

# Local teens elected to BBYO leadership

Stein will become international godol; Levine to be shaliach

By Dave Sorter

Mika Stein grew up in a family in which politics and service to the Jewish community played big roles. So running for BBYO international grand aleph godol (president) seemed to be a natural fit for the Yavneh Academy senior.

So did winning.

Stein, a member of Rubin Kaplan AZA No. 841 and this year's North Texas-Oklahoma Region godol, was elected to the top post available to a male BBYO member Sunday during the BBYO International Convention in Washington.

Fellow Kaplan member and Yavneh junior Gary Levine also will be a part of the leadership team after having been elected grand aleph shaliach (vice president for Judaic programming, community service and social action). Both are Ann and Nate Levine Academy graduates. They will be installed in August.

"Growing up, my mom volunteered in a bunch of campaigns," Stein said about the late Deborah Stein, who died last April. "She worked for (former U.S. Rep.) Martin Frost, (former Dallas Mayor and Senate candidate) Ron Kirk, (President Barack) Obama. My grandfather, Mo Stein, was president of the (Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas).

"As I started in leadership in BBYO, it seemed like a good combination." Stein has been chapter shaliach, moreh and godol, as well as regional godol.

The election format was kind of like the Electoral College: Each region was allotted a certain number of votes, totaling 201. The North Texas-Oklahoma Region had seven votes.

The eight godol candidates made video presentations that were posted on the convention blog and campaigned among the 1,500 who attended last week's convention. Then, voting took



Gary Levine



Mika Stein

place, with Stein and Miami Region godol Josh Roberts winning places in a runoff. Stein won that second ballot.

"I jokingly said as a freshman that I would run for godol," Stein said. "Once I became regional president last year, I thought I might run, then when we had the August executive leadership con-

ference, I knew I would run."

Those who have been around Stein, who attends Congregation Shearith Israel, say they knew there was something special about him.

"I've known Mika since he was a little boy, and he's always been a leader," Shearith Israel Rabbi William Gershon said. "His Jewish commitment has become more and more serious, and he's one of the most impressive young men I've ever met. I'm sure his mother of blessed memory is smiling down upon him."

Stein believes he was the right young man at the right time for the presidency.

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**"I really love AZA and its mission is very noble and important. It's also important to have fun."**

**Mika Stein,**  
BBYO international godol-elect

sion is very noble and important," he said. "It's also important to have fun."

His primary goals, he said, were to increase the overseas membership from 7,000 to 10,000 and have more international participation in summer programs.

"That means the regions in North America will have to do

more fundraising to get them there," Stein said.

He also would like to increase BBYO's Israeli advocacy and advance the organization's newly adopted Jewish enrichment focus.

The grand aleph godol spends much of the year traveling the

see BBYO, p.10

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**Community Spotlight**



**Susie Avnery**

What would the Dallas Chapter of Hadassah do without Susie Avnery? Susie Avnery was born with the spirit of volunteering in her veins. She learnt this well from her beloved parents z"l.

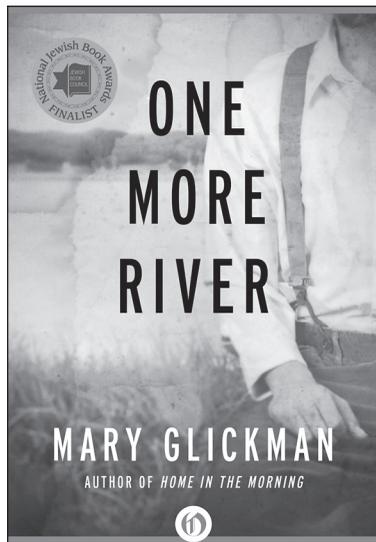
Her Mother, Anne Salfeld z"l, was involved with Hadassah since coming to Dallas. Susie saw all the meetings that her Mother had in her home and also attended many of them, helping with mailings etc from a very early age. Susie has been passionate about Hadassah for years and her energy keeps us all going. She is a past president and a wonderful organizer and energy booster. Thank you Susie for your tireless commitment to Hadassah, Israel and our Dallas Community.

