



THE SHOFAR

שופר

United Synagogue of Hoboken

KISLEV / TEVET 5778

DECEMBER 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2017

- 2 Parenting talk - *How Judaism can help build resiliency in children* (10:30am)
- 3 Book Fair Family Day
- 8-9 Shabbat with Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism: Fri eve Shabbat dinner; Shabbat morning presentation
- 12 1st night of Hanukkah; for full Hanukkah schedule see hobokensynagogue.org
- 15 Vodka/Latke Shabbat dinner for young professionals
- 17 LC & Preschool Hanukkah celebrations
- 17 Hanukkah dinner with Glenn Cohen, ex-IDF chief hostage negotiator (7-9pm)

JANUARY 2018

- 5-6 Shabbaton with musician-in-residence Josh Warshawsky: Fri night musical services 7pm followed by dinner; Shabbat morning singing workshop; Sat eve concert 7pm
- 7 Speakers brunch *My Mother's Kitchen* 10:30am
- 12 JNF Future Shabbat Dinner for Young Professionals, 7:00pm
- 20 Parenting talk: *How Jewish values help our children* 10:30am
- Friday night services 7pm**
- Saturday morning services 9:30am**
- See www.hobokensynagogue.org & USH Facebook page for more info on these and other events!

WHAT DOES THE TORAH TELL US ABOUT GENDER ROLES?



It has been extraordinary to see how, just in the last several weeks, the United States appears to have come to a new understanding of sexual harassment. We have seen dozens of powerful men (not men exclusively, but predominantly), in a variety of fields but especially in media and entertainment and politics, who have had accusers (not women exclusively, but predominantly) come forward to accuse them of infractions running the gamut from unwanted sexual conversation, to pressure to engage in physical activity, to sexual assault and rape, with new allegations coming out every day. In just a couple of months, our culture and society appear to have taken leaps ahead in recognizing the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and how dangerous and unfair it is.

Many of us greet this transformation with mixed emotions. On the one hand, there is a sense of relief that powerful men who have been able to get away with such horrific and predatory behavior for so long are now being held to account. Behavior that many women long assumed they just had to put up with is now being labeled what it is: harassment that is hurtful and unfair and often criminal. But this shift also comes with some deep embarrassment that our society enabled such tragic and hurtful behavior for so long. We have learned about the methods by which powerful men were able to suppress these accusations, including threats of retaliation and non-disclosure agreements. We have read how others made excuses for the perpetrators, implying that when someone is especially powerful, or brilliant, or famous, or talented, a different set of rules apply to them. **[Continued on next page]**



"In just a couple of months, our culture and society appear to have taken leaps ahead in recognizing the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and how dangerous and unfair it is."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY David Swirnoff



LEGACIES, Part 3

In the past two Shofar issues, I've looked at the idea of legacy and what it means in the context of what we have inherited in our building and our community and how we've been able to help them grow. **Now I'd like to**

look at the last meaning of legacy – what we leave for those coming after us.

Our traditional approach to fundraising – a necessity, in order to pay our bills and keep providing programs for our congregants of all ages – tends to focus on the idea of what our needs are right now. Most of us spend a lot of time thinking about budgeting and paying for things like rent or mortgage, gas, food, clothes, entertainment, all of the things that make up our lives.

But just as we as individuals hopefully also think about saving money for retirement, USH needs to think about continuing to serve its mission for generations from now. Our community encompasses adults in their 20s and adults in their 90s and every age in between, as well as children of all ages, and we hope this will always be the case. For those in our community who are at an appropriate life stage to do so, we are asking you to consider what **it means to make a very special type of gift to this community ... a legacy gift.**

In realizing your legacy, you have chosen to support USH beyond your lifetime. What an extraordinary mitzvah. In addition to the critical support your contribution would make, this planned gift would also accommodate your own personal, financial, estate-planning, and philanthropic goals. The benefits of such support go both ways. **[Continued on page 3]**

