

the Research Seminar on Modern Germany and Central Europe, University of Tennessee.

**UPCOMING LECTURES**

**Fall 2010**

Powerful readings and an author's chat were offered by poet Marge Piercy on October 17 and 18.

**Marge Piercy**  
JOHN C. HODGES WRITER IN RESIDENCE  
Reading Poetry of Jewish Identity  
October 17-19, 2010

Marge Piercy is the author of 17 books of poetry, 17 books of fiction, and other works. Novels include *He, She, It, Gone to Soldiers*. Poetry includes *To Be of Use: The Art of Blessing the Day; Poems with a Jewish Theme; Colors Passing Through Us*.

Sponsored by the Creative Writing Program in association with the John C. Hodges Better English Fund; the Manfred and Manfred Steinfeld Judaic Studies Program, Writers in the Library, the Commission for Women, and Ready for the World

**EVENTS**

**The Art of Blessing the Day: Poems of Ritual and Remembrance**  
Sunday, October 17, 7 a.m.  
Temple Beth El, 3037 Kingston Pike

**Informal Chat with Marge Piercy**  
Monday, October 18, 3-4 p.m.  
1210-1211 McClung Tower, UT Campus

**Poetry of Jewish Identity, a reading**  
Monday, October 18, 7 p.m.  
University Center Auditorium, UT Campus  
Reception and signing to follow

For more information:  
Marilyn Kallet  
mkallet@utk.edu, 865-974-6947  
Temple Beth El  
865-524-3521

All programs are free and open to the public.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE

On October 27, Professor Changgang Guo, Dean of the Graduate School, University of Shanghai, lectured on religion in contemporary China.

The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies presents

**Professor Changgang Guo**  
Shanghai University  
"Religion in the Context of the Social Development of Contemporary China"

Wednesday, October 27, 2010, 7 p.m.  
McClung Museum Auditorium  
Reception to Follow

The lecture is free and open to the public.  
Co-sponsored by the Graduate School, the Departments of Religious Studies and Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures, and the Asian Studies Program at the University of Tennessee.

Professor Alec Mishory, 2010-11 Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor, will present an inaugural lecture on Jewish art on November 22, at 7 p.m., in the McClung Museum Auditorium. Please join us.

The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies presents a lecture by

**Professor Alec Mishory**  
Open University of Israel  
2010-2011 Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor

**'Alphabet of Creation':  
Some Aspects of Beauty and Uniqueness of the Hebrew Alphabet**

Ben Shahn, *Alphabet of Creation*, 1963, design for a tapestry, gouache, 16"x49"

Monday, November 22, 2010 at 7 p.m.  
McClung Museum Auditorium  
Reception to Follow

Co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Art, Departments of Religious Studies and History, Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Fund for Judaic Studies, Karen and Pace Robinson Enrichment Fund, University of Tennessee, along with the Knoxville Jewish Alliance, and the Jewish Community of Knoxville.

**Spring 2011**

On January 24, 2011 Professor Xu Xin, Director of the Diane and Guilford Glazer Center for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University will visit Knoxville and speak on the Jews of China.

**GILYA G. SCHMIDT  
ACTIVITIES**

In our eighteenth year of the program, I continue to strive to improve and grow our program. It is helpful not to run the Department of Religious Studies anymore, as I can better focus on the development of private donors, growing our majors, and my scholarship. With visiting faculty in the program, there is also a significant administrative component.

**TEACHING**

In Fall 2009 I again taught two courses after seven years of only teaching one course per semester.

This was a major adjustment for me, especially since one of the courses with more than 50 students was "Introduction to World Religions" (RS 101), which I had to completely redesign as I had not taught a course with this content in about ten years. I focused totally on eastern religions which, with my visits to Japan in 2005 and to China in 2007 and 2008, are of significant interest to me. The second course was RS/JS 381, "Introduction to Judaism," a usual staple for the fall, with about 40 students.

