

BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS 2011

Doug Alpert
Session I

***High Holiday Liturgy: How We Connect (or Don't) Emotionally
Through the Hineni Prayer***

Doug Alpert is the Spiritual Leader at Congregation Kol Ami. He holds a Masters degree in Judaic Studies from the Siegal College of Jewish Studies, and will receive his rabbinic ordination from the Academy for Jewish Religion in Riverdale, NY in May, 2012. Doug has taught in the Melton Adult Education program for many years, and was previously the rabbinic intern for Congregation Ohev Shalom.

Dr. Andrew Bergerson
Session II

***Ethical Choices in Doing the Right or Wrong Thing During the
Holocaust***

Dr. Bergerson completed his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago with a focus on modern German history and served for one year as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Franklin & Marshall College before joining the UMKC history department in 1999. He is Associate Professor of History and German Studies, Modern European and German History with an emphasis on the history of everyday life. A historian of everyday life, Bergerson's research focuses on the historical impact of everyday ways of being, believing, and behaving. Much of his research focuses on a longstanding research engagement in Hildesheim, a provincial town in Lower Saxony. His new book, *The Happy Burden of History* explores the meaning and possibilities for historical responsibility in light of examples and counterexamples from modern German life and letters.

Steven B. Chernoff, Ph.D.
Session I
Session II

***Jewish Genealogy 101: An Introduction to Genealogy and Jewish
Genealogy***

Jewish Genealogy 201: Intermediate Jewish Genealogy

Steve has researched Jewish genealogy in the USA, Europe and Israel since he was a teenager, attended several IAJGS International Conferences on Jewish Genealogy and was the founding President of the former Jewish Genealogical Society of Kansas City. He is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists.

Rabbi Alan Cohen
Session I

Why Jews and Muslims Should Dialogue

Rabbi Cohen is the Director of Interreligious Affairs at the Jewish Community Relations Bureau (JCRB)/American Jewish Committee (AJC). Rabbi Cohen works with clergy of all faiths to strengthen relationships and expand interfaith learning opportunities in Kansas City, enabling people to better understand differences and similarities among faiths. Rabbi Alan Cohen served as Beth Shalom's senior rabbi from 1989 to 2008. He returned to Beth Shalom as the interim rabbi for 2011/12.

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn
Session II
Session III

***Ethical Choices in Doing the Right or Wrong Thing During the
Holocaust***

How to Be a Better Jewish Traveler

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn, a native Brazilian who emigrated and was ordained in the US, is the leader of Temple Israel of Greater Kansas City. His ancestry includes Polish Hasidic rabbis who emigrated to Brazil in 1929, and he is dedicated to reuniting offshoots of Judaism, mainly in Latin America.

Rabbi Cukierkorn and former Kansas City Star Faith section columnist Bill Tammeus co-authored the book, *"They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust,"* a collection of narratives from Holocaust survivors and non-Jews who aided them. The authors travelled extensively throughout the United States and Poland to interview the remaining survivors, many of whose stories have never been told.

Dr. Edna Levy

Ayeka – Listening to My Soul at High Holy Days

Session I

Dr. Edna Levy has been teaching adults for over a decade, in Rochester, NY & Atlanta GA. As Director of the Brill Institute for Lifelong Jewish Learning at the JCC in Atlanta, Edna taught dozens of Melton classes as well as short-and long-term courses on topics as varied as Jewish Parenting, Women in Text & Jewish Ethics. Her energy and enthusiasm for Jewish learning is contagious. In addition to her teaching, Dr. Levy has enjoyed summers at Jewish Overnight camps (Coleman, Barney Medintz) creating intriguing and informal Jewish experiences for campers of all ages. Edna currently serves as the J-Coach & Ayeka Coordinator at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City.

Rabbi Herbert Mandl

What makes the Jewish Calendar Tick?

