

# Voices AND WISDOM

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

VOLUME 23 FALL 2016



## Expanding a Legacy

When I arrived at the University of Tennessee this summer to begin directing the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld

Program in Judaic Studies, it was with a humble awareness that I was taking custody of a 22-year legacy built by Professor Gilya Schmidt. I am also keenly aware I was brought in to expand and develop this important program. Over the next few months, I plan to add new courses for our students, bring in dynamic speakers, and expand the reach of the program from the university campus to the far corners of the state. For those of you interested in coming to hear our visiting speakers, I invite you to check out the upcoming events on the back of this newsletter. For those of you who will not be able to visit campus to hear one of our distinguished lecturers, UT Judaic studies faculty will be "hitting the road" to share our research and give talks in local Tennessee communities. If you are interested in having someone come speak in your community, please let me know!

We will also be transforming the Judaic studies media presence by updating the look of our newsletter, website, and creating a social media presence. I hope you will follow us on Facebook and Twitter. You can find our social media information on the back page of this newsletter.

I encourage you to support these new initiatives and help secure the program's legacy. Although there are generous funds for specific initiatives, the program needs to build an endowment for its long-term operational future. Before she retired, Professor Gilya Schmidt was able to secure a generous commitment from Lea and Allen Orwitz and the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation to continue to fund Hebrew instruction until 2019. I hope to build long-term funding to support Hebrew and other future initiatives.

In addition to learning about my plans for the program, I thought since I was new I would also introduce myself. I am originally from North Brunswick, New Jersey, where I attended Solomon Schechter Day School. I went to Smith College for my undergraduate education and I have a PhD from Brandeis University. I spent three years living in Lodz, Poland, doing my doctoral research on the Lodz Ghetto and teaching at the University of Lodz. Before coming to Knoxville, I served for 11 years as the director of the Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio. During that time, I founded an academic journal and still serve as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Jewish Identities*.

My primary research interest is on the Holocaust. I have been a fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel, where I have had the opportunity to do research on ghettos and women's experiences during the Holocaust. My interest in Holocaust education is not limited to my research, but also in training future educators on the Holocaust. To that end, I served for five years as the executive director of the Ohio Council on Holocaust Education, which provides training for high school teachers.

My husband Wesley and I are the proud parents of two little boys: Nathan, age 5, and Noah, age 2. We were delighted by the warm reception we received from the Knoxville community and we look forward to meeting more members of our extended UT family.

**HELENE J. SINNREICH**  
*Director*

## Journal Finds New Home

The *Journal of Jewish Identities* will now be housed at UT in the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program for Judaic Studies.

The *Journal of Jewish Identities* is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal published by Johns Hopkins University Press that explores Jewish identity in all of its various manifestations. The editor-in-chief is Helene Sinnreich, director of the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program for Judaic Studies.

Daniel Magilow, associate professor in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures and a faculty member in the Judaic Studies Program, is the managing editor of the journal. The next issue, devoted to Jewish Music, will be published in January 2017.

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**JULIE SALAMON**

“Since I was a little girl I’ve felt the urge to write things down, as though the very act would make sense out of the world,” says Julie Salamon about her lifelong passion for writing.

The American author and daughter of Holocaust survivors has written 10 best-selling books in multiple genres. Her novels include *Rambam’s Ladder*, *The Devil’s Candy*, and *Facing the Wind*. Salomon’s *New York Times* bestseller, *Wendy and the Lost Boys*, is a biography of playwright Wendy Wasserstein. She has also penned three children’s books.

Salamon is making an extensive visit to the Knoxville area November 18-21, stopping to speak at the Jewish congregation of Oak Ridge, the Cedar Bluff branch of the Knoxville Public Library, and the Arnstein Jewish Community Center. Salamon will give a public lecture on her book, *Wendy and the Lost Boys* at the **UT Hodges Library, Room 213, Monday, November, 21, at 11 a.m.** The event is free and open to the public.

Salamon photo credit: Sara Krulwich



**RACHEL HARRIS**

Professor Rachel S. Harris of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is the upcoming speaker for the Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture Series on Modern Israel. She is author of *An Ideological Death: Suicide in Israeli Literature* and the forthcoming *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema*. Harris, who was educated at Oxford University, is also the series editor for the journal *Hebrew Literature in Translation*.

