



American Conference of Cantors Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting

Sunday, June 26, 2011
24 Sivan 5771
Sheraton Downtown Boston

Attendance

Officers: Susan Caro (President,) Claire Franco, Mark Goldman, Kerith Spencer-Shapiro (Vice Presidents,) Tanya Greenblatt (Secretary,) David Margules (Treasurer)

Executive Board Members: Roz Barak, David Berger, Marie Betcher, Amy Daniels, Larry Eschler, Brad Hyman, Penny Kessler, Sharon Kohn, Susan Levine, Barbara Margulis, Jacki Rawiszer, David Rosen, Sarah Sager, Tracey Scher, Sergei Schwartz, Lisa Segal, Ellen Sussman

Ex-officio: Richard Cohn (Past President,) David Goldstein (Past President, Pension Trustee,) Alane A Katzew (URJ,) Bruce Ruben (Director of DFSSM)

Staff: Gail Hirschenfang (Director of Member Support,) Barbara Ostfeld (Placement Director,) Rachel Roth (Managing Director,) Jodi Schechtman (Director of Organizational Partnerships)

Guests: John Kaplan (Chair of Committee on Ethics and Appeals)

Meeting called to order at 12:20 pm

Acceptance of minutes from meeting of Executive Board in March 2011

- ◆ Minutes accepted as posted on the Executive Board page of the ACC website

Welcome

- ◆ See **Appendix 1: President's Remarks to the ACC Executive Board** on page 4 of the minutes of this meeting.
- ◆ See **Appendix 2: Letter from Rabbi David Ellenson**, HUC-JIR regarding Ordination of DFSSM graduates, on page 6 of the minutes of this meeting, and also posted on the ACC website.

Membership

- ◆ **MOTION PASSED:** Kerith Spencer-Shapiro MOVES that the ACC Executive Board accept Ayelet Piatigorsky, a 2008 graduate of JTS, as a member of the ACC.
- ◆ Membership calls
 - Board members are asked to contact Tracey with feedback on the script.
 - Discussion will continue at the June 30, 2011 meeting of the Executive Board.
- ◆ **Executive session**—on a membership matter.

Director of Member Support

- ◆ Congregational staff review processes
 - Proposing to pursue a joint process with the URJ to create guidelines for ongoing and mutual review between cantor and congregation.
 - See goals in the Pre-Reads for this meeting posted on the Executive Board page of the ACC website.
 - **MOTION PASSED:** Sharon Kohn MOVES that the ACC Executive Board endorse the process and authorize Gail Hirschenfang to work on our behalf to help create URJ/ACC Goals for the ongoing and mutual review process for cantors and congregations.

MOTION PASSED: Mark Goldman MOVES that the ACC Executive Board accept the Proposed Website Policy revision as presented in the Pre-Reads for this meeting and posted on the Executive Board page of the ACC Website.

CCPD

- ◆ Joint webinar planned with CCAR on clergy teamwork
- ◆ Joint webinar planned with professional development committee of NATE on B'nei Mitzvah preparation techniques.



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- ◆ CCPD recognition program entitled: *Ma'alot Limud*
- ◆ David Berger is becoming the chair of CCPD.
- ◆ Shira Nafshi is thanked for her leadership as chair of the CCPD, and for her shepherding of the listserv.
 - Seth Warner took over as listserv administrator in April.

Torah Initiative—wrap up

- ◆ Close to \$118,000 raised so far
- ◆ Steven Weiss is congratulated on his leadership of this initiative.

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

- ◆ Dues line increased 2% over 2010-2011 actual collections.
 - The change in the timing of our dues deadlines seems to have increased our success in collecting dues.
- ◆ Shirim Ush'kalim Concert Society membership to all members who either participate in a Campership concert, with 50% of proceeds of such concerts benefitting the ACC, or to members who otherwise donate a minimum of \$360 from concerts.
 - Increased line in proposed budget based on projected income from Campership concerts.
 - Campership publicity materials will be available on the ACC website in PDF format.
- ◆ Reminder that this board approved at our last meeting up to \$12,000 from the Torah Dedication Initiative to be used to make up any shortfall in other fundraising and development lines in the Fiscal Year 2010 – 2011 budget.
 - Projected final budget indicates that very little of that money will be needed, so more than expected will go into our Endowment once the 2010 – 2011 Fiscal Year is closed.

Shirim l'Olam update

- ◆ Legacy society planned giving initiative will be introduced at plenary.
 - Educational component will begin this year.

Ad Journal update

- ◆ Included in program book and Convention App.
 - For the first time, Ad Journal available to all of our members year-round.
- ◆ All proceeds support ACC/GTM convention.
- ◆ Theme of honoring Imahot generated excitement and revenue.

URJ board resolution on circumcision

- **MOTION PASSED:** Kerith Spencer-Shapiro MOVES on behalf of the Social Action and Justice Committee that the ACC Executive Board endorse the URJ Resolution on Anti-Circumcision Initiatives and publish the following organizational statement:

The American Conference of Cantors, along with the Union for Reform Judaism, opposes the proposal to ban the practice of male circumcision, which is slated for the ballot in San Francisco this fall and expected elsewhere. Circumcision of male children is a mitzvah for Jewish parents, signifying the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people. Anti-circumcision initiatives are an affront to civil liberties, including the freedom of religion guaranteed by our Constitution. We further condemn undercurrents of anti-Semitism found in the "intactivist" movement, which seeks to make male circumcision unlawful for anyone 17 or younger.