Session II

Rabbi Herbert J. Mandl has served as senior rabbi of Kehilath Israel Synagogue since 1977. Rabbi Mandl received his Bachelor's degree, cum laude from Johns Hopkins University and his Master's degree and Rabbinical Ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He also holds Orthodox Ordination and a PhD from the University of Montreal. Rabbi Mandl is the current President of the Rabbinical Association of Greater Kansas City.

Hazzan Rob Menes

Jewish Music as Commentary on Liturgy and Sacred Texts

Session III

Rob Menes began as Hazzan at Congregation Beth Shalom in August of 2006 after being invested by the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. While in New York, he served as hazzan for Highland Park Conservative Synagogue and Center, White Meadow Temple and Temple Israel in Riverhead. Rob has conducted and sung with numerous choirs and has performed as a soloist with orchestras across North America. Although he enjoys playing a variety of instruments and composing, his great love is bringing prayer to life using traditional nusach.

Aaron Nielsenshultz

Pilgrimage: Where are you going?

Session III

Aaron Nielsenshultz is the part-time Para-Rabbinic for Temple Adath Joseph in St. Joseph, Missouri. A passionate life-long learner, Aaron teaches in Congregation Beth Torah's religious school. Aaron has worked in higher education throughout his career.

Lilach Nissim

Is Israel a Challenge or Source of Pride?

Session II

Session III

Jewish Feminism- A Modern Perspective

Lilach is the Israeli emissary of greater Kansas City. I've worked with collage students for 3 years on community projects, ran a project for adult's high education, worked in Sderot for 3 years, coordinating the youth futures program for children at risk and as a coordinator for teenagers at risk, ran a youth club and coordinated leadership projects.

Rabbi Moti Rieber

Nurturing Nature: Jewish Perspectives on Caring for the Earth

Session III

Rabbi Moti Rieber is coordinator of Kansas Interfaith Power & Light, a statewide non-profit organization encouraging faith communities to raise their voices in response to the environmental crisis we face, through responsible stewardship, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

Rabbi Daniel Rockoff & Dr. Ayala Zoltan Rockoff

Session II

Understanding Traditions & Customs in the Orthodox World

Rabbi Daniel Rockoff is a native of Newton, Massachusetts. Rabbi Rockoff received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology, magna cum laude, from Yeshiva University, Semicha (ordination) from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, and Master's in Jewish Education from the Azrieli School of Jewish Education and Administration, and Master's in Bible at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. Prior to becoming Rabbi at BIAV, he has served congregations in Riverdale, NY, Beverly Hills, CA, and West Orange, NJ. Rabbi Rockoff enjoys teaching students of all ages and backgrounds and is a member of the Melton faculty.

Dr. Ayala Zoltan Rockoff is a native of New Rochelle, NY. She holds a BA from the University of Pennsylvania in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, an MA in Early Childhood Special Education from Columbia University, and an MS and PsyD in School Psychology from St. John's University. Dr. Zoltan Rockoff has worked in numerous capacities in the fields of special education and childhood mental health and development. She currently works as a consultant for Sasone and will begin teaching at the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy this fall. In addition, Dr. Zoltan Rockoff enjoys preparing and delivering classes on topics of Jewish interest, especially text-based Torah study to individuals and groups in the community. She is married to Rabbi Daniel Rockoff and is the proud mother of Shimon Yaakov (Shai) and David Aryeh.

Rabbi Jonathan Rudnick *Shabbat and Shiva: Life and Death for Jews*
Session I

Rabbi Rudnick's background in Jewish communal work as well as his activity during the past five years in the professional realm of pastoral care brought him to Kansas City for the position of Jewish Community Chaplain (based at Jewish Family Services). He feels privileged to serve in this way. Having grown up here, Jonathan made aliya 15 years ago. Along with his wife, Marcelle, he is the proud and blessed father of Sagi, Shir-el, and Shefer.