Professor Harris will be speaking in the **UT McClung Museum auditorium, January 23, 2017, at 7 p.m.** She will present her lecture titled “With a Six Shooter and Spurs: Imaging the Israeli Western.” She will also be screening Israeli films and leading a discussion on them at the Arnstein Jewish Community Center Sunday, January 22, 2017.



**ANNA SHTERNSHIS**

Professor Anna Shternshis is the director of the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto and author of *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923 – 1939* and the forthcoming *When Sonia Met Boris: Jewish Daily Life in Soviet Russia*. Shternshis teaches Yiddish language courses and classes on Yiddish literature, cinema, and culture. She was educated at the Russian State University of Humanities and received her PhD from Oxford.

Shternshis will present “Machine Guns and Lonely Orphans: Yiddish Music in the Soviet Union during the Holocaust,” in the **UT McClung Museum auditorium, February 8, 2017, at 7 p.m.**

Her next talk is the Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Series in Judaic Studies.



**ERIN DARBY**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of  
Religious Studies

As you may remember, Erin Darby was on research leave last year, supported by UT and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. She worked on the publishing her work at the Iron Age site 'En Hazeva, located in the Negev desert. She presented her new research in Vienna, Austria; Amman, Jordan; and Jerusalem.

During her time abroad, Darby helped bring Judaic studies alum Taylor Thomas ('16) to Jerusalem to work on her honors thesis, tour archaeological sites, and visit graduate programs. Lily Dropkin ('15) was also visiting Jerusalem in a conservation program with the Israel Antiquities Authority and spent time with Darby at the Institute and other sites across the country.

This year, Darby is teaching Introduction to Hebrew Bible, Introduction to Early Judaism, and an advanced seminar on Gender and Sexuality in the Biblical World.



**J.P. DESSEL**  
Associate Professor,  
Department  
of History

Dessel continues his research and is now the associate director at Tell Abel Beit Ma'acah. You can learn more about the new dig site by checking out its website at [abel-beth-maacah.org](http://abel-beth-maacah.org). This summer he will be traveling to Tell Abel Beit Ma'acah. Professor Dessel will also be teaching an exciting course this spring on the origins of the Israelites.



**GREGORY KAPLAN**  
Professor, Dept.  
of Modern Foreign  
Languages and  
Literatures

Gregory Kaplan will be at the 400th anniversary of the oldest functioning Jewish library in the world, the Ets Haim library, which was established by the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam. Kaplan's paper, "From Monarchy to Democracy: Ets Haim's

Converso Legacy," will focus on the converso literature housed at the Ets Haim library. Kaplan's forthcoming book on Spinoza's rabbi will be available in print in January 2017.



**JACOB LOVE**  
Lecturer,  
Department  
of Religious  
Studies

Jacob Love continues post-retirement teaching as lecturer in Biblical Hebrew Language and Literature. This year he has two of the largest classes in recent memory, and perhaps ever. Beginning Biblical Hebrew has an overflow enrollment of 19 students and five continuing students in Intermediate Hebrew. Love is also pleased to have resumed the PhD program he left in the 1970s for other career opportunities. Now that he has requalified, he is getting ready to write his dissertation on a topic related to the study of rabbinic literature in the third and fourth centuries (CE). Love is particularly interested in how the liturgy of the Passover Seder evolved from a biblical rite of animal sacrifice into the long night of study (and good food!) that Jews celebrate today.



**DANIEL MAGILOW**  
Associate Professor,  
Dept. of  
Modern Foreign  
Languages and  
Literatures

In addition to giving talks about his recent book, *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction* (co-authored with Lisa Silverman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), Magilow is currently working on several other Jewish studies related projects.

He will deliver a paper that concerns dementia's role as a trope in recent Holocaust films, notably the German-Canadian revenge fantasy *Remember* (2015) at the Association for Jewish Studies 48th Annual Conference in San Diego. Magilow continues his role as managing editor for the *Journal of Jewish Identities* and regularly contributes book reviews. His most recent review was on the reissue of Fania Lewando's 1938 *The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook: Garden-Fresh Recipes Rediscovered and Adapted*

for *Today's Kitchen*. Magilow is in residence at the UT Humanities Center for the 2016-17 academic year, where he is developing a scholarly edition of the theoretical writings of the German photographer Albert Renger-Patzsch.