My inclination is always to look to the Torah for guidance about our society's current moment. Looking at the Torah for lessons about gender relations, however, can be challenging, as there are significant differences between the picture of gender relations described in the Torah and how we understand gender relations today. Sadly, we see in the Torah some examples of the very attitudes that persist today and have made a culture of sexual harassment possible. The Torah portion of Toldot, for example, includes one of the Torah's first stories of sexual harassment. Isaac and Rebecca have to move to a new city, called Gerar. The

Philistine king Avimelech and other Philistines notice Rebecca and start to create a plan for Avimelech to exert control over her. Isaac seems to assume that this is the kind of thing that he expects to happen - and sadly, rather than focusing on protecting Rebecca, he focuses on protecting himself, claiming that Rebecca is his sister instead of his wife. The story concludes with Rebecca and Isaac being safe, but clearly the situation was terribly uncomfortable, and Rebecca was at a disadvantage because of her gender.

In the story of Avimelech and Rebecca, Avimelech is clearly presented as having an adversarial relationship with the Jewish people. But sadly, the attitudes that make rampant sexual harassment possible are expressed in the Torah by the enemies of the Jewish people, but also by the founders of the Jewish people and the ancestors of the Jewish people. Sadly it appears that so many men in the Torah don't particularly value the opinions of the women in their lives; they are routinely making decisions that affect these women without involving them in the decisions. Women are most frequently the 'passive' players in the Torah. This can be a source of great discomfort for those who study Torah with the hope that it will help us to live more ethical and equitable lives.

At the same time, however, the Torah is also absolutely outstanding in its depiction of strong women who manage to use every ounce of their power, even in the context of a generally patriarchal world. For example, in the Torah portion of Chayei Sarah, Rebecca is a model of generosity and dedication, expending significant energy to provide water for Abraham's servant and even for his camels. In the Torah portion of Toldot, Rebecca is as strong a female leader as anyone could have been, given the time period she was living in. The Torah implies that without Rebecca's intervention, Isaac would have transmitted the leadership of the Jewish people to the wrong person. And Rebecca is only one such example of women in the Torah who demonstrate independence and autonomy.

I am sometimes asked how I reconcile my advocacy of gender equality with my dedication to the Torah. Part of my answer is that one should not immediately assume that the Torah's vision is

not one of gender equality. The Torah usually has more than one answer to every question. For example, Genesis Chapter 1 explicitly states that both male and female are created in God's image; we read: "God created the human being in God's image, in God's image God created him; male and female God created them." According to Genesis 1, male and female appear to have been created simultaneously and equally. The better-known story about the origins of the first woman from the rib of the first man is also present in the Torah, but in Genesis Chapter 2.

Academic scholars, as well as traditional commentators such as Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, have suggested that the Torah includes both stories because these are two parallel retellings, two stories that coexist, telling two different versions of the relationship between men and women. The story in Chapter 2 which presents women as subsidiary to men has sadly been the way that gender relations have been understood in most human societies for millennia. But as time goes on, we may be heading more towards a return to the vision of gender equality that is described in Genesis Chapter 1. Certainly this is my prayer, that we are heading towards a world of greater equality and freedom, where the autonomy of every individual, male and female, is respected. And it is my steadfast belief that such a world gets us CLOSER to the world envisioned by the Torah - not further away. ☆



Rebecca Watered the Camels by Elena Kotliarker



"God created the human being in God's image, in God's image God created him; male and female God created them."



We are grateful to those members who have already thought about USH in this special way and we invite them – if they haven't already – to come forward, so that we may meaningfully recognize them and inspire others to join them in choosing USH to become part of their extended family.

We want to provide a community that is connected to one another. A community that reflects our desire to educate and gather socially and offer opportunities for spiritual growth. This sort of community is the legacy that we should strive to provide. And doing so means that we ensure the future of USH, guaranteeing that other generations may experience the same religious, social, spiritual, and educational opportunities that we enjoy today.