Rabbi Elchanan Schulgasser *Black Magic—Real or Hoax?*
Session II

A fourth-year member of Kansas City's Community Kollel, Elchanan Schulgasser grew up in Monsey, New York. He spent 10 years studying under Rabbi Yochanan Zweig at the Talmudic University of Florida, where he received his Rabbinic ordination. In Florida, he also completed an MBA with a Management concentration from Florida International University. Elchanan also serves the Kansas City community as a certified mohel (www.kcbris.com). He and his wife Bracha, a kindergarten teacher at the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy, are devoted parents to five children.

Rabbi Alex Shuval-Weiner *How Should We Pray*
Session III

Rabbi Alexandria Shuval-Weiner has served as rabbi of The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah since July 2008. Rabbi Shuval-Weiner received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel where she double majored in Education and Humanities. Additionally, she holds a Master of Education degree from the University of Central Oklahoma, a Master of Jewish Studies and a Master of Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College. Alexandria was ordained by Hebrew Union College on May 18, 2008. Prior to rabbinical school, Rabbi Shuval-Weiner worked in the field of Jewish education for many years.

Rabbi Yehudah Sokoloff *Kashrut Uncovered*
Session I

Originally from New York Rabbi Yehuda Sokoloff comes to Kansas City via Austin, Texas. There he spent three years founding and directing TALK-Austin School of Judaics, a Jewish educational organization similar in mission to the Community Kollel of Kansas City. Here in Kansas City Rabbi Sokoloff serves as "Rosh Kollel" of the KC Community Kollel where he sets the morning curriculum and pace of study and gives advanced classes to the Kollel rabbis, in addition to teaching classes throughout the community.

Fran Sternberg *THE HOLOCAUST: From Persecution to Annihilation*
Session III

Fran Sternberg has a Ph.D. in history from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and is currently the resident historian and Director of University Programs and Adult Education at the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education in Overland Park. She also teaches courses in modern European history, Jewish history and the Holocaust at the UMKC and the University of Kansas.

Linda Sweenie

Jewish Songwriters, American Songs, 1910-1965

Session I

Linda has been the Music Director at Congregation Beth Torah since 2004. She is also a composer and arranger, and member of the contemporary Jewish band Shir Balev. Linda holds a BA degree in English, with a minor in Music Theory and Composition from Northwestern University.

Marvin Szneler

How your Advocacy can make a Difference for Israel

Session I

Marvin has served as the Executive Director of Jewish Community Relations Bureau|American Jewish Committee since 1999. JCRB|AJC represents the community in fighting hatred, bigotry, and anti-Semitism, and to build relations with elected officials, government officials, educators, law enforcement, and other faith , minority, and ethnic groups. The mission includes working on behalf of Israel in her quest for peace in the Middle East. Travels to Israel include hosting members of Congress, local elected officials, and other civic community leaders.

Rabbi Scott White

How Should We Pray

Session III

Rabbi White has been spiritual leader of Congregation Ohev Sholom since 2005. Prior to that, he was on the faculty of the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy for 10 years. A KC native, he is a graduate of KU and Shawnee Mission East. In addition to serving as the Melton Instructor, he has taught a variety of courses at the Jewish Community Center about Israel. He was ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1986.

Leonard Zeskind

White Nationalism and Anti-Semitism in the Midwest-Great Plains

Session II

Session III

The Tea Party Movement: Is it Good for the Jews?

Author, speaker and community activist, Leonard Zeskind has worked for three decades to curb the influence of racism, anti-Semitism and white supremacist groups in the United States. He is the author of *Blood and Politics: The History of White Nationalism from the Margins to the Mainstream*, which received an Honorable Mention from the Society of Midland Authors in May 2010 in the Adult Non-Fiction category. Mr. Zeskind writes a regular column for *Searchlight* magazine, published in London, and has written for *The American Prospect*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, among other publications. He has testified before a Parliamentary Subcommittee in the United Kingdom, given public lectures at universities in London and Berlin, and worked for three decades to curb the influence of racism, anti-Semitism and white supremacist groups in the United States. He is a life time member of the NAACP, and has served on the board of directors of the Petra Foundation and the Kansas City Jewish Community Relations Bureau. He is president of the Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights (IREHR).