Because of my service as Head of the Department of Religious Studies, I received a zero teaching semester in Spring 2010, which nevertheless became very busy and enjoyable due to the Igal Bursztyn film festival.

This semester, Fall 2010, I am again teaching RS/JS 381, "Introduction to Judaism," with more than 40 students, and RS/JS 385, "Contemporary Jewish Thinkers," about German Jews. About 34 students are in this class.

In Spring 2011 I plan to teach RS/JS 386, "Voices of the Holocaust," and RS/JS 320, "Women in Religion," focusing on women in Judaism.

**RESEARCH**

**"Suezza—No Grazing Land for Jews"**



Hugo and Inge Lang 2010

All good things must come to an end, well sort of. One of the primary accomplishments during my zero teaching semester was the completion of the book manuscript on rural Jews in Süssen, Germany, titled, "Süssen Is Now

Free of Jews—A Not So Romantic Journey Through the Valley of the Fils.” The explorations for this project began in 1999, when I began to search for information on two Jewish families who had settled in the town of Süssen shortly after 1900. The pickings originally were slim, as there did not seem to be any surviving files from the Nazi period, but this fortunately was not so. With persistence, much help from local colleagues, and excellent information at Yad Vashem, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and several German archives, the project grew over the years into a sizeable manuscript, currently under review by an academic press. The original title, “Suezza—No Grazing Land for Jews,” has been updated to “Süssen Is Now Free of Jews—A Not So Romantic Journey Through the Valley of the Fils.” This title, while still focusing on the two families in Süssen, also takes account of Jewish life in Göppingen, Geislingen, and Kirchheim u. d. Teck which have been included in the study.



Lang house in Süssen 2010



Lang house in Süssen with Stolpersteine in sidewalk

When one works on a project, there really is no end. The work is alive, and new sources reveal

themselves continuously. In 2002, I had planned to visit a village in northern Israel, Shavei Zion, because some of Hugo Lang’s relatives from Rexingen had emigrated to Eretz Israel in 1938 in order to escape the Nazi persecution. In 2002, at the height of violent attacks on Israelis, the railroad station in Naharia was bombed. I had planned to take the train from Haifa to Naharia, but decided it was not safe. Only this year did I have the time to resume my queries into any possible survivors of these Rexingen Jews.



Alisa Klapfer, Shavei Zion 2010

To my very great surprise and joy, our 2008 Schusterman Visiting Israel Professor, Dr. Rivka Ribak, came to my aid, as her husband Yair and his mother had connections to Shavei Zion. I am deeply grateful to Rivki and Yair for leading me to Alisa Klapfer, the daughter of Alfred and Resi Pressburger, who emigrated to Palestine with her parents at age 4. Alisa graciously received us in the middle of Passover and shared with me photographs, dates, and the beautiful Shavei Zion cemetery where her parents are buried.



Grave of Alfred Pressburger in Shavei Zion 2010



Four generations: Alisa Klapfer, Resi Gideon Pressburger (mother), Sofie Schweizer Gideon (grandmother), and Dora Schweizer (great-grandmother)

Needless to say, both Alisa in Israel and Hugo in New Jersey were quite surprised to learn of each other’s existence, and I was delighted to share with each information about the other.

During the summer, I traveled to Germany to attend to a variety of matters concerning lingering questions, gathering information and searching for new sources for all three of my research projects. The collective archival knowledge in Germany, and specifically in Baden-Württemberg for my particular area of research, is tremendous and invaluable. Archivists are great sources of information concerning the location of pertinent material and even more importantly, the people who can help one gain access to the records.

**“Oh Little Village Mine—Kaddish for Rural Swabian Jews”**

is a new-ish research project that grew out of the previous travels around southern Germany in search of Jewish life. While there is no Jewish life of any kind in any of the Swabian villages today, one can find a very active and sophisticated life from the late eighteenth century on. This study includes about twenty villages and towns where there is tangible evidence in the form of homes, businesses, and above all,

cemeteries. This project is a work in progress both in writing and in research. The book, which is organized thematically, so far lacks voices. Only a few Jewish families' stories are included in some of the German books written about Jews in a given location. While in Germany this summer, I pursued a lead that I became aware of while working on the Süssen study. I hope to return in two years for an in-depth mining of the archival sources for Jewish voices from these communities.

