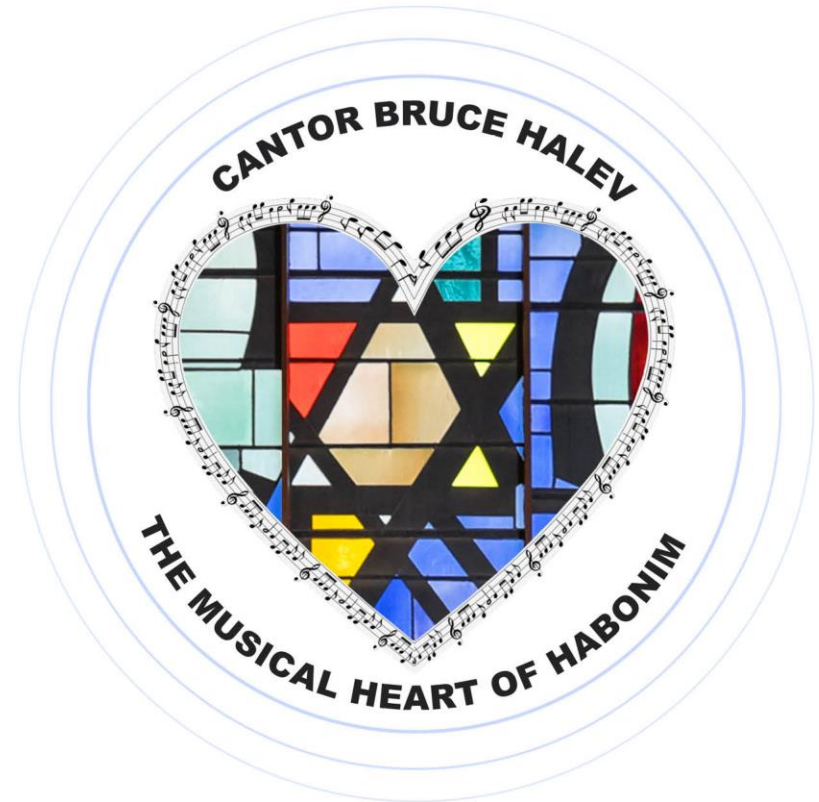




# Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

CONGREGATION HABONIM  
SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021



Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SPONSORS

### Cantor's Circle

Anonymous  
Renee Edelman  
Neil Goldstein

### Orchestra

Amy Foster & Stephen Berman  
Nita and Joe Gottesman  
Lew Krulwich  
Marc & Jill Mehl  
Bill z"l and Janet Schwartz

### Parterre

Hubert & Frances Brandt  
Paul & Janet Cord  
The Halperin Family  
Debra Karlstein  
Saul & Mary Sanders  
Richard Verner & Jean Hellering  
Phyllis Hofman Waldmann

### Grand Tier

Brett Applebaum & Deborah Winokur  
Sarah & Eric Rosand  
Lori-Ann Wynter

### Dress Circle

Brandon & Erica Eisenman  
Michael Harwayne & Alison Fried  
Anonymous  
David Feuerstein & Laurie Mendik  
Jeffrey & Deborah Moelis  
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David & Robin Singer  
Daniel Stone & Ellie Carmody  
Lois Baskin & Bill Taubenfeld  
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### Balcony

The Bank Family  
Norbert Fruehauf & Dail Stalow  
Sheryl Goldstein & Stephen Kramer  
Ceri E. Hadda & Lloyd Gelwan  
Larry Jacobsberg & Barbara Kaplan Jacobsberg  
Laurance Kaufman & Melody Marcus  
Brian King & Susan Grant  
Michael Kowal  
Stewart & Maureen Lande  
Beth Lawrence  
John, Deborah, Avery & Lucy Meer  
Rachel, Bill, Kenneth Meer and Family  
Harriet Mehl  
Ellen Mendel

### Balcony (Continued)

Ruth & Timothy Murphy  
Robert & Ellen Plancher  
Russell & Jill Rivera  
Linda Salomon  
The Soll Family  
Aliana & David Spungen

### Family Circle

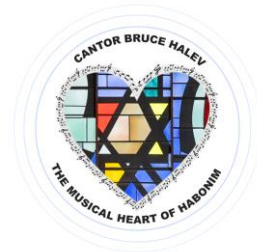
Rachel, David, Sadie & Ezra Berger  
Louise & Andy Bergman  
Elizabeth, Bill, Doris, and Sophia Bernhard  
Zach, Beth, Sammy, Julia & Hannah Bornstein  
Sandy Brod  
Candice & Lewis Brown  
The Shipley Dean Family  
Dr. Michael & Eileen Dolfman  
Lindsey & Assaf Gal  
Rabbi Lisa Gelber  
Rob, Roberta, Taylor & Eric Greenberg Goldy  
Daniel & Frances Hamermesh  
Eli & Tracy Hattem  
Jamie & Irene Jacobsohn  
Hilda Jaffe  
Barry & Judith Kenter  
Doron, Jennifer, Tess, and Nadav Kenter  
Dr. Alana Mendelsohn, Eric Kohlmann & Naomi  
Alan, Rachel, Benjamin, Elias and Gabriel  
Krauthamer  
Stephen & Claire Lewin

### Family Circle (Continued)

Sherrill and Zieve Mane  
Alyce & Tom Mariam and Steven & Rita Golden  
Michael Massen  
Melissa Jampol, Seth, Ben, and Max Moskowitz  
The Merdinger Family- Maya, Matthew, Ellie & Eytan  
Paul Millman  
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Robin, Brad, Romy and Jaime Roberts  
The Rudolph and Cohen Family  
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## RAISE OUR VOICES FOR CANTOR HALEV



A Tribute to Cantor Bruce Halev  
on his retirement after  
38 years as Habonim's Cantor

May 23, 2021

CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

MAZEL TOV, CANTOR BRUCE.

YOU ARE A RENAISSANCE MAN, AND JOANIE, YOUR MUSE,  
ALONG WITH BECCA AND TALIA.

**LOVE, RENÉE, AND RICHARD, MARGOT, TORY, AND AMANDA EDELMAN**



CANTOR'S CIRCLE SPONSOR



# Message from Gala Chair – Jill Mehl

Welcome to the 2021 virtual Congregation Habonim Gala. We can all agree that this year has at times felt endless and often trying; what a bright spot it has been these past months to focus on our well-loved honoree, Cantor Bruce Halev, who is retiring after 38 years.

Thank you to the gala committee members (Janet Cord, Renée Edelman, Jean Hellering, Amy Foster, Alison Fried, Sheryl Goldstein, Sara Lise Raff, Ilyse Shechtel, and Lori-Ann Wynter) who worked with a spirit of camaraderie and brought their specific talents in production, marketing, music, fundraising, and networking among other useful skills to make this first-time virtual synagogue gala possible and successful. A special thank-you goes to Michael Rehfield, who donated hours toward filming and editing critical pieces of the production.

Thank you to the many current and former members of Habonim, and Bruce's many friends and admirers for contributing so generously to make this a fundraising success. (Bruce, would you consider retiring again next year?) And to Cantor Bruce, the Musical Heart of Habonim, we thank you for who you are and who you have been for this community for almost four decades! We wish you great joy and fulfillment in whatever you create next.

**Jill Mehl**

**2021 Gala Chair**

CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

CANTOR BRUCE HALEV,

WE SALUTE YOU, JOANIE, BECCA & TALIA ON YOUR 38 YEARS  
AS A FAMILY AT CONGREGATION HABONIM.

Thank you for your leadership, energy, passion, humor, and scholarship.  
Mazel Tov. Looking forward to continuing our journey together.

**Love, Richard, Margot, Tory, Amanda,  
John, Suzie, and Renée Edelman**



CANTOR'S CIRCLE SPONSOR

# Message from the Editor

This book is not a traditional Gala Journal. It is a book of tributes to Cantor Halev from his congregants, friends, and colleagues. It has some of the typical journal content, it wouldn't be Habonim if we didn't honor tradition in some way. There are tribute ads from sponsors at different levels; messages from synagogue leadership; and lists of current personnel and past leaders.

What makes this book a Tribute Book and not an ordinary Gala Journal is that we asked everyone to submit a favorite story or memory featuring Bruce. We got quite a response, everything from one-line to multi-page submissions some with photographs and some photos without a written memory to go along. They range from funny to poignant and came from children, young adults, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. They celebrate everything from Bruce's days as an opera singer through B'nai Mitzvah of this year.

I got to read them all and do my best to group them by topic. Of course, some stories covered lifetimes and generations. I could have placed them in any number of categories. Often, space or available pictures drove their

placement. As I read these snapshots of Bruce's impact on people's lives, I laughed, cried, got choked-up, and smiled. I hope you will too.

I apologize for all the errors that have undoubtedly found their way into this book. I'm profusely sorry for misspelling your name, omitting your photo submission, or pairing it with the wrong story. Please send your corrections to [Gala2021@habonim.net](mailto:Gala2021@habonim.net) I will update the digital version which will be posted on the Habonim.net website.

Bruce,

It has been an honor and a privilege to prepare this tribute to you, just as it has been a pleasure to know you and Joanie and to learn from you over the last 20-odd years. For me, your voice will always be the sound of prayer and anyone else's voice, no matter how beautiful, will never sound quite right.

With love and best wishes for the future,

**Jean Hellering**  
**2021 Gala Tribute Book Editor**

CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

# ANONYMOUS DONOR

CANTOR'S CIRCLE SPONSOR



# Message from Rabbi Gelber

What a joy to work, plan, and lead together! I love that a similar photo hung right outside the Blue Room under *Rock Shabbat* where we could see it each day, reminding all of our joint love of community, Torah, and song. Mazal Tov to my bimah partner in prayer and song for sharing your heart with Habonim and teaching everyone to build from love.

**Rabbi Lisa Gelber**



Cantor Bruce with Rabbi Gelber

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

To (Bruce) Cantor Halev

♥ With Deep Affection,      ♥ With Utmost Respect,      ♥ With Profound Gratitude

Thank You  
for Being the Voice of the Prayers in Our Hearts  
and  
for Being the Glue that Held Our Community Together.

Wishing You Much Joy in The Next Portion of Your Journey

**Neil Goldstein**

# President's Message

Habonim means “the builders” and Halev means “the heart” and together they describe Bruce’s invaluable contributions to our community. Bruce joined Habonim when many of our founding generation of German Jews were still active members of the congregation and attending services on a regular basis. He has witnessed and helped guide the transition from that founding generation to our current diverse membership, eagerly welcoming each succeeding generation with warmth, humor, and kindness.

As our cantor, Bruce not only shared with us his beautiful voice; he was a partner in the joys and sorrows that define our lives – truly the heart of our community. Bruce was the calming presence who put nervous children and parents at ease through Bat and Bar Mitzvah preparations and the excitement and stress of that special day. Throughout his time as our cantor, Bruce devoted himself to calling and visiting members who were ill and comforting grieving families. Bruce’s caring nature, boundless optimism and easy-going manner have been critical elements in creating and maintaining our warm and welcoming community.

Bruce’s positive impact on Habonim cannot be overstated. He has been the heart and the rock-solid foundation for the builders — supporting our Habonim community and holding us together through multiple changes in rabbinic and lay leadership over the years all the while welcoming members and guests, new and old, with his strong voice and his gentle spirit.

**Rich Verner**  
**President**



Richard Verner

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

## THANK YOU, BRUCE!

We're so grateful for your many years of spiritual guidance, inspiration, education, and friendship. Your dedication has helped to set the tone of warmth, acceptance, and inclusion that are the earmarks of Habonim.

It will be hard to imagine not seeing your face or hearing your voice on the bimah. But we look forward to sharing more great stories and chatting in the years to come – over bagels or a glass of wine!

We will miss you so much! We all wish you a new chapter filled with rest, great books, adventure, and all that makes you happy!

Lots of love,  
**Amy Foster, Steve Berman, and Zoe Berman**



# Cantor's Message

A Brief Summary of My Years at Congregation Habonim

Excerpted from Cantor Halev's 10.14.18 speech at Rabbi Gelber's Installation

When I stepped on the bima for the first in July 1983 and then meeting the congregation at the Oneg afterwards I didn't realize what an interesting journey my wife Joanie and I would be taking. We started to meet people after the service, and a couple came up to me and the woman said with a strong German accent: 'I am Ilse Winkler, and I am the mother of the Fonze! Her husband said: 'And I am the producer!' I replied: 'that is very nice' not knowing what or who they were talking about. As we walked away Joanie informed me who he was. And so, began my education.