**CORRECTION**

In last week's article about Diane Benjamin, the name of the company with which she is now affiliated was incorrect. It is United Real Estate. Benjamin is still selling real estate and has not changed her professional focus. The TJP apologizes for the error.

## THE NOVEL LIBRARIAN

## Spring Read book spans generations



By Linda Blasnik

Take two parts “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” and one part “M\*A\*S\*H,” and you have “One More River” by Mary Glickman. Glickman creates a story of romance, family mysteries and personal quests to bind readers into a story that spans generations.

Glickman will speak at the Tycher Library’s Spring Read at 11 a.m. Sun-

day, March 3 at the Mankoff Center for Jewish Learning, on the second floor of the Aaron Family JCC, 7900 Northaven Road.

“One More River” takes us up and down the Mississippi and back and forth between the Great Flood of 1927 and the turbulence of Vietnam. The novel makes us as the reader consider questions like: Where is passion born? Does it move forward

and backward? Can the search for history change the future and, if not, how can we be reconciled with the past?

Glickman, while weaving a story of passion and intrigue, also teaches about the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and how rebuilding can tear apart homes and lives. This is the story of determination and hope; of faith in the face of impossible odds.

And of the love that makes it all possible.

To reserve a place at the Spring Read, call 214-239-7132.

Linda Blasnik, Tycher Library librarian, is substituting for Tycher Library director Nina Golboro, the “Novel Librarian” at the Center for Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas. Nina would love to hear your thoughts about the review. Reach her at [ngolboro@jfgd.org](mailto:ngolboro@jfgd.org).

## BBYO

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nation and the world to, as Stein said, “pump up the teens and programming, and go to the regions and pump up the presidents to help them achieve success.”

So, Stein is delaying his college education for a year after having been accepted at New York University, where he plans to study media culture and communications.

“Traveling from place to place and being surrounded by so many

people will prepare me not only for living in New York, but for any situation life throws out,” said Stein, who is involved with mock trial, journalism and Students Against Terrorism at Yavneh.

Stein is happy to be serving on the international board with Levine.

“It’s really exciting,” he said. “When he was a freshman, I was his moreh (vice president of membership) and I brought him into BBYO. All the kids on the board are a year younger than me, and he can help me connect with the other kids.”

Added Levine: “It’s miraculous. Before it happened, we never would have thought we’d both get it. Mika’s one of my best friends. We bond well together and we work well together.”

Levine, son of Sylvie and Ian Levine and who attends Chabad of Dallas, is also involved with Helping Hands for the Homeless, Students for Students and mock trial at Yavneh. He knew he wanted to run for the international board after attending BBYO International Kallah last July.

“Kallah gave me a much more clear picture of how BBYO and Ju-

daism work on a global level,” he said.

Since joining the Kaplan AZA, Levine has served two terms as chapter shaliach and a term as chapter moreh, and is now serving as regional shaliach.

His goal as international shaliach, he said, is to “elevate the level of collective pride in every member. Within that, I hope to use all the initiatives and campaigns in BBYO.”

Levine specifically mentioned the Stand Up tikkun olam campaign, the Speak Out Israel Advocacy program and the Judaic en-

richment program.

“I want to take them to the next level in the regions and the world,” he said.

A happy coincidence for both Stein and Levine is that next year’s International Convention will be in Dallas. But for now, they are preparing for their new duties and enjoying making the Kaplan AZA and Yavneh Academy a base for BBYO leadership.

“We couldn’t be prouder of the boys, their dedication to BBYO, and to the greater Jewish Community,” Yavneh head of school David Portnoy said.

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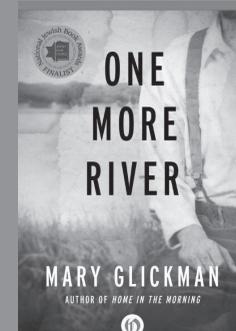
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This event is FREE but seating is limited. Please RSVP to Nina Golboro at [ngolboro@jfgd.org](mailto:ngolboro@jfgd.org) or call 214-239-7132.