**"Mordecai Gustav Heiser—The Sweet Singer of B'nai Israel,"** my current hot research project, is a contribution to the study of German and central European *hazzanut* (liturgy). This project was originally begun in 1993 when I created a memorial recording with snippets of Cantor Mordecai Gustav Heiser's renditions of synagogue music for B'nai Israel in Pittsburgh, PA. Cantor Heiser had been their *hazzan* for nearly fifty years. He was also my teacher and friend. Over the years I have done considerable preparatory work, such as digitizing the snippets of music that survived his death, collecting as much of the sheet music as I could find, searching for personal and family information as well as records of his public life. I am deeply grateful to his family for giving me access to their personal collection of documents and correspondence and to Professor Elijah Schleifer from Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem for his kindness in working with me through the music and teaching me how to listen and write about Cantor Heiser's particular contribution to *hazzanut*.

### German and Central European Research Seminar

In the summer of 2010, the German and Central European Research Seminar, which began in 2005, was renewed for the fifth time. My colleagues Denise Philips, Daniel Magilow, Maria Stehle and I, the core members, are very excited

to be able to continue with this stimulating venue for discussing our scholarship with colleagues and graduate students, and are currently developing a rich schedule of events for this academic year. For a peek into the world of the research seminar, please see the website, so ably maintained by our colleague Professor Daniel Magilow at [http://web.utk.edu/~mfill/languages/german/research\\_seminar/default.html](http://web.utk.edu/~mfill/languages/german/research_seminar/default.html).

### Academic Conferences 2009-2010

Over the past several years I have been very fortunate to be able to participate in several exiting conferences with Jewish, German, religious, and humanities themes.

In Fall 2009, I contributed a paper on German and Jewish customs in rural communities to the German Studies Association (GSA) and presented a paper on the different meanings of victimhood in post-Holocaust reparations documents at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies, where I also chaired a session on East European Jewry at the *fin de siècle*.

For the American Academy of Religion I serve on the steering committee of the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Group. As the title of the group says, it is our responsibility to create opportunities for scholars to present their work on the Holocaust and other genocides, especially as these atrocities intersect with religion. I am also a member of the International Connections Committee (ICC), a standing committee of the AAR. We are responsible for creating two academic fora per year that showcase the work of scholars in a particular geographical region of the world. This year the focus is on Oceania; next year it will be on the Middle East.

This past spring, 2010, I again participated in the International Humanities Conference with a paper presentation on the *hazzanut*

of Cantor Mordecai Heiser of Pittsburgh. As chair of the History of Judaism section for the regional AAR conference, the Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion (SECSOR), I organize between two and three sessions a year and usually present a paper and chair a session as well. Last spring's paper dealt with Central European *hazzanut*.

### Academic Conferences 2010-2011



Gilya Schmidt at Niagara Falls 2010

In August, several colleagues and I traveled to Toronto to present papers at the International Association for the History of Religions Congress. My paper dealt with the plight of the cattle dealers under the Nazis. In early October I contributed a paper on the difficulty of German Jews to become Jewish nationalists to a panel on Zionism at the GSA with colleagues from Israel and Germany. And in January at the International Humanities and Arts Conference I will discuss the meaning of "Stolpersteine," or stumbling stones which are being placed in the sidewalk in many German cities in remembrance of the Jews who used to live there.



Falk Sahn Stolperstein in Süssen 2010

Although I am organizing sessions for the Southeast Conference for the Study of Religion (SECSOR) in Louisville, Kentucky, in March, I will not be able to attend myself, because the conference conflicts with a mandatory meeting of principle investigators for federal grants in Arizona.