I first worked with Rabbi Bernhard Cohn who was born in Berlin, and whose father was a well-known rabbi and playwright, and also an early Zionist. He had married Miriam the daughter of Rabbi Hugo Hahn, the founding rabbi. Cantor Erwin Hirsch had just retired. He had brought the German Jewish liturgy from Manheim and had married Martha Sommer the organist, who had just made it out of Germany leaving her parents behind. The services were conducted with a choir and organ.

Habonim was often called the 'best kept secret on the Upper West Side.' In 1995 we joined the Conservative movement. The congregation had been turned down by them in 1941 as members had to drive or use public transport. They therefore joined the Reform movement. During the 80s numerous people joined the synagogue from the Upper West Side and the RS had about 75

students. The first girl to have a Bat Mitzvah was in the late 60s. I began to make changes in the music during the early 90s, and often got a lot of flak. The Nursery school started in 1997 and there was an instant influx of new members. There was a very active sisterhood and numerous adult education programs. A beautiful aspect of the congregation was how the generations melded. Deep relationships grew between our older and younger members.

We continue on our journey here at our temporary space. An impressive building awaits us on West 65th street. Today we have a vibrant NS and RS under Tina Lobel and Rina Cohen Schwarz. Today is also time to continue our journey with Rabbi Lisa Gelber. Next year we will celebrate the last 80 years. She has a vision for our synagogue. I am sure our founders would be happy and approve of the direction we are going in.

**Cantor Bruce Halev**



Cantor Bruce Halev

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

**Cantor Bruce Halev has served as:**

- Keeper of historical memories
- Conservator of the music cherished by our original members
- Maintainer of connections to Habonim
- Teacher
- Encourager of active participation by members in leading services
- Bridge from one generation to the next

On this night when we reminisce about the many (38!) years that Bruce Halev has been our cantor, how he has affected and influenced us, the many ways he and Joannie have enriched our lives, we wish him good health, the active pursuit of his interests, and the hope that he will not disappear from our lives.

Kol HaKavod

**Nita & Joe Gottesman**

# Religious School Director Message

Bruce,

What an honor it has been to work with you these past five years, a bonus of collegiality after being a congregant for the 12 years before that. I love your calming presence, always ready to listen, always caring about what is said and who is saying it. You lift up everyone around you, and that has been your gift to me and countless members and colleagues.

I liken your presence to that of an angel — with your kindness, your supportiveness, and your ruach/ spirit. You have brought joy to so many people throughout your 38 years as Habonim's Cantor. As you shift into retirement, I wish you shalom — a great sense of peace in your going and offer you the words of Shalom Aleichem. This is the first song we sing together at the Friday evening Shabbat table that sets the tone of the evening, and it's a merry liturgical kabbalistic poem from the late 16th century. Each paragraph is welcoming the angels of God who come to bless us with their presence:

Shalom Aleichem — peace be unto you — Bruce, you brought us peace and mindfulness as our Cantor, lifting us up in song.

Boachem l'shalom — come in peace, messenger of peace: Bruce, so much of our liturgy invokes Shalom. You have inspired us musically to seek out shalom, as the Habonim community, as Jewish people we are responsible to be the messengers and pursuers of peace.

Barchuni l'shalom — bless me with peace: personally, I know you have brought me shalom. You have celebrated different simchas with me and my family, and I hope to continue to see you at our

family's celebrations. You also brought me shalom when I needed support or a listening ear. Oh, how I will miss our time schmoozing between our adjoining offices — whether it was hearing about the best movies to check out, commiserating on national politics, or our chats about Israel, I will miss that piece of shalom with you.

And, finally, Bruce, I offer you this: Tzeitchem l'shalom — may your departure be in peace. May you enjoy every moment of your retirement. Bring your own shalom and bring the shalom and brachot of the many members of this holy community with you everywhere.

L'hitra'ot Bruce — may we all see you again b'shalom (in peace).

L'shalom,

**Rina**



Rina Cohen-Schwarz, Education Director

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Best wishes to Cantor Bruce

**Bill and Janet Schwartz**



# Nursery School Directors Message

Cantor Bruce, since the day we met, working with you has been an immense pleasure. Your graciousness about the people with whom you work, your delight in and your acknowledgment of their successes, and your ability to make them the heroes, always impressed us. You have proven that it doesn't take a loud voice to accomplish tremendous things.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with you. We appreciate our friendship and caring more than we can say. Thank you for always supporting the Nursery School. Your love for children and your commitment to Jewish education are ever present. It was always clear that your great joys have been connecting with young children through holiday celebrations and our Tot Shabbat Program. Your enthusiasm never waned. You have been an integral part of growing our community by attending events and sharing your knowledge of the history of Habonim. Now that your daughter, Talia, is working at Habonim, your legacy will continue. Her commitment to teaching and her love of children inspire all of us.

We will always cherish the beautiful gift of your friendship both personally and professionally.  
Lots of love today and always.

Most warmly,

Tina and Ann



Tina Lobel  
Nursery School Director



Ann Obsatz,  
Associate Nursery School Director

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

We thank and honor you, Cantor Bruce, for the gift of your music  
and your friendship during our decade at Habonim.

With love and appreciation,  
**Sarah, Adam, Jill, & Marc Mehl**



# Officers & Board of Trustees

## OFFICERS

Richard Verner, PRESIDENT

Alison Fried, VICE PRESIDENT

Debra Karlstein, VICE PRESIDENT

Abigail Schlaff, VICE PRESIDENT

Marc Mehl, TREASURER

Susan Grant, SECRETARY

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Beth Bornstein

Janet Cord

Deena Ecker

Brandon Eisenman

Jon Forstadt

Amy Foster

Lindsay Gal

Nita Gottesman

Lewis Krulwich

John Meer

Jeffrey Moelis

Tony Robins

Joseph Teig

Deborah Winokur

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Congratulations for all your contributions to Habonim  
and all our members.

Much love to you and your family.

**Maxine z"l and Lew Krulwich**



# Congregation Habonim Personnel

## Office & Maintenance

Malkie Grozalsky, Director of Administration  
Ann Cohen, Communications Coordinator  
Grace Rosas, Bookkeeper  
Matvey Khazanov, Maintenance  
Jesus Gutierrez, Maintenance

## Nursery School

Tina Lobel, Director  
Ann Obsatz, Associate Director  
Michael Berry, Administrator

### Orange Room

Robin Weinstein  
Elanah Fishman

### Purple Room

Hara Hoff  
Emily Feffer  
Debbie Abrons

### Blue Room

Karen Klibanoff  
Farrah Zabar

Alexis Cohen

Ilanah Feldman

### Red Room

April Chestner  
Dawn Neil  
Talía Halev

## Religious School

### Administrative Team

Rina Cohen-Schwarz, Education Director  
Karen Sacks

### Gan-Aleph

Karen Sacks  
Hannah Buhasira

### Bet

Abby Newman

### Shira Specialist, Gan-Hei

Rob Silverbush

### Gimmel, Dalet, Hei

Barry Waldman

### Ivrit Team Gimmel, Dalet, Hei, Vav & Zayin

Hannah Buhasira  
Jodi Eliasson  
Rob Silverbush

### Vav-Zayin

Jodi Eliasson  
Rob Silverbush

### Lomdim Teens

Jessica Futran

Dear Bruce:

Thank you for everything. For being there in the good times and not so good times. For sharing a laugh and funny story. For serious discussions and comments. For expressing joy for the children and wonderment of the members with strong German roots. And for persisting until I finally became a Bat Mitzvah.

May you and Joanie have many more happy and healthy years together.

Love always,

**Janet, Paul, and Brian Cord**

# Past Presidents

Dr. Friedrich S. Brodnitz z"l	1941 – 1947
Gustav Jacoby z"l	1947 – 1959
Eric W. Norden z"l	1959 – 1965
Erich O. Grunebaum z"l	1965 – 1974
Ludwig Boettigheimer z"l	1974 – 1981
Dr. Ralph Stein z"l	1981 – 1984
Carol Kahn Strauss	1984 – 1992
John Keller z"l	1992 – 1999
Leo Asen	1999 – 2005
Saul Sanders	2005 – 2010
Elaine Witkoff	2010 – 2015
Neil Goldstein	2015 – 2018

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Congratulations, Bruce!  
on your long and wonderful tenure  
as Habonim's beloved cantor

You have been the heart of our community  
for all of these years

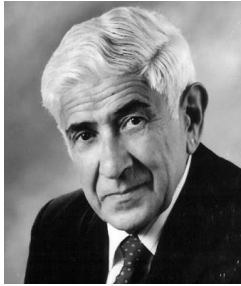
We wish you well as you begin  
your next chapter

With our love and gratitude,  
**Saul and Mary Sanders**

# Clergy Through the Years



Rabbi Hugo Hahn



Rabbi  
Bernhard Cohn



Rabbi  
Jay Rosenbaum



Rabbi  
Robert Summers



Rabbi  
Joanna Samuels



Rabbi  
Joshua Katzan



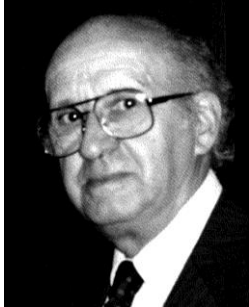
Rabbi  
Barry Kenter



Rabbi Lisa Gelber



Cantor  
Erwin Hirsch



Cantor  
Walter Salomon



Cantor  
Bruce Halev



Cantorial Soloist  
Jessica Futran

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

*Cheers to 38 years!*

*The Halperin Family congratulates our Cantor, Bruce Halev, on 38 years of service to Congregation Habonim!*

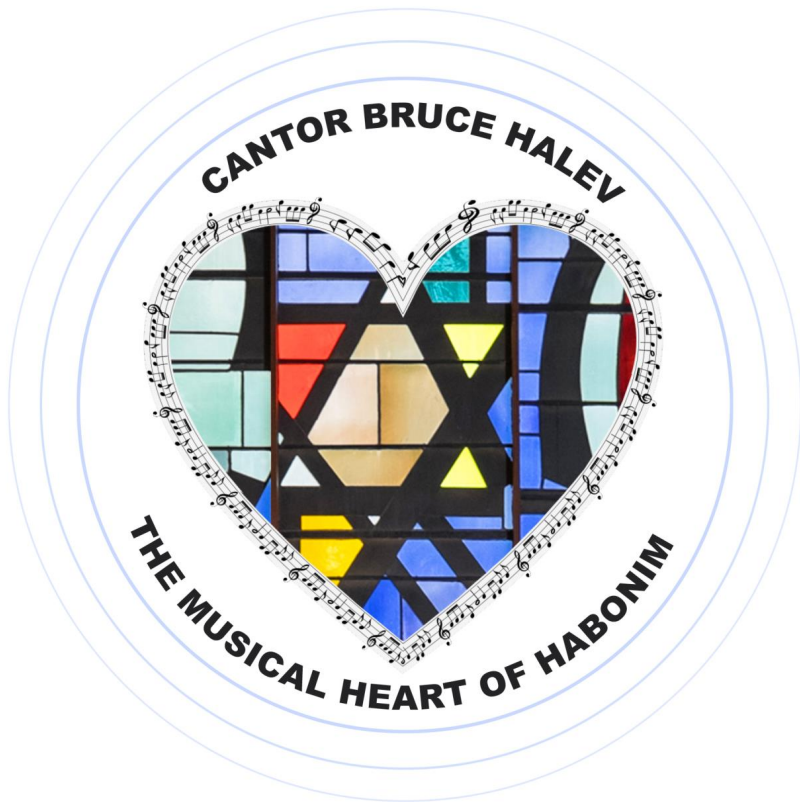
*We feel lucky to have had Cantor Halev teach all four of our children and prepare them for their Bar, Bat and B'nai Mitzvot!*

*And we love his casual style,  
which seems to have rubbed off on us!*





# TRIBUTES



Do you know why there are so many people paying tribute to Cantor Bruce? He's a connector par excellence! He has an exquisite ability to engage with new people in a very short time after services and during Kiddush as well as with synagogue regulars, as with long-term members! Bruce is keenly interested in everyone's background - from the youngest Bar and Bat Mitzvah student and their families - to our most senior members. He not only listens but also cherishes what he hears. Bruce is a living legacy for Habonim.

ELLEN MENDEL

Confirmed, Shavuot 1949

Part of founding families.

