UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2020

2/6  YP Shabbat
2/7  WZO Elections
2/9  Speaker Brunch: Gili Getz
2/23 Shalom Baby
2/29 Casino Night

Friday night services 7:00 pm
Saturday morning services 9:30 am
See www.hobokensynagogue.org and the USH Facebook page for more info on these and other upcoming events!

14TH ANNUAL CASINO NIGHT
& 7TH ANNUAL POKER CLASSIC

February 29th, 2020
Doors open at 7:00PM
Gaming starts at 7:30PM
at
The Elks Club
1005 Washington St, Hoboken, NJ 07030

YOUR $85 TICKET
INCLUDES
DINNER, OPEN BAR, PRIZES, GREAT GAMING
& YOUR 1ST 50/50 TICKET ON US!

50/50 tickets, 1/$10 and 3/$25,
are available in the USH Office or
contact CasinoNight@hobokensynagogue.org

Poker Players:
Seats are limited...For details
CasinoNight@hobokensynagogue.org
Be ready to grab your seat!

Open Bar
Blackjack
Dinner
Roulette
Craps
Poker
Music

If you are interested in joining our committee, becoming a Casino Night sponsor or making a prize donation, we would be delighted to hear from you.
Please email us ... CasinoNight@hobokensynagogue.org to learn more.
Rabbi Scheinberg, I’ve heard you talking about the World Zionist Congress Elections. What is that all about?

If you are Jewish, over 18, and approve of Israel’s existence as a Jewish and democratic state, YOU are entitled to vote in the elections for the World Zionist Congress, which are taking place right now (until March 11, 2020). The outcome of these elections affect some policies affecting the State of Israel, control nearly $1 billion of funds affecting Israel and the worldwide Jewish community, and powerfully communicate the relationship of the worldwide Jewish community to Israel. See https://azm.org/elections to cast your ballot!

Wait! What is the World Zionist Congress?

The State of Israel was founded in 1948. But of course its roots go back much deeper. In Biblical times, the people of Israel was a nation living in its own land. Through nearly 2000 years of dispersion, Jews continued to face Jerusalem in prayer and to yearn for a return to the land of Israel -- a dream realized by many Jews over the centuries who established their homes in Jerusalem, Tzfat, Hebron, and other cities. And of course, the roots of the contemporary effort to establish Israel can be found in the late 19th century, when leaders like Theodor Herzl came to the conclusion that the best solution to the problem of world-wide antisemitism was for the Jews, considered outsiders wherever they lived, to reestablish their ancestral homeland as the one place where they could truly be at home.

Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in 1897, at which he founded the Zionist Organization, later to be named the World Zionist Organization. There continued to be additional World Zionist Congress meetings every few years, with delegates elected or appointed to some Israeli policies and funding decisions. The World Zionist Organization is governed by the World Zionist Congress that continues to represent Jewish communities around the world. This organization played a role in giving birth to the institutions of the State of Israel. In 1948, after Israel was founded, some Israeli leaders felt it was appropriate to shut down the World Zionist Organization as it had fulfilled its purpose -- but they were not successful, and the organization still exists, giving Jews around the world a continued voice continues to meet every few years. The 38th World Zionist Congress will take place in 2020.

What’s at stake in these elections?

The decisions of the World Zionist Congress determine the leadership and influence the policies of Israel’s National Institutions: the World Zionist Organization (WZO), the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Jewish National Fund-Keren Kayemet LeIsrael (JNF) and Keren Hayesod – which together allocate nearly $1 billion annually in funding in support of Israel and Jewish communities around the world. I am interested in using my vote to encourage Israel to make a stronger commitment to religious pluralism and to safeguard both its Jewish and democratic values.

So who are you voting for?

The World Zionist Congress is conducted according to a parliamentary system, so you vote for a slate rather than for individuals. Each slate publishes its platform (see https://azm.org/elections) and an ordered list of the delegates on its slate. Depending on how well the slate does in the election, it will be awarded a certain number of seats, which will go to the first several people on the delegate list.

I cast my vote already for MERCAZ, which is the slate affiliated with Masorti/Conservative Judaism and stands for religious pluralism, and encourages the support and funding of the full range of expressions of Judaism in Israel (not just Orthodox expressions of Judaism).

So are you telling us to vote for MERCAZ?