## SERVICE

### Professional

I continue to serve on the Editorial Board of the interdisciplinary journal *Soundings*, reviewing occasional manuscripts for them, and the Editorial Board of the UT Press, where I also serve on the Executive Committee. Last year I also reviewed manuscripts for the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and SUNY Press.

My term on the Religion, Holocaust, and Genocide Group steering committee runs to 2012, as does my appointment to the International Connections Committee of the American Academy of Religion. I also

continue as chair of the History of Judaism Section of SECSOR.

### Institutional

It has been a year since I stepped down as Head of the Department of Religious Studies. To be sure, I was exhausted from a challenging year, but I was also gratified that we emerged intact from the threat of merger and worse. I will always be grateful to my colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies and to our loyal and active Board of Visitors for their support, encouragement, and real help during this time of crisis. The sincere concern of all involved was heart-warming and gave me strength in uncertain times. Now, with a semester off to re-immense myself in my research and resume teaching and committee work this semester, as well as a new Head at the helm, life has returned to normal. I enjoy reinvesting myself in the growth of Judaic Studies, the mentoring of my colleague Dr. Daniel Magilow, other college committees, searches for an Arabic instructor, and a tenure-track

colleague in Islam.

### Community

The Jewish community also promises to keep me involved. As President-Elect of Heska Amuna Synagogue, I serve on the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Rabbi and Religious Services Committee. In Spring 2010 I also served on the Rabbi search committee which was brought to a successful conclusion with the hire of Rabbi Alon Ferency.

As a graduate of Leadership Knoxville, Class of 2009, I committed to serve two years on the Curriculum Committee. I enjoy the interaction with the new classes and feel a sense of accomplishment at helping to shape the curriculum for the new "students." Both last year and this year, I am involved in planning Diversity Day. Last year we visited the Alex Haley farm and learned about the Clinton Twelve. This year we will visit the Green Macadoo Museum in Clinton, a place of great interest and full of compelling history.

## TENNESSEE HOLOCAUST COMMISSION

<http://www.tennesseeholocaustcommission.org/>

After 16 years, the once-a-semester drive to Nashville has become part of my routine. The Tennessee Holocaust Commission has been in existence for a quarter century. We are certainly grateful to Felicia Anchor for continuing to chair this commission so ably. Last spring I was on the search committee for a new Executive Director. We were delighted to be able to hire Danielle Kahane-Kaminsky, who is a fine addition to the commission staff, with experience in the public schools, fund-raising, and Holocaust commemoration.

Danielle's biography on the THC website reads as follows:

Danielle Kahane-Kaminsky joined the THC as Executive Director on April 8, 2010. Prior to her current position with the THC, Danielle worked as

the Director of Instruction for the Murfreesboro City School District where she served for four years following her return to Nashville, the city of her childhood. Danielle's appointment with the THC comes with a personal connection to its vision and mission. The daughter of Belgian refugees, Danielle brings to the THC a mixture of story and experience, both of which hold promise for her work in guiding educators and students through the academic lessons of the Holocaust. "Having spent my life hearing the stories of aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents," says Danielle, "I understand the importance of communicating the meaning of the Holocaust to succeeding generations. Because of my

background and being raised in Nashville, I have a passion for the Tennessee Holocaust Commission."

In addition to her personal interest in the work of the THC, Danielle brings years of experience in education, having served as both Principal and Assistant Principal in New York and Connecticut schools. Danielle has an in-depth understanding of the ways in which education serves as a means of work against genocide. The Commission looks forward to the resources and initiative Danielle will provide as Executive Director as the THC moves into its 26th year of work in combating prejudice, and building understanding among all people in an effort to prevent genocide.

**WELCOME TO ASHLEY COMBEST**



Ashley Combest at the Schusterman reception

Ashley Combest is delighted to join the Judaic Studies Program and has received a warm and generous welcome from the department, the community, and especially Gilya Schmidt, whose smile and energy radiates

across the desks and makes the office an enjoyable place to work. Despite knowing very little about Judaism, and very few Jews for that matter, Ashley is "learning all about Judaism while standing on one foot," as Gilya says, and she couldn't be happier about the experience or more grateful for the opportunity.