Bat Mitzvah Dec. 2015

## Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

CONGREGATION HABONIM

JUNE 30, 2021

# Tribute from Joanie Halev

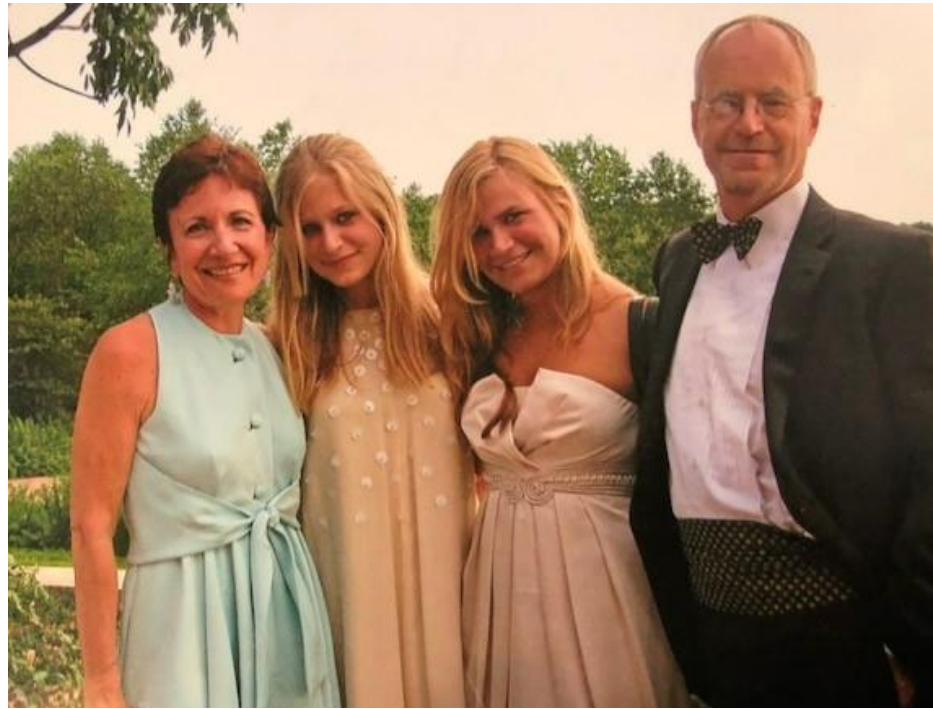
Dear Habonim Family:

How to sit down and try to encapsulate 38 years of life experience in one sitting?

So many memories and images flash past my mind's eye as I think of all that Bruce's many years at Habonim have meant, and how those years have mirrored our lives as both a couple and a family. We came to Habonim together, as newlyweds, really, having been married for less than a year when he became the Cantor of Habonim in July 1983. So Habonim has truly been the centerpiece and "the heart" of our lives.

For a man, whose name — Halev — actually means "the heart", this is somehow appropriate!

I remember so clearly the earliest years when Bruce was still in cantorial school and was joining an established congregation of 43 years as its second cantor. What a mantle to take on - to follow in Cantor Hirsch's footsteps! But I felt certain that this would be a perfect fit for my husband - with his quiet but assured presence; his innate love of learning and teaching; his appreciation and respect for those who have lived long lives, surmounting challenges with resilience as our founding members had. I was thrilled that his vocal talent would be appreciated by people who knew and understood his abilities, and who were deeply moved by the way he brought honor and beauty to the music they had brought with them from Germany. And, as the needed transitions took place, Bruce's interest in new Jewish music and in exploring new ways of communicating our liturgy were essential as we evolved to a local, community-based congregation. So, it isn't surprising to me that this "marriage" to Habonim was so long-lasting and satisfying on both sides.



What HAS been surprising, though, has been how much Bruce came to enjoy his role as a teacher and leader for the children and teenagers of the congregation, especially preparing them for their b'nai mitzvah. You may not know this, but initially he came to this aspect of his job with genuine trepidation. His professional life before the cantorate had been as an opera singer in the UK, in Europe and in Israel, with concurrent stints as a soloist in synagogue choirs. Children and teens hadn't been a part of his life at all. He wondered how he might manage this part of his role with authenticity; he doubted his ability to connect with the children. I must say that I never doubted that he would rise to the occasion, and I am pleased and proud to say that I was right!

## Tribute from Joanie Halev continued

When the Habonim Nursery School first arrived over 20 years ago, teeming with our delightfully engaging newest members, Bruce was 100% charmed. He often said that seeing them was always a great way to start the day. He enjoyed teaching and working with the children of the religious school — many of whom he had known since age two — as they began to find new meaning in their own Jewish life and education. And he often beamed as he told me of the progress made by a particular 12-year-old whose big day was nearing; he took real interest in each one, in their challenges and triumphs.

Of course, having his own children, our daughters Becca and Talia, broadened his point of view and gave him an at-home laboratory for understanding the lives of little ones (and not so little ones by the time they approached the age of bar and bat mitzvah). I would have to say that Bruce's respect for each child's individuality was definitely aided and abetted by becoming a dad himself.

As the years have passed, we have lived through the deaths of so many wonderful members for whom we had grown to care a great deal. Those funerals were many, and they were very difficult. As well, Bruce has officiated at b'nai and b'not mitzvah and at weddings of children whose baby namings and brises he had attended. Our own lives over the last 38 years have been a mirror of yours, sharing your many life-cycle events, both joyous and sad, exhilarating, and painful.

Understandably, Bruce had hoped to be able to join his beloved congregation when we returned to our new and permanent home on the site of the congregation's original synagogue building, on 66th/65th Streets. We have truly been "wandering in the desert" on West End Avenue for seven years now! Bruce had hoped to participate in that sacred event; to see that dream become a reality would have been a realization of the dearest hopes of many of our founding members. And so, it seems that he will not be your cantor when the congregation reaches that particular "Promised Land."

But, like Moses of old whose fate it was to stay behind and witness his flock moving forward to the land of Canaan, promised to his people by God, Bruce will stand aside and witness this moment in a different role, nonetheless with tender happiness and pride. The myriad moments of fulfillment and connection will always be held close to his heart, and to mine. It has been a joy to grow and learn and celebrate with you.

I join Bruce in wishing only goodness and fulfillment for those with whom we have shared so much, and in praying that you, our congregational family of Habonim, continue to go from strength to strength in the coming months and years. Keyn y'hee ratzon: May it be God's will.

Warmly, with love and respect,

**Joanie Halev**



Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Bruce,  
Your strong, passionate voice has been the  
unshakeable foundation of our community for 38 years.

Thank you for your

- ✧ Dedication and Leadership
- ✧ Kindness and Compassion
- ✧ Friendship and Warmth

Your generous spirit represents the best of Congregation Habonim.

With gratitude and love  
**Jean Hellering and Rich Verner**  
**Tim Verner and Peter Verner**



# Tributes from Becca & Talia Halev

As a little girl, I didn't fully understand why my dad stood in front of you all and sang songs with all sorts of weird words I couldn't understand... And why were all of you lining up to see him afterwards? Was my dad some kind of rock star? I didn't know what was going on!

But as I got older, I learned more about what it meant to be Jewish. I learned that those words weren't weird at all. I studied with my dad for my bat-mitzvah, and when I nervously recited the haftorah in front of so many of you, he was right by my side... I listened to him sing those same prayers each High Holy Day, and I watched him lead the funeral services for both of my grandparents — and somewhere along the way I finally understood... He was there for all of your life-cycle events too.

It's a powerful thing, being witness to how much your father means to other people. Even more to be witness to how much you and all those we have lost over the years have meant to him.

Habonim has been a part of my dad's life even longer than I have! For 38 years he has genuinely loved his job, and I'm so thankful for what you all have given to him and to our family.

But today, I'm just really proud of my dad.

**Becca**

Hi Dad! I can't believe this day is finally here. Thirty-eight years is a very long time to be a part of this amazing congregation, and I know how much everyone is going to miss you. It's very strange being here with you not being here this past year, but it's definitely been really nice to keep the Halev family tradition going.

Habonim has been a part of my life, personally, for my entire life. I remember going to services every single Friday, going on the bimah, waving to mom, and that one time I got in trouble for sticking my tongue out on the bimah during services. I'll never forget that because mom would not let me forget about it.

Hopefully when all this is over, we can get together to celebrate and give you the send-off you deserve. I love you so much, and I can't wait to give you a big hug.

**Talia**



CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

YASHER KOACH AND TODAH RABBA

WITH MUCH APPRECIATION

**PHYLLIS HOFMAN WALDMANN**

PARTERRE SPONSOR



# Tributes — The Early Years

**Dear Bruce,**

Congratulations on your retirement.

When you first arrived at Habonim, my father, Rabbi Bernhard Cohn was very excited to have you join as the incoming Cantor. He commented what a beautiful voice you had and that you shared with him a love for classical music and opera.

I believe my and Charles' wedding on November 27, 1983, was your very first you performed together with my father. The musicals selections were perfect.

I also recall working together with you on the committee for developing a nursery school for Habonim. A dream of my fathers.

You, Joanie and the family have been an incredible addition to Habonim and will surely be missed. We look forward to still hearing your lovely voice at high holiday services, and wish you and your family much health, happiness, and joy during your retirement.

All the best,

**Ruth Cohn Warner, Charles N. Warner,  
Aaron and Jeremy Warner**

My first memory of Bruce was at High Holiday services 1983, shortly after he became our Cantor. I remember thinking that, given how cherished newly retired Cantor Erwin Hirsch had been at Habonim, Bruce was undertaking a very difficult role. And I also remember admiring his bravery for doing so! But as they have done ever since, his voice and his personality quickly won congregants over. And little did I realize how amazing Bruce would be as Cantor over the next 38 years — giving voice to prayers that move us, lending an ear to those needing someone to confide in, serving as the bridge between the German Liberal liturgy and the Conservative liturgy, and providing the glue that has enabled the synagogue to continue on, even through some unsettling times!

**Susan Grant**



Bruce & Rabbi Cohn

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

To paraphrase the words of the immortal Cole Porter: Cantor Bruce, YOU'RE THE TOP!!!



# Tributes — The Early Years

I first met Cantor Bruce during Pesach services in 1983. He had been hired as the new cantor to take effect in July of that year, upon the retirement of Cantor Erwin Hirsch Z.L. I remember some people remarking, “The person in the back is the new cantor.” When I spoke with him after the services, I found out that we both had something in common. Love of opera.

I still remember the baby naming’s for Rebecca and Talia.

When I served as gabbai of Habonim, I also helped to organize the “Classical Services (Choir and organ). During the summer before the holidays, we would sit down together and figure out, whom we should honor with calls to the Torah.

When I was in the hospital following surgery in 2018, Bruce visited me regularly, also when I was at the Jewish Home on 106<sup>th</sup> Street.

Cantor Bruce has been instrumental in keeping the traditional organ and choir service during the High Holidays. This also includes his monthly services with the members of the Queens community.

It will be hard to imagine Habonim without him. I am certain, that in his retirement, we will see Bruce on the bimah (hopefully soon in house), helping to conduct services.

I am certain, that everyone joins me in wishing Cantor Halev a happy retirement, and a long life with Joanie, Rebecca, and Talia.

**By Stanley Lewin**

I first met Cantor Halev at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, in the spring of 1992. I recall a bright, sunny day, and we spent some time in pleasant conversation on a bench outside the school building.

Sometime later (perhaps a few years, I cannot recall) I found out that Habonim might be needing a cantor for the upcoming High Holidays. I duly made my way to West 66 Street, and there on the bimah was Bruce. We had our reunion, and I had an audition. While I was not brought on that year, Bruce noted that I could read Torah, and made sure that I could be contacted. The rest is history...

**Rabbi Mark Somerstein**



Rebecca’s Baby Naming 1988

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Thank you, Cantor Bruce, for helping make Habonim our family's spiritual home.  
Mazel Tov on your retirement!

**Deborah, Brett, Ben, & Jessica**





# Tributes — The Early Years

## Memories!

Back in 1981–82, our Rye, NY home became full of joyful banter and music thanks to both Cantor Bruce and Joanie Halev. The Rudolph home was “the weekend country residence” for Bruce, our synagogue’s Cantor, allowing him to avoid the NYC-Rye commute. Bruce and Joanie were part of the family. Joanie and Susan established an even stronger bond thanks to shared roots in the state of Maine that included mutual friends and family connections.

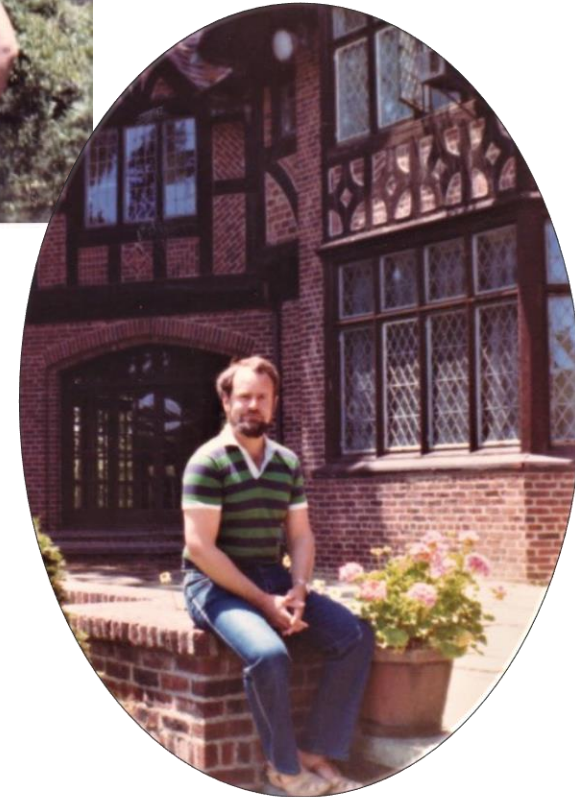
Bruce and Joanie’s weekend experiences included their sharing the adventures of Danielle (then age 12) and David (then age 10). One incident still brings back fond memories. On this particular Shabbat afternoon, a gathering of David and his neighborhood buddies evolved into a super, duper water fight! All methods of squirting, hosing and spraying were adopted! Bruce decided to join in the fun. Equipped with spray bottles, he joined the motley crew as they chased each other on the lawns throughout the neighborhood.