- See **Resolution on Anti-Circumcision Initiatives**, Adopted June 13, 2011 by the URJ Board of Trustees, which is available at http://urj.org/about/union/governance/reso/?syspage=article&item_id=68500



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- www.stopcircban.com has a list of individuals and organizations opposed to the proposed ban. The ACC will be added to the list.
- In addition to the organizational statement, a press release will be prepared, affirming the right of Jewish families to choose whether to circumcise, recognizing that *b'rit milah* is normative Judaism.

Israel

- ◆ Board members are reminded to let us know if travelling to Israel, to facilitate interactions as emissaries of the ACC.
- ◆ David Berger will be in Israel this year.

Plenary activity on Tuesday on Teen engagement and community organizing

- ◆ Volunteer note-takers needed.

Boston Convention Chadashot will go out on Tuesday

- ◆ Email or text items for inclusion to Rachel.

Thank out-going board members

- ◆ Roz Barak, Amy Daniels and Shira Nafshi

MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED:

- ◆ Penny Kessler **MOVES** to **ADJOURN**.
- ◆ Meeting Adjourned at 4:00 p.m. Eastern



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Appendix 1: President's Remarks to the ACC Executive Board

Welcome to Boston! We are in for a great week of study, of celebration, of prayer and of music, in a city vibrant with history of this nation that has given us the freedom to openly live meaningful Jewish lives.

There is so much happening this week that you have about and you will hear about. Great opportunities and experiences for collaboration and partnerships, exciting new programming, challenges and growth.

On our brief agenda today, there are both exciting initiatives and challenging deliberations.

First, since we last spoke a few weeks ago, let me give you a update on the Reform Judaism Think Tank; I will be giving more detail during the plenary session. Convened by the three founding institutions, its goals are ultimately to open conversations toward addressing and thinking about the forces exerting change on Reform Jewish life in North America. This process began with a limited number of voices. From the outset, there was a great deal of recognition by many folks across a broad range of our Reform Jewish life that there were insufficient voices at the planning table. It has since expanded over the ensuing months not only to embrace a wider spectrum of influence in their visioning, but even more so in where this group is going to seek information and answers. I now represent the ACC in this project and conversation.

Next, I am delighted to share the progress on the matter of cantorial ordination at HUC, following the meeting in April which Jodi told us about on our April Board call. I wrote a letter to our membership, as you will recall, back in May; there was a letter as well from the CCAR to their membership in June. On June 21st, we received a letter from David Ellenson, directing us to determine and recommend back to HUC a preferred Hebrew nomenclature to accompany the term 'Cantorial Ordination'. With that, I am pleased to announce that I have convened a committee, as per David's request: Yvon Shore, Rick Sarason, Eli Schleifer, Howard Stahl, and Benjie Schiller, led by Jodi Schechtman. They will be getting underway after convention to develop a Hebrew phrase to describe Cantorial Ordination. I recognize that there are still some unanswered questions, such as whether or not this would become retroactive. At this time, based on everything that have I come to know and understand about this matter, it would be best to bring that up later on in the process and discussion.

You will hear me announce during the plenary sessions my plans to roll out Town Hall meetings during the year. I am planning either 2 or 3, web-based calls, open to our membership. As open communication with our membership is a high priority for me, this is a way for show our members that we, their leadership, is really listening. It is also a better way for me to be able and available to respond to concerns and questions, rather than through the series of posts to the listserv, which always seems reactive to me, and insufficient. Each call will have some timely update that I will share with the membership, and then I will open the remainder of the hour for questions and dialogue. I am very excited to offer this to our membership, and invite your feedback as we try this out.

Extending ourselves, our being present and available is important for each of us in leadership. During the convention this week, and throughout the year, we must remember (as Dee Danner gave us a great image) that we are each wrapped in the ACC flag. We need to do this together. How can we best do this? Listen carefully. Be responsive. Be an active



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participant, encourage the best from all our colleagues, all the convention participants—we are all emissaries of the Conference during the convention.

Be the leaders with whom I am so proud to share this journey. The 7th Century *Midrash Tanhuma* comments on the familiar statement from Deuteronomy:

אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני יהוה אלהיכם ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם ושטריכם
כל איש ישראל :

pointing out that even though God appointed over us heads, elders, and officers, all of us are equal before God, for the verse concludes *Kol Ish Yisrael*—"All are people of Israel." The *Yalkut* (16th C.) supports this with another teaching on this verse, stating: "Even though I appointed heads and judges and magistrates, all of you are equal before Me." This teaching is based on Rashi's comment that the Hebrew should have either said, "*roshei shivteichem*—the heads of your tribes" or "*roshim l'shivteichem*—heads for your tribes." But in reading "...*rosheichem, shivteichem*..."—the leaders are not raised above the tribes, meaning that the leaders and the people are equal before the Holy One.

This, then, is true leadership—God equates all, irrespective of our roles. Empowerment, then, isn't something that we as leaders can confer upon others; rather, we must act together, modeling true partnership. This implies collective responsibility and being guarantors—*arevim*—together, to ensure the communal success of our Conference.

Now a few updates:

- Mazal tov: Jen Frost and Steve Weiss, on their respective new babies!
- Mazal tov and thanks: Shira Nafshi (will further acknowledge and thank all of our outgoing board members at Plenary session)
- Kay's absence

I have a few thanks to share here among us before we jump into our business (and there will be a lot more throughout the week!). Let us all extend our gratitude to Sergei and Randall, our convention co-chairs, and their amazing team of our colleagues, each of whom had a part in creating what awaits us in the coming days.

To Claire and Rachel, our leadership team that assists, supports guides and facilitates the dreams and visions of the convention committee—you are awesome! You have worked tirelessly to support the convention team in bringing this great week to fruition, and for that we are truly grateful!

As we enter into our work today, may God grant us wisdom and patience for our deliberations and discussion, compassion in our leadership, and joy and fulfillment in our work.