Ashley is no stranger to McClung offices, having worked for several years for Tom Heffernan, whose office is, in fact, right next door. She just completed an editing project for Professor Heffernan's forthcoming book, "The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity." Ashley is currently a doctoral student in the English Department, working under the helpful guidance of Professor Heather Hirschfeld on a dissertation project which focuses on women and treason in early modern drama.

**FAREWELL TO MICHAEL BOOKER**

Michael Booker successfully defended his dissertation, "The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798," in May 2010. Congratulations, Michael! Following a relaxing vacation in Bar Harbor/ Acadia National Park, ME, he returned to Knoxville to teach "Western Civilization II" during the second summer session at the University of Tennessee. After working as Dr. Schmidt's assistant for Judaic Studies for the better part of four years as a graduate student, Michael was hired as a lecturer in the Department of History at UT for 2010-11 and is scheduled to teach

"Contemporary Europe," "Modern Britain since 1688," and "Western Civilization II."

Michael is currently in the process of revising an article titled "Pugnacious Protestantism: Flute Bands and the Transmission of Loyalist Popular Culture in the Urban Lowlands of Scotland" for the *Hibernian Review* and is scheduled to present the findings of this work at the American Conference for Irish Studies international meeting in Madison, WI in April. Michael and his wife Jennifer are anticipating the birth of their first child Trey Booker in November.

Thank you for all your help, Michael. Best wishes to you and Jennifer as you enter into a new phase of life. May you have only blessings!

**MORE CHANGES**



Debbie Binder and Joan Riedl 2010

It seems fitting to speak of Debbie Binder and Joan Riedl as one. When I came to Knoxville in August of 1993, Debbie and Joan made sure that the office was able to help with anything I needed. They both had been at the university for a number of years and knew the ropes. Over the years, and especially during my time as department Head, Debbie and Joan kept me afloat by reminding me of deadlines, making sure I didn't miss any appointments, and a myriad of other things. Debbie made sure the financial end was in order, and Joan worked tirelessly to make our department a great place for students. She was also a superb editor and I always made sure Joan read any manuscript

before I sent it off to the publisher. Debbie and Joan both retired this summer and their departure literally brought on a sea change in the office. I will always be deeply grateful to Debbie and Joan for the support they gave me over the years and for their helpfulness and kindness. I hope you enjoy retirement in good health!

We are delighted to welcome as the new support staff in Religious Studies Karen Windham, who has been with the university for a number of years in different capacities. Welcome, Karen, and thank you for all your help already!!



Karen Windham

**JEWISH STUDENT CENTER/HILLEL**

The Jewish students at the University of Tennessee are an active and enterprising group, who not only organize holiday services and year-round programming, but regularly find a home for Shabbat meals with families throughout the community. If you are interested in hosting the students for Shabbat, or if you are willing to help them in other ways, please contact their director, Deborah Oleshansky, at [doleshansky@jewishknoxville.org](mailto:doleshansky@jewishknoxville.org). For general information, please see their website at <http://www.utk.edu/~uthillel>.

## SHTETL NEWS

It is always a delight to welcome new life into this world and to share in the simchas in the Jewish community, which spans from Knoxville to Israel to Europe and to China.

This past spring we were saddened by the loss of two giants in the Jewish world. Both will be sorely missed, not only by their loved ones, but by their friends and the scholarly community as well.