David was beyond excited to have Bruce participate in the merriment. At the same time, he saw Bruce as not only a family friend, but also as his Cantor, someone he walked to synagogue with on Shabbat. Before the water fight got underway, David gathered his pals around him and delivered the following words of advice: “Watch what you say, guys. He’s a holy man!”

**From the entire Rudolph and Cohen clan to “our” holy man...  
Mazel Tov on this amazing milestone!**



Bruce & Joanie in Rye, NY 1981



Bruce in Rye, NY 1981

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

We celebrate and honor Cantor Bruce Halev,  
a truly unique cantorial leader whose humanity, compassion, and  
heartwarming voice has inspired four generations of our family.

Thank you for always being there for us throughout the years.  
May your well-deserved retirement be as long and sweet as the  
sound of tekiah gedolah.

Much love,  
**The Rosand, Wertheimer, and Kopans Families**



# Tributes – Nursery School

Hi, I am way overdue to make any comments about Cantor Bruce, whose warmth and genuineness contribute so much to the atmosphere at Congregation Habonim. I remember how, after services (pre-pandemic), Cantor Bruce would make his rounds, checking in and connecting with others with much grace and sweet attention.

My son in the nursery school was obsessed with “Cantor Bruise,” and every time he saw him would be a special treat. I recall one time a discussion in which another administrator described my son as “another boy who is obsessed with Cantor Bruce.” Kids can be a great judge of character, and I like to imagine the line of tiny boys extending through the years who looked up to this man with lots of love.

I can't imagine Congregation Habonim without our Cantor Bruce, whom I feel can't be replaced. Wishing him all the best in his future endeavors.

## The Uness family



Shavuot with Bruce and the Orange Room

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

To our marvelous Cantor Bruce,

With gratitude, we celebrate you and all you have done for our beloved Habonim community during your 38 spectacular years. We will forever cherish the joyous milestones and memories we shared with you.

**The Fried / Harwayne Family  
Michael, Alison, Ben, and Zach**

# Tributes – Nursery School



Benjamin says that Cantor Bruce is absolutely “wonderful and he is so smart and nice”  
**Krauthamer Family**



Purple Room Passover

Cantor Bruce has always played such an active part in the Nursery School and is so important to my family! Not only does he bring to life all of the Jewish Holidays, but he connects to each student personally. My oldest child, Sammy, warmly remembers sharing the bongo drums with him during every Tot Shabbat service. My middle child, Julia, LOVES his funny costumes when reading the Megillah! That really helps her bring the story to life, and for us all! And my baby, Hannah, will always remember making chocolate matzas and learning the prayers for Passover with Bruce. My kids love him, and our family will truly miss him!!

**Zach, Beth, Sammy, Julia, and Hannah Bornstein**



Red Room Hannukah 2017



Red Room Tu Bishvat 2018

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Cantor Halev,

Thank you for being the mainstay, foundation of, and primary association with our Jewish life. From when we could remember, your voice guided all our ceremonial religious experiences from being pinched for talking during services (yes, that too was a religious experience), to being there with us through our B'nai Mitzvah, to marrying us. Our most important rituals have taken place with you as a part of them. In fact, we truly can't imagine what being Jewish feels like without hearing your singing voice in our heads.

Thank you for imbuing our lives with such kindness, compassion, and beauty of sound. We will miss you terribly and hope that we see you in the future even if in an unofficial capacity.

**Alexandra, James, Georg, and Peter**



# Tributes – Nursery School

Dear Cantor Bruce,

Thinking back on our ten years as members of Habonim, you have been a constant presence. We remember with happiness your smile of delight and amusement in the presence of the nursery children, singing and drumming with them at Rock Shabbat and enjoying their costumes on Purim. We remember the many Tot Shabbats on the first Friday evening a month, standing with you above the seated children and finding a moment to chat in the midst of juice and chicken nugget-fueled chaos. We remember your quiet presence while the Religious School students straggled in after a long school day and sat together enjoying their pizza with friends before class started, and then again during tefillah at the close of each session. We remember your rich voice leading us in song and prayer during shabbat and High Holidays. And most recently, we remember lessons to prepare Sarah for her December bat mitzvah in the midst of the pandemic, your encouraging words and complete faith in her abilities, your pleasure in her singing voice. While you won't prepare Adam, we know you'll be celebrating him!

As you can see, your warm and gentle presence is a thread that weaves its way through our memories and experience of Habonim. Our family will miss you.

However, our tribute to you would not be complete without mentioning how important Talia is to our family and especially to Sarah and Adam. She is the reason we met in the fall of 2002 (well before Habonim) when Talia (luckily for me) landed in my fourth-grade class! And in the lovely way life has of completing a circle, she became a loving and caring babysitter and friend to both Sarah and Adam so many years later.

Our family will always feel connected to yours and we will always be grateful.

With love and appreciation,  
**Jill, Marc, Sarah, & Adam Mehl**



Family Shabbat 2018



Family Shabbat 2018

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Bruce.

You have been a part of every major life event in our family for the past 25 years. From Marty's entry to the Nursery School, Gabriel's birth and bris, and our family's celebrations and losses, you have been with us. You have been our beloved spiritual counselor and friend all these many years. And you married us! With good humor, compassion, and a deep interest in knowing and appreciating every member of our family, you have always made us feel special. This is your gift, Bruce. You make everyone feel special.

With our deep gratitude and love, you will forever be in our hearts and a part of our family.

**Laurie Mendik, David Feuerstein, Marty, and Gabriel Feuerstein-Mendik**



# Tributes – Religious School / B’nai Mitzvah

Cantor Halev has played an important role in my Jewish education, my Jewish identity and many of my family’s Jewish traditions. He’s been a great teacher preparing me and my brothers for our milestone bar/Bat Mitzvahs — patient, thorough and inspiring.

He’s a consistent figure always present and smiling every year during the high holy day services. He and his beautiful voice represent the comfort of home for me, and I will miss him.

Cantor Halev, thank you for everything and I wish you and your family the best in the coming years.

**Rachel Lande**



Rachel Lande’s Bat Mitzvah



Marc Lande’s Bar Mitzvah



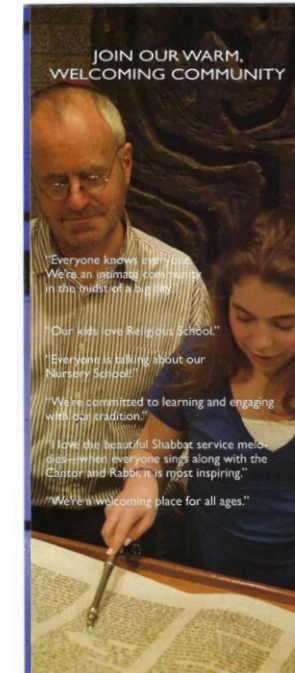
Josh Lande’s Bar Mitzvah

I just have a quick memory of Bruce and I practicing for my Bat Mitzvah. This took place during the fall of 2006. Cantor Halev led the service of my bat mitzvah along with Rabbi Samuels in February 2007

It was always a pleasure learning the tropes and Torah passages with Cantor Bruce. His mellifluous voice was wonderful to learn from, both in person in his cozy office and remotely on my iPod. A major highlight included being featured on the brochure of Habonim reading from the Torah by his side, which remains the closest I've ever gotten to stardom. I will always cherish the smile on his face when we would practice, and his constant patience and generosity.

He will be greatly missed. Thank you, Cantor Bruce!

**Emily Singer**



Emily Singer on Habonim Brochure

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Cheers to you Cantor Halev!!

We are so grateful for the positive energy and dedication  
that you constantly brought to Habonim.

We will truly miss having you by our side.

All our love,

**Stella, Samuel, Deborah, and Jeffrey Moelis**



# Tributes – Religious School / B’nai Mitzvah

Cantor Bruce,  
Working with you for my bar mitzvah was such a pleasure. I remember we always had great conversations about technology before we started tutoring. Whether we were talking about the iPhone, MacBook, or Apple watch, we always had fun. In addition, you helped me fine tune many prayers I had to recite. And, because you are a singer yourself, you guided me with many areas I had trouble singing.

Thank you, Cantor Bruce!  
**Noah Levine**



Noah Levine's Bar Mitzvah Nov. 2020

Our son's bar mitzvah was on Shabbat Shuvah, the Saturday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. At the rehearsal, the week before, our son literally froze on the Bimah; he couldn't get out a word of all that he had practiced. Unfazed and compassionate as always, Bruce had our son come to shul every day that week to stand on the Bimah and practice with him, during one of the most demanding times of the year for clergy. With Bruce's kindness and support, everything went smoothly on the big day. We were so proud then and are so grateful to Bruce to this day.

**Jean Hellering & Rich Verner**



Bruce, Tim & Rich Verner Sept 2004



Peter Verner May 2007



CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

TO THE  
LONGTIME HEART  
OF HABONIM  
FROM OUR HEARTS  
THANK YOU,



**BOB AND VIVIEN NEWMAN**

DRESS CIRCLE SPONSOR

## Tributes – Religious School/B’nai Mitzvah

Our family has known Cantor Bruce for 15 years. He is the anchor of Habonim. The one with the institutional knowledge. The one whose roots run deepest. Throughout our Habonim journey, Bruce has been a steady and reassuring presence. From exchanging pleasantries in the halls of the nursery school at 66 St. when Kyle was there in preschool, to sharing festive Purim celebrations, to catching up with him at shabbat lunches and high holiday services over the years, Bruce has strengthened and enriched our connection to Habonim. We would love when he shared stories about South Africa and his love of rugby and tennis. Kyle grew up at Habonim hearing Cantor Bruce’s songs. As Bruce watched Kyle move toward bar mitzvah, he’d remark that pretty soon the two of them would be working together to prepare for the big day. With Bruce’s guidance and command of tefillah, the bar mitzvah preparations were seamless. In these times of upheaval, when there is much uncertainty, we have relied on Bruce’s unwavering leadership at Habonim as a gift.

**Lisa, Steve,  
and Kyle Kaplan**



Kyle Kaplan’s Bar Mitzvah Feb. 2020



Jesse Soll, Sam Kramer, Charlie Kramer, Lauren Soll & Peter Verner  
Torah Readers at Charlie’s Bar Mitzvah Dec. 2007



Johanna Sanders’ Bat Mitzvah 2004

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Congratulations

Cantor Bruce Halev

On Your Wonderful Career at

Congregation Habonim!

With Deepest Gratitude,

**Robin, David, Emily & Hannah Singer**



# Tributes –B’nai Mitzvah

Over the course of 38 years Bruce had to have been part of over 200 B’nai Mitzvah



Elias Raff 9.12.15



Ben Sokolow 15.11.14



Ellen Mendel 12.5.15



Ella Trager 1.9.16



Corey Donenfeld  
1.23.16



Sophie Poritzky  
3.19.16



Julian Bedolis 4.9.16



Josh Botel 4.16.16



Cole Pfeffer 5.7.16



Zachary Zimmel  
9.19.15



Noah Edelman 10.3.15



Maya Brown 10.10.15



Justin Lurie 10.24.15



Aviva Schwarz 5.14.16



Ethan Genn 9.17.16



Julie Sarah Weiner  
9.24.16



Benjamin Winokur-  
Applebaum 4.8.17



Zachary Traum  
4.29.17



Samuel Moelis 9.9.17



Joshua Unger 9.16.17



Matthew Aaron  
Cohen 12.21.16



Myles Roven 12.17.16



Ryan Madnick 1.21.17



Leo Tesler 2.4.17

CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Yasher Koach Cantor Halev

for 38 amazing years of singing, teaching and inspiration

With best wishes,

**Ellie, Daniel, Benjamin, Isaac, and Naomi Stone**

DRESS CIRCLE SPONSOR

# Tributes –B’nai Mitzvah

Over the course of 38 years Bruce had to have been part of over 200 B’nai Mitzvah



Theo Forstadt 4.14.18



Asher Zimmel 3.4.17



Preston Sickle 3.11.17



Leo Greenberg 10.7.17



Lily Montelle 9.8.18



Owen Shipley Dean  
5.5.18



Seth Edelman 1.20.18



Spencer Herzog 3.3.18



Josie Raff 10.6.18



Zach Cohen 3.10.18



Ben Harwayne 12.9.17



Isaiah Singer 12.16.17



Chloe Teig 12.2.17



Elana Rappaport  
10.28.17



Ethan Weinberg  
2.10.18



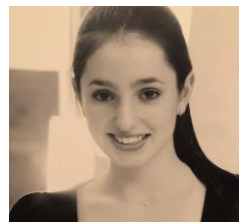
Jack Forstadt 4.14.18



Ellie Pfeffer 11.18.13



Sam Taubenfeld 2009



Hannah Taubenfeld  
3.13.12



Sam Kramer 2004



Charlie Kramer 2007



Sadie Berger 9.5.20



Peter Verner 5.5.07



Timothy Verner 10.4.04



Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Thank you, Cantor Halev...