**ITSIK PARIENTE**  
Diane and Guilford  
Glazer and Lea  
and Allen Orwitz  
Teaching Fellow in  
Modern Hebrew

For the past five years, Itsik Pariente has taught Modern Hebrew at the University of Tennessee. His position has been generously supported by Lea and Allen Orwitz and the Diane and the Guilford Glazer Foundation. This year, as we expand our reach onto social media, we have created videos and podcasts to help you learn more about our students and faculty.

To learn more about Pariente, his research, and work with our students, go to [judaic.utk.edu/fellows/glazer.php](http://judaic.utk.edu/fellows/glazer.php) or his Academia site at [utk.academia.edu/ItsikPariente](http://utk.academia.edu/ItsikPariente)

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**CHRISTINE SHEPARDSON**  
Professor,  
Department  
of Religious  
Studies

After receiving a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, Shepardson is on research leave to work on her third book.

In the past year, Shepardson has been very busy publishing, traveling, and presenting her research at several national and international conferences. She gave the annual Vassiliadis Lecture at UC-San Diego, a keynote address at a conference at UC-Santa Barbara, and accepted invitations to present her research at UC-Riverside and Indiana University.

She remains the co-chair of the Early Jewish/Christian Relations session for the national Society of Biblical Literature and looks forward to rejoining the Judaic studies committee when she returns from leave next fall.

**JUDAIC STUDIES PROGRAM**

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## From Strength to Strength



Although retirement brings with it a degree of anxiety, mostly concerning

the unknown, it is not much different than starting a new job. One has to adjust. In my case, the adjustment is gentle, as I have a post-retirement agreement until June 30, 2017, which allows me to continue my research, interact with our new director, and participate in the life of the Department of Religious Studies. And even after that, as professor emerita, my ties to Judaic studies and to religious studies will continue indefinitely.

So life is good. I am currently working towards concluding the writing and editing of my manuscript on Cantor Mordecai Gustav Heiser from Pittsburgh,

Pennsylvania. To that end, I completed a week's worth of research in Pittsburgh in July—in the Rauh Archives at the Heinz Center, University of Pittsburgh Archives and Hillman Library, and Carnegie Library. I visited with the Heiser-Stein families for additional information and clarification and made site visits to various Jewish sites, including Cantor Heiser's synagogue of nearly 50 years—B'nai Israel. In January 2017, I will present a paper on the reformatory period of Hazzanut in Europe for the International Humanities and Arts Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 2017, I hope to begin the organization of materials I have collected over the years for a new book, tentatively titled *Kaddish for Swabian Jews*, which will discuss Jewish life in southern Germany during the 19th century. In summer 2015, I spent two

weeks at the Landesarchiv in Ludwigsburg, near Stuttgart, Germany, to collect reparations materials concerning Jewish possessions confiscated by the Nazis. During previous trips, I took about 3,000 photographs of former Jewish homes, businesses, and rural synagogues that survived the Holocaust. I look forward to working on this project.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone at UT, in the Jewish community, our loyal donors, and my many colleagues in academia worldwide, as well as the numerous students who made teaching so much fun, for your trust and your encouragement for the past 23 years. All good wishes for success and joy in the position of director to Helene Sinnreich. May the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies at UT go from strength to strength.

**GILYA G. SCHMIDT**  
*Director Emerita*

## JUDAIC STUDIES UPCOMING EVENTS

**John C. Hodges Library at UT  
Room 213**

**November 21, 2016, 11 AM**  
Public lecture on *Wendy and the Lost Boys*  
Speaker: Julie Salamon  
Best-selling author

**McClung Museum of Natural  
History and Culture Auditorium**

**January 23, 2017, 7 PM**  
Karen and Pace Robinson  
Lecture Series on Modern Israel  
“With a Six Shooter and Spurs:  
Imaging the Israeli Western”  
Speaker: Rachel Harris  
University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign

**February 8, 2017, 7 PM**  
Abraham and Rebecca Solomon  
and Ida Schwartz Distinguished  
Lecture Series in Judaic Studies  
“Machine Guns and Lonely  
Orphans: Yiddish Music in the  
Soviet Union during the Holocaust”  
Speaker: Anna Shternshis  
University of Toronto