In June of this year, Professor and Rabbi Jacob Milgrom died in Jerusalem. During my visit to Israel in April, I visited with Jacob and his wife Jo, who had become dear friends after Jo's visit to Knoxville to give a lecture on and demonstration of hand-made midrash during my first few years in Knoxville. We struck up a friendship, and when Jo and Jacob moved to Jerusalem from Berkeley, we stayed friends. Jo and Jacob were my hosts when I first arrived in Israel in 1996 and have been my teachers, advisors, and even collaborators on Buber's poems when I translated them some years ago. Jacob was a kind and gentle soul who was easy to love. I will always treasure the occasional lectures I was privileged to hear and the lovely Seudah Shlishit at the Milgrom's home. We grieve with Jo, and we will miss Jacob tremendously. May his memory be for a blessing.

Just a month before Jacob died, in May of this year, Professor Moshe Greenberg died, also in Jerusalem. I did not know Professor Greenberg well but had the opportunity to meet him and his wife, Chaya, through the Milgroms. They took me along to a study session on a Shabbat afternoon quite a number of years ago. Moshe Greenberg was the son of the late Simon Greenberg, Vice Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, who was an early mentor of mine. I dedicated

my Buber book on Zionism to Simon and Betty Greenberg, and it was an honor to meet their son. May his memory be for a blessing.

Earlier this year, Rabbi Louis Zivic retired from the rabbinate and Heska Amuna Synagogue. He was not only a fine spiritual leader, but very generous with his time.



Gilya Schmidt and Rabbi Louis Zivic 2009

He often came to my class on the Holocaust and, as a member of the Second Generation, spoke about the complicated life of a child of survivors. Students enjoyed his erudition and his candor. I am grateful to Rabbi Zivic for all he did for the students at UT, his cooperation with many of the Judaic Studies events, his good counsel and his support in difficult times. May you enjoy your retirement in good health for many years to come.

Between January and April, Heska Amuna went through the process of searching for a new rabbi. We were very fortunate that a mutual liking developed between the congregation and Rabbi Alon Ferency and his wife, Karen. The Ferencys moved to Knoxville at the beginning of August and we are delighted to welcome them to Heska Amuna and to Knoxville. We hope that Knoxville will be a hospitable and friendly



Rabbi Alon Ferency 2010

location for you and that you will share your insights with the Jewish students and all the students who take Judaic Studies courses once you have settled in. Welcome to Knoxville!

"Bagels and Barbecue: The Jewish Experience in Tennessee" opened at the East Tennessee History Center, 601 South Gay Street in downtown Knoxville on Monday, October 18. Stephen Rosen, president of the Knoxville Jewish Alliance, states that "This event is a 'must see' for people interested in understanding and enjoying how we got here and why we are so proud of our community." The local connection was provided by Barbara Bernstein, Nicki Russler and the KJA Archives Committee. The press release states that "This is a touring exhibition of the Tennessee State Museum, organized in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, Jewish Community Federation of Greater Chattanooga, Knoxville Jewish Alliance, and Memphis Jewish Federation, with the participation of other Jewish communities around the state. The exhibit's statewide tour is supported in part by a grant from Humanities Tennessee, an independent affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities." For further information, see <http://www.pitchengine.com/pitch/91336/> or contact Cheryl Henderson at either (865) 215-8823 or (865) 335-0888 or by email at [cherel@eastTNhistory.org](mailto:cherel@eastTNhistory.org).



Knoxville author Wendy Besmann at opening of "Bagels and Barbecue" exhibition.

For the past three years, Judaic Studies at UT has formally joined an ever-growing group of Judaic Studies programs who support the Association for Jewish Studies, a professional organization for scholars of Judaic Studies. The following list is taken from the association's website at <http://ajsnet.org/institutions.htm>

## **Institutional Membership**

We are pleased to announce the AJS 2009-2010 Institutional Members.