- ✧ for your welcoming heart
- ✧ for your spirituality and inspirational voice
- ✧ for your guidance to Sam and Hannah in preparing for their B'nai Mitzvah
- ✧ for your leading us in community prayer
- ✧ for your support during hard times
- ✧ for your teaching us trope
- ✧ for your sharing of your lovely and beautifully talented Joanie
- ✧ for building the Habonim community

We will miss you and wish you all the best in your retirement

**Lois Baskin & Bill Taubenfeld**

# Tributes –B’nai Mitzvah

Over the course of 38 years Bruce had to have been part of over 200 B’nai Mitzvah



**Gabrielle Niederhofer**  
4.29.13



**Dassah Philipson**  
4.8.12



**Olivia Rosegarten**  
4.8.12



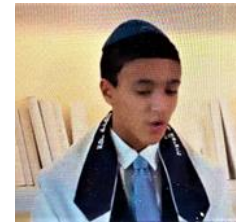
**Ariel Cohen** 10.21.12



**Sophie Edelman**  
10.17.13



**Isabel Genn** 10.21.13



**Noah Levine** Nov. 2020



2.26.13



**Emily Halperin** 9.19.12



**Lesser Family** 5.23.13



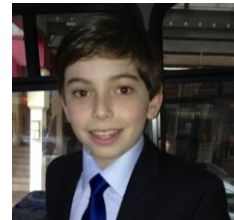
**Hannah Singer**



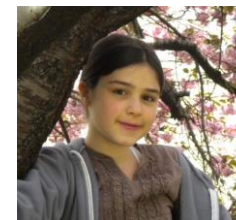
8.22.13



8.23.13



9.17.13



10.25.12



**Sarah Mehl** 12.5.20



**Zach Harwayne**



**Bebe Landau** 2.10.12



**Zoe Berman** 11.1.08



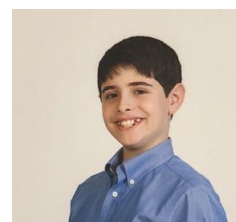
4.4.14



4.27.14



**Johanna Sanders** 2004



**Avery Meer** 6.16.18



**Asher Bank** 3.3.07

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for your music, your guidance, and your care.

Your voice, your wisdom and your warmth  
made Habonim a home for us for so many years.

Thank you for the beautiful memories.

Love,  
**Kara, Ian, and Gabrielle**



# Tributes –B’nai Mitzvah

Over the course of 38 years Bruce had to have been part of over 200 B’nai Mitzvah



Emily Singer



Marc Lande



Rachel Lande



Ida Messana



Kyle Kaplan 2.1.20



Noah Halperin



Josh Lande



Elaine Witkoff



Amy Kargauer



Barbara Feldberg



Amy Foster



Nita Gottesman



Eva Bergmann



Marga Walter



Peggy Sarlin



Elizabeth Bernhardt  
2004



Frances Yeston



Ellen Mendel Dec. 2015

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Bravo, Bruce!

What a run!!

You have enriched our congregation with your sonorous baritone voice and dedication to our multi-generational community throughout your many years of service to Habonim. You are leaving us with many cherished memories.

We will miss our cool cantor!

Happy trails to you!

*Hakarat ha'tov,*

**Elaine, Robert, and Holden**

# Tributes – Weddings

Laura and Steven Schwartz were married at Congregation Habonim on June 24, 1984, by Rabbi Bernhard Cohn, with Cantor Bruce Halev assisting. Prior to the ceremony Cantor Halev had noticed Laura's yellow lilies and was thus inspired to sing the beautiful Hebrew wedding song 'Erev Shel Shoshanim.' Steven's uncle Harold can be seen in the background of the photo, between Rabbi Cohn and Cantor Halev. He was a renowned Boston nightclub singer as well as a volunteer cantor at his synagogue in Newton, Massachusetts. Later, at the reception, Harold enthusiastically commented about the sublime beauty of Bruce's voice. Our first child, Shoshana, was named in honor of Bruce's unforgettable rendition of this beautiful song, and in honor of our wonderful wedding day at Congregation Habonim.

All the Best, **Steven and Laura Schwartz**



Laura & Steven Schwartz Wedding 06.24.84



Barbara & Larry Jacobsberg Wedding 11.17.85

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

*Dearest Cantor Bruce,  
We thank you for sharing your  
gift, imparting your wisdom,  
and shining your light upon all  
of us for so many years.  
You will forever be our cantor.  
With much love and gratitude,  
The Rehfield Family*



# Tributes – Weddings

I was proud to have Bruce teach me how to read the Torah, I was even more proud when he also was able to be part of my marriage. Throughout the years Bruce's voice was the foundation for sound of Judaism he will always be with me.

## Michael Lande



Michael Lande Wedding

When Alyce and I were planning our wedding, there was one member of the clergy we wanted to officiate: Cantor Halev. He got our married life off on literally a high note that day. Cantor Halev has been there for the entire Mariam family for all of our life cycle events — from weddings and baby namings to funerals and unveilings — always adding warmth, spirit and a personal touch. We wish the Cantor, Joanie and the rest of their family many years of happiness and good health. Mazel Tov and L'chaim!

## Tom Mariam



Talia and Rebecca Halev, Terry Schirok, Ellen Mendel, & Norman and Sherry Stroh

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Thanks for the years of love and support,

**Robert, Abigail, Blake, and Ari Schlaff**



# Tributes – Weddings

Cantor Bruce's beautiful voice, his marvelous historical knowledge, and his profound kindness have provided the soundtrack for our family's synagogue life since we joined Habonim in 1990. When our younger daughter became a Bat Mitzvah, he was her coach. When we each learned to leyn Torah as adults, he was our primary teacher and guide. When each of our parents died, he was the comforting voice of El Malei Rachamim and the person who took our hand and said (gently, kindly, supportively): "And now, it is time for you to say your first Kaddish for your parent." When our younger daughter married, there was no question in her mind — or ours — who would be the person to preside over that major simcha. We love you, Bruce. Thank you for all that you have done for us.

**Tony Robins and Susan Leicher**



Lucy Robins' (Tony Robins & Susan Leicher) Wedding

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Yasher Koach from the Sisterhood of Congregation Habonim.

You HAVE always supported Sisterhood.

Thank you for helping SO MANY OF our members layn Torah and learn haftarah.

Thank you for sharing stories of the Sisterhood members who came before us.

Thank you for making each SISTERHOOD SHABBAT a success and the pleasure of seeing the joy on your face at the end of the service and not just because  
“you had a Saturday morning off.”

We wish you and your family all the best.

**SISTERHOOD OF CONGREGATION HABONIM**

# Tributes – Weddings

It was April 15, 1999. Our three-year-old Marty was our ring bearer. See the bump in Laurie's belly? That's Gabriel less than two months before his debut. This was going to be an unusual wedding and Bruce embraced it fully. With good humor and lots of love, Bruce conducted a beautiful ceremony. Even when Laurie needed to pause because she needed a chair to sit, Bruce took it in stride, made jokes, and captivated the room. We have always been so proud to say that Bruce married us.

**Laurie and David**



Laurie Mendik & David Feuerstein Wedding  
04.15.99

Bruce,

Even though the sunset made the whole room glow at our wedding, your beautiful voice and spirit lent its own glorious aura to the occasion. The star of this photo might seem to be our niece, the flower girl, but we all know it was you! Thank you for your friendship and for making synagogue a warm and welcoming place for us and our kids. We'll never forget your spirited "Sim Shalom"!

Love,

**Aliana and David Spungen**



Wedding of Aliana & David Spungen (Bruce circled)

# Tributes – Adult Learners

## REFLECTIONS...

Sometimes we take for granted that a person we admire will always be there. And that person is you! When I think about our many wonderful years together, I find it hard to imagine Habonim on a regular basis, without you. Your sonorous voice and the familiar melodies make my heart sing! Through all the ups and downs of our splendid journey, you have been the glue and the glow that have kept Habonim together during which time you also encouraged me to do my Bat Mitzvah at 80. Wow! What a thrill to think I could do it! And to realize I actually could!

My great grandfather used to say, “when it's the best, you should stop!” So, I will, for now, and leave just enough space to say...

“Bruce, you're our Rock Star and by golly together with Joanie... you rock!!!!!!

With lots of love for you and looking forward to many more happy times together.

**Ellen**



Ellen Mendel

So many memories....

I was in one of Cantor Halev's first adult B'nai Mitzvah groups, on Chol HaMoed Pesach.

We were a disparate group of men and women ranging in age from early 30's to 80's, with very varied religious and cultural backgrounds. I still recall the cassette tapes (!!!) that Cantor Halev made for each of us to study our portion of the Parsha.

Cantor Halev guided each of us in the same ever-gentle manner he's used for Habonim B'nai Mitzvah of all ages.

Thank you, Cantor Halev!

Best,

**Ceri Hadda**



Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

MAZAL TOV & THANK YOU, BRUCE!  
YOUR CHANTING HAS TOUCHED OUR HEARTS AND GIVEN US THE GIFTS OF  
CONNECTION AND MEMORY FOR 38 WONDERFUL YEARS

WE AND OUR FAMILIES ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO YOU

INGE BALLIN  
LARRY & JEFFREY BAUER  
HELEN DREYFUSS  
MARIANNE FALKENSTEIN  
LILI LOEB FISHMAN  
MADELAINE (MARSHALL)  
& WILLIAM GALLIN  
SUSAN GRANT & BRIAN KING  
CERI HADDA & LLOYD GELWAN  
DAVID & JILL HIRSCH  
LAWRENCE & BARBARA JACOBSBERG  
ALEC & LUKE JOYNER  
MARGOT KELLER  
ALEXANDER KING  
MICHAEL KOWAL  
STANLEY LEWIN

BARBARA LINTON  
MICHAEL & BARBARA LISSNER  
THOMAS & ALYCE MARIAM  
ELLEN MENDEL  
RUTH & LINDA NORDEN  
SUSAN & MONICA PANZER  
ELLEN & ROBERT PLANCHER  
LINDA SALOMON  
JOHANNA SANDERS  
PETER SANDERS & IDA MESSANA  
RAYMOND & JEAN SCHRAG  
TRUDE SCHWARZ  
CAROL KAHN STRAUSS  
(Past President)  
RUTH (COHN) & CHARLES WARNER



Our Queens regulars, circa 2014

# Tributes – Adult Learners

After two years of study with Cantor Bruce, I was able to experience one of the most meaningful days of my life. Due to Bruce's patience and dedication to my becoming an adult Bat Mitzvah, I was able to stand before our congregation, chant Torah, Haftarah, and share my personal story with my kehila kedosha. I felt like I had ascended and arrived at my Jewish self. The parshah, chosen by Bruce, was Lekh L'kha, in which G-d asked Abraham to set out from his home and journey to a place where he could leave his past behind, become his authentic self, and father a great nation. I will be forever grateful to Bruce for encouraging me and stoking the faith I have in myself to realize and embrace my Judaism so that I, like Abraham, could grow closer to my authentic self. Bruce, may you continue to be a source of light and inspiration to all those whose lives you touch.

**Elaine**



Elaine Witkoff

I'll never forget the morning in June 1989 when I stood beside my older daughter, Doris, at her bat mitzvah. I had never been on a bimah before, and was awestruck, and full of admiration for Doris' achievement. Rabbi Bernhard Cohn's words were so moving. Beforehand, Bruce — the kind young cantor, trying to hide his amazement at my ignorance — had explained to me what an "Aliyah" was and I had memorized the transliterated prayers. Three years later, in May 1992, I stood beside my younger daughter, Sophie, again moved by the power of the ritual and by Sophie's achievement. I felt, too, great pride and happiness that girls could now learn and participate as equals — something not available to my generation. Young Bruce, as before, was there to instruct and encourage. Fast forward 12 years. With Bruce's "help" — by which I mean tireless, good-humored, weekly instruction — I was now on the bimah myself, actually reading from the Torah, chanting a long haftarah, and understanding what I read. How this happened I'll never understand. Divine grace? Luck? One thing is sure: it would never have happened without Bruce — not just his teaching and encouragement, but also his presence — his shining grace, beauty and kindness. It is rare in life that one person does so much good. Bruce is that rarity. Thank you, Bruce.