I am asking you to vote -- and I am encouraging you to seriously consider voting for MERCAZ, which is the party whose vision of Israel’s future most closely accords with mine: a country that enshrines democratic values and gives equal rights and liberties to all its citizens while also ensuring that the country retains a Jewish flavor; a country that gives opportunities for its Jewish population to practice Judaism (or not) as they wish, eliminating religious coercion and providing opportunities for the practice of Conservative, Reform, and other non-Orthodox forms of Judaism along with Orthodoxy; a country that pursues genuine peace with its neighbors. Though I am not an Israeli citizen, I care deeply about Israel and encourage its embrace of these values. The continued existence of the World Zionist Congress is a demonstration that, at least in this small way, Jews outside of Israel continue to be stakeholders in the project of Israel and have some say in its future.
There are a couple of other parties that express similar values, but MERCAZ is the best choice for me in its positions and in the issues it addresses. Plus, one of the potential delegates is Noam Kornsgold, our USH rabbinic intern. (Last time around, in 2015, USH member Avi Siegel was a delegate to the World Zionist Congress on the MERCAZ slate.)

**How do I vote?**

All voting is online. Remember that the deadline is March 11, 2020. Go to azm.org/elections and follow the directions. Your first step is to register to vote; there is a $7.50 fee for registration (or $5 for people under age 25).

**Wait - what?**

The fee covers the costs of running the election and helps to prevent voter fraud. It also establishes that the people who are voting are, at least to a minimal degree, stakeholders in the World Zionist Organization. I hope the fee will not deter you from participating.

**I voted! Now what should I do?**

Congratulations and thank you! As we would like to keep track of how many people have voted from our community, we invite you to go to http://bit.ly/IVoted2020 and let us know that you voted (and if you’re willing to say, let us know who you voted for).

I invite any comments or feedback on the World Zionist Congress or this column, at rabbi@hobokensynagogue.org. You are also welcome to reach out to Noam Kornsgold, our rabbinic intern who is on the MERCAZ slate, at noamek54@gmail.com.

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**WORLD’S TALLEST LEGO MENORAH! FUN FROM PRE-HANUKKAH KAPLAN LEARNING CENTER EVENT**
Pictured: Participants in the "Debate for Peace" Israeli Model UN team, including Jewish, Muslim and Christian high school students from all over Israel. They presented an enlightening and inspiring panel on Monday evening January 19. Also pictured are group leaders Steven Aiello and Hassan Hassan, and USH member Samantha Glass who coordinated their visit.
NO HATE, NO FEAR
SOLIDARITY MARCH

January 5, 2020
SAVE THE DATE!

This coming March, the United Synagogue of Hoboken will be a proud participant in HIAS’ National Refugee Shabbat, during which Jews across the country will take action for refugees and asylum seekers.

With more than 70 million people worldwide who have fled their homes due to persecution and violence, we are now witnesses to one of the largest humanitarian crises in human history.

And, yet, in this moment of unprecedented need, the policies of the current administration are grinding the U.S. refugee admissions program to a halt, imposing extreme limits on the ability of asylum seekers to find safety in our country, and cutting humanitarian aid.

Over the Shabbat of March 20-21st, 2020, the American Jewish community will dedicate sacred time and space to refugees and asylum seekers. Building on the momentum of the inaugural National Refugee Shabbat, in which nearly 300 congregations across the United States and abroad participated, this National Refugee Shabbat will be an opportunity to once again raise awareness in our community, to recognize the work that has been done, and to reaffirm our commitment to welcoming refugees and asylum seekers.

Our USH Refugee Support Committee will be organizing activities and hosting kiddush. We hope you will join us.

- The USH Refugee Support Committee
TODAH RABAH TO ALL OF OUR DONORS

CHESED FUND
Ken and Susan Schept, in memory of Dorothy Schept
Rabbi Naomi Kalish and Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, in honor of Harriet Taub, Gabby Becker, Vivian Greene, Kitty Bateman, Rochelle Ohring, Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, Louise Kurtz, Audrey Merwin, Marilyn Freiser, Mimi Lavine, Razel Solow, Merry Firschein, Jenny Labendz, Avi Siegel, Susan Schept, Melissa Sandler, & Karen Jurman

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Craig Teitelbaum

CONDOLENCES TO:
Ken Howitt on the loss of his mother Mildred and to his brothers Arnold, Jeffrey and Lawrence and to their families and to Ken’s children, Patrick, Katherine and Francis
Talya Schaeffer on the loss of her aunt Lilian Gruber
Tracey Gavant on the loss of her mother Miriam Husid and to Tracey’s husband, David and to her sister Alison and her husband Hal and to Miriam’s siblings and their families
Abbie Jacobs on the loss of her mother Annabelle Jacobs and to Abbie’s husband, David Kalmus and to Annabelle’s grandchildren, Elena and Danielle