American Jewish Historical Society  
American Jewish University  
American University, Center for Israel Studies and Jewish Studies Program  
Arizona State University, Center for Jewish Studies  
Center for Cultural Judaism  
Columbia University, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies  
Cornell University, Jewish Studies Program  
Foundation for Jewish Culture  
Georgetown University, Program for Jewish Civilization  
Harvard University, Center for Jewish Studies  
Hebrew College  
Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion  
Indiana University, Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program  
Jewish Theological Seminary, The Graduate School  
Johns Hopkins University, Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Jewish Studies Program  
Laura and Alvin Siegal College of Judaic Studies  
Northwestern University, The Crown Family Center for Jewish Studies  
Ohio State University, Melton Center for Jewish Studies  
Old Dominion University, Institute for Jewish Studies and Interfaith Understanding  
Pennsylvania State University, Jewish Studies Program  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College  
Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies  
Stanford University, Taube Center for Jewish Studies  
The Tikvah Fund  
University of Arizona, Arizona Center for Judaic Studies  
University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Jewish Studies  
University of California, San Diego, Judaic Studies Program  
University of Connecticut, Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life  
University of Denver, Center for Judaic Studies  
University of Florida, Center for Jewish Studies  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Program in Jewish Culture and Society  
University of Maryland, Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies  
University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Judaic and Near Eastern Studies Department  
University of Michigan, The Frankel Center for Judaic Studies  
University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Norman and Bernice Harris Center for Judaic Studies  
University of North Carolina at Asheville, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Center for Jewish Studies  
University of Oregon, Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies  
University of Pittsburgh, Jewish Studies Program  
**University of Tennessee, The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies**  
University of Texas at Austin, Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies  
University of Virginia, Jewish Studies Program  
University of Washington, Stroum Jewish Studies Program, Jackson School of International Studies  
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies  
Vanderbilt University, Program in Jewish Studies  
Washington University in St. Louis, Program in Jewish, Islamic, and Near Eastern Studies  
Yeshiva University, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies  
York University, Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies



Former UT student Avi Shem-Tov, Gilya Schmidt and friend 2010



Gilya Schmidt in Haifa 2010



Elijah's Cave in Haifa 2010

Visit the Knoxville Jewish Alliance Web site:  
[www.jewishknoxville.org](http://www.jewishknoxville.org)

## Become a friend of Judaic Studies at UT

The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies is in its second decade. Public lectures, in collaboration with other UT departments and the Knoxville Jewish Alliance, Holocaust Conferences, book discussions, as well as cultural experiences such as trips to the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., have helped to educate on campus as well as in the Jewish community and the community at large. Private funds have made possible the teaching of Modern Hebrew and the hiring of the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professors. Your support can help to make our program better and stronger. If you wish to make a contribution, the following funds are available:

- THE FERN AND MANFRED STEINFELD SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN JUDAIC STUDIES, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- JUDAIC STUDIES LECTURE FUND, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- JUDAIC STUDIES CHAIR ENDOWMENT, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- JUDAIC STUDIES SUPPORT FUND, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- ABRAHAM AND REBECCA SOLOMON AND IDA SCHWARTZ DISTINGUISHED LECTURE FUND FOR JUDAIC STUDIES, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- DR. RUBEN ROBINSON MEMORIAL FUND, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- KAREN AND PACE ROBINSON ENRICHMENT FUND, RELIGIOUS STUDIES \_\_\_\_\_
- MANFRED AND FERN STEINFELD PROFESSORSHIP ENDOWMENT IN JUDAIC HISTORY, HISTORY DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

## How to contact us

DEPARTMENT OF  
 RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
 501 MCCLUNG TOWER  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
 KNOXVILLE, TN 37996-0450

TELEPHONE (865) 974-2466  
 FAX (865) 974-0965

E-MAIL  
 DR. GILYA GERDA SCHMIDT:  
 GSCHEMIDT@UTK.EDU  
 DR. J. P. DESSEL:  
 JDESSEL@UTK.EDU

The Fern & Manfred Steinfeld  
 Program in Judaic Studies  
 is located in  
 501 McClung Tower

You can also find us on the Web:  
[web.utk.edu/~judaic](http://web.utk.edu/~judaic)

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THE NEWSLETTER of the  
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Program in Judaic Studies  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE



The Department of Religious Studies  
501 McClung Tower  
The University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-0450  
Telephone (865) 974-2466

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