**Elizabeth**



Elizabeth Bernhardt



Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Bruce

Mazel Tov On This Event

Crowning

A Glorious Career!

**The Yeston Family**

# Tributes – Adult Learners

Several years ago, a big birthday was looming for me, and I wanted to do something special to mark the occasion. At Habonim several women who had their adult b'nai mitzvah served as role models for me; so, I decided to study for the bat mitzvah that was not even a consideration for a girl when I was growing up. Like all the kids who go through this, I had to be assigned a date and begin learning a bit of Torah and a haftorah.

Cantor Halev helped me find a Shabbat that would be around the right time with a Parshah I could relate to and a haftarah that was not too long. Then like so many others before me, he taught me trope, gave me color coded sheets, and told me to download the Pocket Torah app. My Hebrew was far from perfect since I'd had very limited Hebrew school as a child, picking up most as an adult attending services. So, Bruce worked on that with me and listened to my voice (far from great) on a fairly regular schedule. Thanks to his encouragement and patience I was called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah, successfully meeting a new challenge, and making my family and friends proud.

Over his 38 years with our congregation, Cantor Halev has touched the lives of so many, and encouraged and provided the opportunity to learn and grow.

**Nita Gottesman**



Barbara Feldberg



Amy Foster



Nita Gottesman

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

*Bruce,*

*We thank you for all your many years of devoted and inspirational leadership that made our congregational music open and warm. The continuity of some of the German Jewish melodies that you conducted was very special to us.*

*Our best wishes for a well-earned retirement and a wonderful, musical life together with Joanie and family.*

*Kol Hakavod!*

**Norbert Fruehauf and Dail Stalow**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Thank you, Cantor Halev, for all the years of beautiful music, inspirational services and friendship. You are the heart and soul of Habonim.

Congratulations

**Jennifer, Charles, & Asher Bank**



# Tributes – Adult Learners

When I decided to layn Torah for the first time, of course I asked Bruce to record the part of the aliyah that I was doing (sharing with another brave Sisterhood member, as I recall, on a sisterhood Shabbat). He did that (emailed the file), and then graciously invited me to come to shul at any time to go over it with him and to practice from the actual Torah scroll we'd be reading from that Shabbat. I would never have been able to do it without Bruce's patient and kind encouragement. Any time after that; I'd count on Bruce, and gradually I graduated to doing an entire aliyah on my own. Bruce's gentle coaxing helped me gain confidence in my ability to do that!

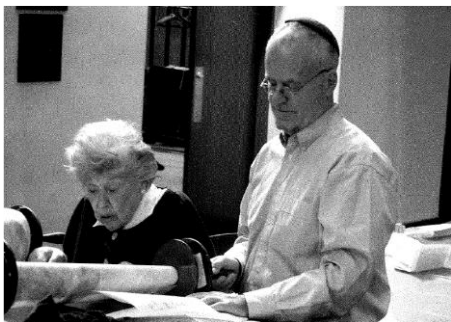
I'm grateful to Bruce for encouraging me and helping me to get out of my comfort zone and learn something new.

I should add — he was like that for everyone, b'nai mitzvah kids, congregants, and especially for Sisterhood members on Sisterhood Shabbat. Bruce, you're the best!

Amy Kargauer



Amy Kargauer



Francis Yeston



Eva Bergmann



Marga Walter



Peggy Sarlin

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

**"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."**

-Albert Schweitzer

---

Thank you, Cantor Bruce, for being the ignitor of light for our family through both good times and bad. We knew we always could count on you.

With humble appreciation,

**Sheryl Goldstein, Stephen  
Kramer, Sam and Charlie**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Bruce,

Congratulations on your retirement.

We will miss your wisdom, kindness,  
and guidance — not to mention  
your mellifluous voice.

With love and appreciation for all you,  
Joanie, Becca, and Talia have given us.

All best,

**Ceri Hadda and Lloyd Gelwan**



# Tributes – Moving from W.66<sup>th</sup> St. to WEA

Bob and Vivien on a cold December 2014 day during a historic procession — led by Cantor Bruce and Rabbi Katzan — from our 66th Street location to our temporary synagogue at 64 Street. A brave band of Habonimers made the trip to the 'Wild West' location. One talented member even played the opening bars from West Side Story on his trumpet! We followed to the new entrance where Bruce and the Rabbi attached the mezuzah at the door.”

## Bob and Vivien Newman

The day was particularly impactful for my dad...

In July 1938 he was the last child to be a Bar Mitzvah at his synagogue in Mainz. He lived down the block and woke the morning after Kristallnacht to find his synagogue destroyed.

His emotions were vivid the day Habonim was finally vacated with the knowledge it too would be “destroyed.” His fervent hope was to see the synagogue rebuilt, as he had seen on a trip to Mainz many decades later. He passed at Nov 2019...

I do not have any stories to tell about dad and Bruce as I moved away from NYC in 1979.

## Allen Keller (son of John and Margot Keller)



Leo Baer, John Keller & Bruce



Bruce Leading Procession to 103 WEA



Bruce & Stanley Lewin



Bob & Vivien Newman



Rabbi Katzan & Bruce

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Always with a smile, a good word, and an interesting travel story.

You made Habonim a warm and welcoming place for us the years we were there.

Thank you for your commitment to enriching the lives of everyone who passed through those doors.

Wishing you all the best on your new journey.

Warmly,  
**Larry, Melody, Caleb, and Aaron Kaufman**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

THANK YOU, BRUCE  
FOR KEEPING THE MUSIC OF THE  
GERMAN LITURGY AN INSPIRATION  
FOR MANY GENERATIONS OF  
HABONIMERS!

**Susan Grant**  
**Brian King**  
**Alexander King**

# Tributes – Queens Community

Dear Bruce,  
You have been the Rock of Ages over these past 38 years, especially during the period of the “changing rabbis,” where you took on many more responsibilities than the average cantor.

Your devotion to the Queens branch of Habonim, singing the beautiful melodies from the past, made going to services a delight. You are the Queens rock star.

Best wishes for your next new life.

With love,  
**Barbara Linton**



Queens Congregation



Joanie Halev, Marianne Falkenstein and Bruce



Trudy Schwarz & Bruce



Preparing for Services June 2012

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Cantor Halev has Bar/Bat Mitzvah Josh,  
Rachel, Michael, and Marc Lande.

I had the first Adult Bat Mitzvah with him.

We have so many memories with him  
that we will never forget.

**The Lande Family**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

We wish you only the best.

Thank you for everything,  
**Beth, Jerry, Ruddick, Julia,  
and Baby Ada**



# Tributes – Queens Community

Through ups and downs, births, b’nai mitzvah and deaths, Cantor Halev has been by the side of Habonim, steadfast and unifying. In thinking about how to describe Cantor Halev’s role in Habonim, we keep coming back to “the glue.” We have had various Rabbis come and go, the Tree of Life has rearranged outside of a different physical sanctuary, but Cantor Halev has remained our constant. Ha lev shelanu.

It is hard to believe that Cantor Halev was not German Jewish when he arrived. Deeply committed to the refugees who built Habonim and to the music they brought with them, Cantor Halev holds our stories, our melodies, our memories.

Over the years, our German Jewish cohort has become smaller, and we have said goodbye to so many that we love. Cantor Halev is always there, connected to the personal and communal loss, offering words of comfort, amusing stories and reminiscences, and leading us in prayer and song. We have shared so many of our simchas together as well. Cantor Halev always finds a way to make each of us feel special and we deeply appreciate his presence in our lives.

It is always so moving to hear Cantor Halev recount stories of members through the years because you can see what an impact ‘our crowd’ has had on him, and we know the gift that Cantor Halev has given us for so many years in continuing to sing the songs of our youth, for many of us our youth in a different time and country.

Cantor Halev, we thank you for making Queens Habonim such a priority through the years, for your love and support in the good times and the harder times. Your social justice convictions, your openness and your joie de vivre — Cantor Halev, you are a real mensch. Your space on the Queens Habonim bima will always be yours though your presence as ha lev of Habonim will be sorely missed. Thank you for 38 wonderful years.

With love,

**Johanna Sanders**  
**Peter Sanders and Ida Messana**  
**[and Helga Sanders z’l in absentia]**



Ida Messana and Bruce Oct 2014



Johanna Sanders & Eva Bergmann



CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Thank you, Cantor Halev, for all  
of the years that you have given to  
Congregation Habonim.

We will miss you.

**John, Deborah, Bill, Rachel, Kenneth,  
Avery, and Lucy Meer**

BALCONY SPONSOR

CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

We enjoyed having you as our Cantor  
for many years.

Our very best wishes to you  
and your family:

**Rachel, Bill, Kenneth Meer, and Family**

BALCONY SPONSOR

# Tributes – Israel Trip June 2011

Cantor Halev and I were on Habonim's only official trip to Israel in June of 2011. Our group of about 15 congregation members were visiting the ancient city of Safed, a city mentioned in the writings of Roman Jewish historian Josephus. As we departed the bus, the Cantor and I decided not to go shopping with the rest of our group, but to head to the ancient cemetery in the center of Safed. We visited the graves of many historic and amazing rabbis. It was hot, sweltering, with an intense sun and cobalt blue sky, but we were laser focused on the graves of giants. It seemed as if we were there for just a short while, but when we checked our watches, we realized we spend nearly two hours walking among some of the great religious leaders of Judaism. It was a very memorable moment for me, learning from the Cantor about some of the great rabbis, and feeling as if we had actually met each of them. When we returned to the meeting point, everyone had lovely artistic items they had purchased, but Bruce and I had something so much more valuable — time spent with the leading Jewish lights of their time. A rich reward that continues to resonate with me to this day.

**Howard Stoffer**

Wonderful memories & photos!!!! I have hundreds of photos and so many special memories. Especially the afternoon we arrived in Tel Aviv and Bruce, and I jumped right into the Mediterranean Sea and went for a long swim together.

This swim with Bruce is an indelible and wonderful memory from our awesome group adventure. One of so many...

**Suzanne Sunshine**



Congregation Habonim Group in Israel



Congregation Habonim Group in Israel

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

On Wings of Heavenly Music...



Bruce, we couldn't have done it without you!!!  
How lucky we were, that you found us — and  
that we found you!!!!!!

Mazel Tov!

With loving and warmest wishes for you,  
Joanie, Rebecca, and Talia!

Love,  
**Ellen**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Congratulations on your retirement!

Thank you for everything over the years!

Best wishes,

**Russell, Jill, and Adam Rivera**

# Tributes – Israel Trip June 2011

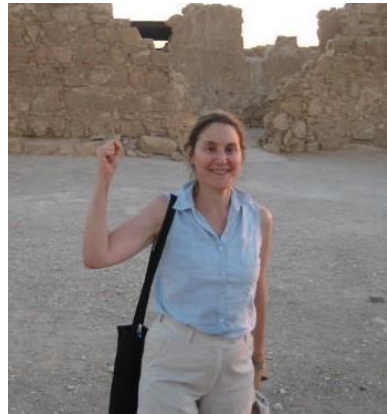
I met you and Joanie in fall 2000 at my oldest niece Margot's Bat Mitzvah luncheon at the Harmonie Club in New York City. You learned from my mother Ruth that she grew up in Racine, Wisconsin; Joanie was from nearby Kenosha. Joanie and I realized she had consulted with our Axe team at Edelman in her role at Firmenich. You, Joanie, Becca and Talia have served as role models to me in living a Jewish life. I danced at the gala when we celebrated your 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Habonim. I watched Joanie's debut cabaret at The Birdland Theater, "Like a Perfumed Woman", and learned your romance began when she saw you "across a crowded room."

I was blessed to journey to Israel in June 2011 with you, Rabbi Josh, Howard Stoffer and 15 Habonim members. We made it to the top of Masada and shopped for tallitot in Jerusalem. You sang on stage in the ruins of Caesarea. We met by chance in Israel Johanna Sanders, a young member from our Queens community; she joined us for dinner. We planted trees and visited with Israeli soldiers near the Lebanese border.

I am grateful to you for urging me to become involved with Habonim. I look forward each Shabbat to your beautiful singing. You helped me learn my Torah portion for Sisterhood Shabbats. It is my dream to study with you to become an adult Bat Mitzvah.

Here's a toast to you and your family on new adventures.

**Renée Edelman**



Renée Edelman at Masada



Bruce singing in Caesarea



Bruce & Rabbi Josh with Israeli Soldier



Bruce & John Giamundo

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Cantor Bruce,  
Enjoy your retirement.

Thanks for continuing the German Nusach  
of Lewandowski, Sulzer, and Rossi.

**Linda Salomon**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Bruce,

You have been an inspiration, a true teacher,  
and a source of comfort to our family for the  
many years that you have been a part of our  
lives. Your thoughtful and compassionate  
words, beautiful voice, and sense of humor have  
been the essence of our Habonim experience,  
particularly in the celebration of Jesse and  
Lauren's B'nai Mitzvot.

The Soll Family wishes you and Joanie much  
health and happiness in the next chapter of  
your journey.

Fondly,

Steve, Kathy, Jesse, and Lauren Soll



# Tributes – Services and Kiddush

Bruce Halev is not only a fine cantor but also a musician deeply versed in the traditions of European Jewish and classical music. His presence at Habonim has guaranteed that inevitable change has been tempered by strains of continuity and stability. His remembrance at last year's Yom Kippur service of the founders of Congregation Habonim and his evocation of their achievement is among my most moving experiences in the many years of hearing him conduct services. It is a pleasure to be able to express my appreciation of his work, to thank him for his personal friendship, and to hope that he will be available to advise and guide the Congregation for many years into the future.

**Michael Kowal**

Bruce Halev is the kind of cantor all synagogues should aspire to have; a friendly and laid-back personality with a singing voice so soothing and comforting it's like you're hearing those ancient melodies for the first time. I've been fortunate enough to have two cantors named Bruce in my life, one of which also goes by "the boss", but both have voices that ooze with spirituality, power, and redemption. I have no doubt that anybody who was lucky enough to attend one of his services left feeling awed, reassured, and inspired.

**NOAH CHENFELD**



Ark at 66<sup>th</sup> Street

One of the things we like best about attending services at Habonim is the participation by the congregation. It's what makes us all feel involved and an integral part of what is happening, not just spectators or onlookers. We hope this will be part of Bruce's legacy.

**Nita & Joe Gottesman**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Bruce –

Thank you for all of your kindness,  
friendship, and music.

Enjoy the next stage of your journey.

With warmest regards,

**Aliana, David, Ella, and Joey Spungen**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Mazal Tov to Cantor Bruce Halev

With much appreciation for your  
friendship and service

**Rabbi Lewis Warshauer**

# Tributes – Services and Kiddush

Dear Cantor Halev,  
Your Hallel is my favorite! I always truly enjoyed that particular part of your service — it will be sorely missed!  
You always said such nice things about my voice and participation when we were seated together at a kiddush table and at other times as well — and kindly did so in front of others. Those thoughtful gestures and words have stuck — and will continue to stick — with me!  
Wishing you the best — especially fun, good health, rest, and relaxation — for your next steps,  
**Jessica**

Thank you for your long dedication to Habonim's community. As new members we quickly experienced your warm and welcoming character. The first time right after joining Habonim, we had a lovely conversation about South Africa and the history of its Jewish communities as we were planning on traveling to Cape Town soon after. Wishing you, Cantor Halev, all the very best going forward.

**Alana, Eric, & Naomi**



Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev



Isaac O. MILLS, son of Vicki KOPPEL and Tim MILLS, with Cantor HALEV and Melamed Allan CUTLER at his Bar Mitzvah 11.17.18.

Isaac represents the 4th generation of the GRUNEBAUM family to enjoy the Cantor's wonderful voice and warm heart.

Thank you, Bruce, from **all of us**.

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Cantor Bruce,

Our Habonim will never be the same  
without you.

Thank you.

With much love,  
**hld**

# Tributes – Services and Kiddush

When we were brand-new members, 17 years ago, I asked Cantor Bruce about Adult Ed classes at Habonim in the hopes of learning how to read Hebrew. Bruce said, “Why don’t you come to my office Monday morning at 9:30.” That invitation resulted not just in my learning to read Hebrew, but also learning Trope and then, two years later, sharing the bimah with Elaine Witkoff as we became Adult Bat Mitzvahs! That was an opportunity I never thought I’d have! Not having been part of a synagogue growing up, Bruce’s patiently teaching us Hebrew and how to chant Torah and Haftarah has forever changed how I feel about myself being part of a Jewish community!

In the course of this learning, Bruce and I started chatting a lot. We soon learned that we were both social workers, and I shared that I too was a trained singer. Several years later, my choral group brought a rare opportunity to Habonim — an afternoon of singing Bach’s B Minor Mass with the text rewritten into Hebrew. This was particularly special to Bruce as The B Minor Mass had always been one of his favorite choral works. Needless to say, the conversion to Hebrew text made it that much more meaningful for him. I still remember his email to me after the event, thanking me and saying how really special that day was for him and how unique it was for Habonim. It’ll always be a special day for me too.

**Amy Foster**

At services during my religious school years, Cantor Bruce was always sneakily side-smiling and subtly gesticulating at me and my friends from the bimah. He always made us giggle (before we’d muffle it quickly into our hands), and he made us feel included in the service itself. That was true even in the middle of our Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Going to services as a (still young-ish) adult, it’s like seeing an old friend — the sideways glances and small smiles still make the minutes fly by.

**Zoe Berman**

Around ten years ago, at Kiddush over bagels and lox, Bruce and I struck up a conversation about recreation in New York City. I mentioned that I am an avid tennis player in Central Park. Bruce mentioned that while he grew up with tennis as a child, he had not had the opportunity to play yet in the city. Since we lived next to the Central Park tennis courts, I said I had gotten into playing more regularly. I invited Bruce, a fellow Upper West Sider, to join me one morning, and he accepted. Bruce has been playing tennis in Central Park ever since!

**Steve Berman**



Amy Foster, Zoe Berman & Steve Berman



CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Mazel Tov to Cantor Bruce Halev!

Many thanks for your warmth, kindness  
and years at Habonim.

Congratulations on this new chapter.

We will miss you.

**The Ellman Family**

CONGREGATION HABONIM

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Best wishes Bruce  
for the coming years.

We'll miss your inspiring chanting  
during services.

**Margie and Jay Hirshfield**

# Tributes – High Holidays

My favorite memory of Bruce comes from our annual Shofar blowing rehearsals, which would attract pint-size guests from the nearby Nursery School classrooms. Everyone had a blast!!

## Brian King



David Feuerstein with Shofar



Brian King with the Rappaport girls, Shofar blowers in training Sept. 2016

When we attended High Holiday Services at Habonim for the first time we did so as nonmembers. Being unfamiliar with the traditions, we looked at the location options and thought, of course, we would prefer going to the synagogue itself rather than Ethical Culture. So that's what we did. So, there we were on West 66th Street listening to a choir singing melodies with which we were unfamiliar, accompanied by an organ. Where were our well-known melodies for Rosh Hashanah? We were confused until the end of services when we were heading out the door. Cantor Halev was standing there greeting all the people exiting and engaged us in conversation.

Realizing what we had done, he said to be sure to come to the "traditional" service at Ethical Culture the next day where we would hear the prayers sung in the melodies to which we were accustomed. He explained that we had experienced the "German" service which was performed only on some special days and holidays each year to honor the shul's heritage and its founding members.

Bruce has always been the bridge for us — between old and new, tradition and change. He holds so many of the historical memories and melodies of Congregation Habonim, knew and continues to keep in touch with the long-time members who came from Germany, keeps our story alive and teaches it to newer members and to the children. He is our very own treasure.

## Nita & Joe Gottesman

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

Dear Bruce,

You have been an anchor at Habonim,  
a wonderful teacher, mentor and friend.

I would never have experienced a  
Bat Mitzvah without your encouragement.

Warmest personal regards

**Barbara and Meyer Feldberg**

Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

## Congratulatory Listing

Rachel, David, Sadie, & Ezra Berger

Elizabeth Bernhardt, Bill Bernhardt,  
Doris Bernhardt, and Sophia  
Bernhardt

Zach, Beth, Sammy, Julia, and  
Hannah Bornstein

Sandy Brod

Candice and Lewis Brown

The Shipley Dean Family

Dr. Michael and Eileen Dolfman

Helen Dreyfuss

Lindsey and Assaf Gal

Rabbi Lisa Gelber

Daniel and Frances Hamermesh

Jamie and Irene Jacobsohn

Hilda Jaffe

Dr. Alana Mendelsohn,  
Eric Kohlmann and Naomi

Alan, Rachel, Benjamin, Elias and  
Gabriel Krauthamer

Stephen and Claire Lewin

Sherrill and Zieve Mane

Alyce & Tom Mariam and Steven &  
Rita Golden, Lisa & Rudolph Mariam  
z"l Hortense & Herman Lewin z"l

Michael Massen

The Merdinger Family –  
Maya, Matthew, Ellie & Eytan

Paul Millman

Robin, Brad, Romy, and Jaime Roberts

The Rudolph and Cohen Family

Robert, Abigail, Blake,  
and Ari Schlaff

I. Shechtel

Dr. Lynn and Rabbi Mark Somerstein

# Tributes – Purim (the most photogenic holiday)

For several years, Elizabeth Bernhardt and I coordinated the annual Purim Spiel.

In 2011, we spoofed Bruce's love of all things electronic. He was an adorer of all things Apple and other electronic devices. "Cantor Gadget" was played by Tony Robins.

This is my brand-new tablet computer! It contains the entire Tanach! You can change the font... and it's searchable! Just type in 'Tefillah' and see what happens. It's terrific for working with the kids! I think I'll call it (pauses a bit)... the "kindela!"

That little speech encapsulates Bruce — always enthusiastic, upbeat, and excited as a kid at life's wonders. At Purim, whether dressed as a pirate, Pharaoh, or an old Persian woman, Bruce was spirited and "all in" to the hilt.

Keep exploring Bruce! It's what made you such a treasure at Habonim.

Thanks, and best,  
**Ellie**



Deena Ecker, Teen Hamantaschen bakers and Amy Kargauer Feb. 2018



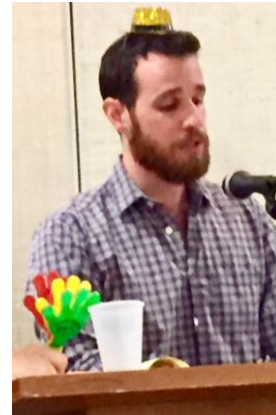
Ellie Schaffer



Susan Leicher



Tony Robins



Gedalia Lefkowitz



Ellen Mendel, Aviva Resnick, Rosalie Osian & Renée Edelman



David Feuerstein



Renée Edelman



Joe Teig



Bruce



# Tributes – Purim (Clergy love this holiday)



Bruce & Rabbi Katzan



Bruce & Rabbi Katzan



Bruce, Tony Robins, Rabbi Warshauer and Susan Leicher



Rabbi Gelber & Bruce



Bruce



Rabbi Katzan & Bruce



Religious School Purim Spiel



Rabbi Warshauer



Rabbi Kenter, Gedaliah Lefkowitz, & Bruce



# Tributes – From Bris to Shiva



Alex Paretsky's Bris – Bruce, Melissa, Asher and Daniel Paretsky

I met Bruce in 1982, the year that he started at Habonim. I was in the post bar Mitzvah confirmation class, and he was teaching us. He remembers fondly that my cousin Melissa was his 1st bat mitzvah. My grandmother who was very active in Habonim spoke to him about bringing in some more Sephardic melodies and they were great friends. She was from Baghdad, and he did enjoy speaking to her and learning more about her culture. I remember Bruce's years in Alice Tully Hall and Ethical Culture as he led the service with the choir for so many High Holiday services. I became active in Habonim myself when Bruce officiated at my wedding in 2002. He officiated at my son's bris and then his bar mitzvah. I was able to organize his tribute concert in 2008 on his 25th anniversary at Habonim. It was a lot of fun, we held it in the sanctuary and there were over 200 people in attendance. Bruce explained to me what music made him happy. We flew in musicians that were his friends and as they performed, he got up on stage with them. And now Bruce is winding down his great career with a voice as strong as ever. We have gotten to know him and enjoy him for all of these years. We know that we will still get to hear him on holidays; but will miss his guiding presence every day.

**John, Deborah, Bill, Rachel, Kenneth,  
Avery and Lucy Meer**



Avery Meer

# Tributes – From Bris to Shiva

We met Bruce Halev when we first joined Congregation Habonim in 2004. He was a major reason why we decided to become members.

Since we joined Habonim, Bruce Halev has participated in the significant life events of the Singer family. He prepared Emily and Hannah for their B’nai Mitzvah — we can still hear him singing the Haftarah on the CDs he created to help them learn their Haftarah and Torah portions.

We are grateful for the support that Bruce Halev has provided to us over the years. At times of loss, he always was present. He participated in the funerals and Shivas for our family members, providing comfort and showing empathy.

We also are grateful for the friendships that we have developed with Bruce and Joannie, and we look forward to our continued friendship in the years to come.

Over the decades, Bruce Halev has embodied the virtues of Habonim. His contributions to the synagogue have helped make our experience at Habonim meaningful. Thank you, Bruce Halev, for all that you have given over so many years as our beloved Cantor.

**Robin, David, Emily, & Hannah Singer**

I’m sure that all members of Congregation Habonim have been privileged to interact with Cantor Halev over the last 38 years for a multitude of reasons. I’d like to take this opportunity to talk about an experience I had 20 years ago which shows a side of him many may not have seen. My father Cantor Erwin Hirsch became seriously ill in the late 1990's before his ultimate passing in June 2001. The last year of his life was difficult — during that time, Cantor Halev visited him both in the hospital and ultimately at home where he spent his final months. I observed some of these visits and was astonished by what took place. Bruce began speaking to him about the “old days” when he started his career here and reminded him of the beautiful German synagogue music from Lewandowski, Kirshner and the rest which he had learned. Before long, the two of them were singing these melodies together. His ability to bring my father out of his silence and depression was incredible, and the joy which filled the room was amazing. I can never thank him enough for these memorable occasions.

**David Hirsch**



Rabbi Bernard Cohn, Cantor Bruce Halev,  
Martha Hirsch & Cantor Erwin Hirsch

# Tributes – From Bris to Shiva

The pictures on this page bring back some of our important memories of Cantor Bruce.

From my younger sister, Deborah Norden's wedding, in January 1990:

- My sister and her husband, Barry Magid, with Bruce barely visible behind them, just after the ceremony, January 2, 1990.
- My older son, Luke, who was three at the time, and who served as ring bearer, giving the rings to Bruce. Two notes: Talia was the “flower girl” at the ceremony, and, very tragically, my sister died in a plane crash in 1994, so the photos are quite poignant for us. Bruce was there for all our family celebrations and losses.

Apropos of which, much more recently, the burial of my father, Peter Norden, in June 2020 — just after this had become possible, again, but when only immediate family members and a rabbi could attend. Again, unfortunately, the only photo I have from the burial, with Bruce in it, shows just a teeny portion of him, getting out of his car at the site:

And last, I've included another photo from my sister's 1990 wedding, because it pictures both my grandmothers — Irene Nathan and Greta Norden — each of whom were longtime members of Habonim. It was the third person in the photo, though, Thea Kroner, who introduced my parents' parents and, through them, my mother and father. So, I literally owe my life to Habonim's existence, and the community it created for German Jewish refugees like my grandparents and parents, and more than anyone else at Habonim in the past decades, it was Bruce whom my family felt kept those earlier traditions alive. That Bruce was also able to help Habonim embrace the present tense, and cultivate a newer, younger generation of Habonimers, is, of course, equally important.

And thank you for the opportunity to celebrate our beloved Bruce!!  
We will miss him greatly.

My best,  
**Linda Norden**





# Tributes – From Bris to Shiva

I met Cantor Halev 18 years ago, when my oldest son, Jake, enrolled in the yellow room (then the 2's) at the Nursery School at Habonim. During the initial "separation," parents were asked to wait in the building while their kids began acclimating to preschool. As would be the case with many things to come, Jake headed into his classroom without ever looking back for me... instead, it was me who needed to acclimate to the separation. And so, I sat in the lounge and had coffee with Bruce — who promised me that Jake would still be my little boy — which of course, he was and is.

Cantor Halev was there for so many family events: when my three sons became b'nai mitzvah, when they graduated from Nursery and then Religious School, when I first read Torah again after an extended hiatus, when I celebrated the 40th anniversary of my own bat mitzvah... and of course when we faced life's inevitable sad events. Bruce has been a constant, a rock to hold onto when change swirled all around. We wish him and Joanie happiness and good health as they move into this new phase.

With much love,

**Debra Karlstein, Jake, Ryan, and Eric Goldsmith**



Debra Karlstein and Bruce



Simchat Torah Celebration with Kara Unterberg & Roy Niederhoffer

# Tributes – From Bris to Shiva

My late parents, Else and Gerhard Graupe were among the first members of the Habonim. They were longtime members of the synagogue until my mother's death in 2007.

When it came time to plan her funeral my mother insisted on Cantor Halev officiating because she liked and admired him. My sister and I called him after our mother's death and he agreed, without a moment's hesitation, to officiate. At the funeral he spoke about the contributions of the German Jewish women (including my mother) to the well being of the Habonim. We appreciated his kind and thoughtful words and have to this day been grateful to him for his selflessness and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Florence Diller**



Bruce with Religious School at 66<sup>th</sup> Street  
Memorial Wall

Cantor Halev's attentiveness, professionalism and personal grace during the difficult period of my husband Sheldon's death, funeral and Shiva were immeasurable.

I will always remember and value his attention, compassion and words of comfort to my family and me as we began our lives anew without a husband, father and "Papa."

**Sandy Brod**

My favorite memory of Cantor Bruce took place just a couple of years ago in May 2019. My Grandpa Harvey had just passed away and we were sitting shiva. Bruce stopped by to lead a short service and after we were finished, he noticed me sitting alone drinking a beer. He asked me what I was drinking, and I told him it was a Negra Modelo and that it had been my grandpa's favorite beer. Bruce said he had never tried one and to my surprise he asked if we had another one. I got him a beer and we sat and drank and talked about beer and travel which naturally led to stories about Grandpa Harvey. The conversation really helped me move from the immediate mourning to all the good memories. I knew that Bruce's presence meant a lot to my mom in a difficult time, but I had not expected it to make such a difference for me.

**Timothy Verner**



# Tributes – From Clergy

## Hazzan and Person –

“God has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and ‘to walk modestly with your God; Then will your name achieve wisdom.” (Micah 6:8)

When I think of Cantor Bruce Halev the verse in Micah along with this photo comes to mind. One of the first times John and I experienced Cantor Bruce was at our very first Yom Kippur Kol Nidrei service at Cong. Habonim. We were moved, inspired and held by his prayers. From that point on, Cantor Bruce has had a steady presence in my own faith journey. As a mentor As a friend. As a colleague. The most important memories are filled with what he generously gave to me and asked for nothing in return. He encouraged me to find my voice. The day after I was ordained, I received a call from Cantor Bruce and Rabbi Josh to convey a heartwarming Mazel Tov. The next Shabbat, I experienced a most uplifting first aliyah as a Rabbi filled with blessings and songs. It is a moment I will never forget and continues to inspire me.

Cantor Bruce Halev has the unique ability to see the strength in others and then shines his light upon it. He gives people their spiritual wings. The most important teaching he gave to me is this. The spiritual leader and the person are one without separation. That oneness unites holiness and the mundane with joy and love. Creating wholeness leaves space for others to grow and walk on a glorious path in Judaism and life.

With gratitude for being, caring and sharing. A *L’chayim* and a *shehecheyanu* are conveyed upon Cantor Bruce, the Halev family, and to Congregation Habonim. With love, peace and God’s blessings.

**by Rabbi Rosalie Osian**

Good luck in your retirement Just think: movies 24/7!  
**Rabbi Leah Berkowitz**



Bruce Davening at sunrise in Israel June 2011



Rosalie Osian & Bruce — Chanukah Healing Service Dec. 2013

# Tributes – From Clergy

12 Sivan 5781

May 23, 2021

Dear Friends,

In a speech to the Cantors' assembly many years ago, my colleague, Rabbi Brad Artson, noted:

In the Talmud, in *Massekhet Arakhin*, the sages pose a question, noticing that the Torah recounts an obligation to do *melekheth avodah*, the work of service [Numbers 4:47]. They ask, “What is work that requires service?” The Talmud’s answer is, “it is song [Arakhin 11a].” Song is a kind of work that requires service. And the ancient sages use as their *pasuk*, their prooftext: “They lifted up their voices and they sang with joy. [Isaiah 24:14]” The Cantorate is in the business of providing service, in part, through song.

The word *hazzan* appears nowhere in *Tanach*, nowhere in the canon of Holy Scripture. According to one source, the word *hazzan* used in the early rabbinic period, appears but ten times in the Mishnah. The *hazzan ha-knesset* was the superintendent, the super, of the synagogue, responsible for the rolling in and out of the ark with the Torah scrolls. Over time, the role expanded to that of *shaliach tzibbur*, the emissary of the congregation, singing the service for those not fluent and confident in their own ability to represent the congregation before the Almighty.

The voice of the *hazzan* encourages the worshipper to share in intense moments of reflection, petition, entreaty, thanksgiving, joy and yes, sadness. The cantor touches the soul while reaching out to God. Everyone has an opinion about the *klei kodesh*, the sacred instruments that are Jewish clergy. The classic Yiddish “*A khazandel oyf Shabbos*” shows just how intense can be the different perspectives about a cantor as viewed through the ears of the listener.

In ancient times 15 steps led up to the Temple in Jerusalem; there are 15 *shirei m’aalot*, songs of ascent in the book of Psalms [120-134]. Throughout his career as a *hazzan*, Cantor Halev has urged us to climb those steps with him, to reach deeply within ourselves to touch our souls, and invited us to join in the sacred service of God through worship. We at Congregation Habonim have been privileged and gifted with his voice, his passion and his professionalism. I was privileged to work with and learn from him. As he continues to ascend the steps of holiness, sharing his gifts and his commitment with others, we ask that he always go, *mi-hayil el hayil*, from strength to strength.

*Bididut,*

**Rabbi Barry A. Kenter**

# Tributes – Other Passions

Richard Tucker and Jan Peerce are two examples out of many who transitioned from the bimah to the operatic stage. But Habonim has had the enviable benefit of Cantor Halev's transition in the opposite direction. This afforded generations of congregants the pleasure — indeed the spiritual inspiration — of hearing niggunim sung with true authenticity. And for us personally, Bruce gave us the opportunity to learn (mainly at Shabbat Kiddush) as he shared from his vast experience singing many major operatic roles all over the world. Four good reasons to come to shul: tefilla, friends, kiddush, and opera gossip with Bruce. What now???

Fondly,  
**Margie and Jay Hirshfield**



Bruce singing opera



Joanie singing at  
Habonim's Supper  
& Song March 2016

Several years ago, at Stadium Tennis in the Bronx, I looked over to the court next to me and saw a doubles match in progress. One of them looked a lot like Bruce, but I thought, "Nah, couldn't be." Sure enough, it was! After seeing Bruce in his official role as cantor all those years, it was great to see him incognito. And in case you're wondering, he's quite a good player! I hope you're able to find a lot more time to play tennis and explore many other interests in your retirement. You will be missed!

Fondly,  
**Laurin Grollman**

This is a little remembrance of the Cantor. A number of Habonim members were in the audience at Birdland to attend the October 17, 2019, performance of Joanie Halev. Cantor Halev was glowing with pride and love, and floating around the room, welcoming us all. He enthused (as well he should), about Joanie's singing ability and her career in perfumes. Seeing him, it was quite apparent that Cantor and Mrs. Halev were lovebirds.

**Vicki And Elliot Brown**

# Tributes – Other Passions

Bruce,

I discovered my love of drumming from you, sitting side by side during Shabbat, always moved by the sound of your voice and the beat of your drum. There are so many memories of our time working together that I cherish, among them the healing services that we did together, the opera duets we sang, and of course the many wonderful conversations that we had. I am honored to be present for this tribute to you. I know that mine is only one of many, many lives you touched and changed.

With warmest congratulations,

**Cindy Grebow**



Rock Shabbat 2016



Bruce drumming at Tu Bishvat Nursery School seder 2014

We joined our first Tot Shabbat when our daughter Sadie was just two and Ezra wasn't yet born. As we became regular attendees, from the moment Ezra could crawl he would scramble straight for Cantor's djembe drum. Cantor Halev always enthusiastically welcomed playing a duet as Ezra would bang along! Eleven years later, this past September, Cantor Halev graciously and warmly guided us through Sadie's bat mitzvah. He has clearly been an integral part of our family's Habonim journey.

**The Berger Family (Rachel, David, Sadie, and Ezra)**

# The Gala Committee extends special thanks to:

Aaron Butler

Jason Kooistra

Rina Cohen Schwarz

Tina Lobel

Renée Edelman

Ellen Mendel

Neil Goldstein

Scot Raff

Malkie Grozalsky

Michael Rehfield

Wendy Halperin

Rob Silverbush

Debra Karlstein







# Raise Our Voices for Cantor Halev

CONGREGATION HABONIM  
JUNE 30, 2021