Opportunities for legacy giving are as unique as each person's own financial situation. So if you'd

like some more information, please email me (president@hobokensynagogue.org). We can help discuss the complexities of managing the planned gift that you would like to make.

I hope you will consider making this very special gift to USH. ☆



MISSION TO THE MOON:

Rosh Chodesh In The Mobile Planetarium

by Rhonda Strosberg



Two groups of students from the Learning Center visited our mobile planetarium on Tuesday, November 7th: Bonim Kindergarten, Alef 1st and Bet 2nd grades, followed by our 2nd group of Gimmel 3rd, Dalet and Hey 5th grades to enter this unique journey. Here's a little about our adventures...

Students reviewed

how we as Jews have a special connection to the moon. One of the words for "moon" or "month" is chodesh, renewal, and when there is a sliver of a moon that is the new moon or new month. The next Rosh Chodesh to celebrate was Saturday, November 18th, the first of Kislev.

Rosh Hashanah, the new year and new beginning, falls on the new moon. The end of Hanukkah, which is a time of increasing light, also falls on Rosh Chodesh.



After our discussions, students entered into the planetarium to view a movie about space navigation and our connection on planet earth to the moon, space travel, innovation and the possibilities we all have to be change makers & dream BIG!



We hope you'll continue discussions with your children about what they experienced.



The Siegel Family's Trip to Remember

by Jeremy Morley

"the Jewish community of Vilna was the spiritual center of Eastern European Jewry, the center of enlightenment

Laura Siegel, with her parents Larry and Pat Siegel, traveled to Eastern Europe in the late summer on a remarkable Family Remembrance and Experience Tour.

Laura, a history teacher at McNair High School in Jersey City, had prepared for the tour for several years, conducting extensive and meticulous research, and creating a thorough and richly footnoted family genealogy and history that records the trails of her forebears throughout Europe - and ultimately to the "Golden Land" of the United States - that reveals a little of how their Jewish identity forged the paths they took.

Their trip was a special opportunity to visit places they had only heard of, to breathe the same air and imbibe the same smells that their grandparents and great-grandparents had breathed and smelled, to see the same kinds of people who had been their neighbors, to walk on the same paths that they had walked on and to touch the very earth that they had touched.

And yet, while they caught some glimpses of the lives of their ancestors, they also felt acutely a sense of awful loss and great emptiness. In places where Jews had lived for generations they spoke to old people who said they remembered a single Jew. In towns where so many were slaughtered they struggled to find a gravestone or the remains of a synagogue.



Golden Rose Synagogue, Lvov (destroyed)

the home of Pat's paternal grandparents, they walked the streets of a modern Lithuanian city, and saw mere glimpses of a community that had been obliterated. At the beginning of the 19th century, Vilna had been one of the most important centers of the *Haskalah* - the Jewish Enlightenment - in Eastern Europe, where many of the greatest Jewish writers and poets lived. "On the eve of the Shoah," as Yad Vashem explains,

In Vilna, now known as Vilnius, Lithuania,



Shrine in Pokhivka

almost doubled in size as Jewish refugees poured into the city. By the war's end, most had been murdered. Little remains of the old Jewish quarter of the city. The magnificent *Golden Rose Synagogue*, which for centuries was the center of Jewish culture in Lvov, was burned down by the Nazis in 1942, but part of the structure's northern

wall has

survived. Instead, they found the *Golden Rose Restaurant*, a fake Jewish restaurant where you are supposed to bargain for your food.

In Zolochiv, Ukraine, the home of Larry's grandmother, Clara Horowitz, nee Gruber, Laura and her parents found a small town where 40% of the inhabitants had been Jewish. Now just one family remained. Through records in Lvov, Laura

and Jewish political life, of Jewish creativity and the experience of daily Jewish life, a community bursting with cultural and religious life, movements and parties, educational institutions, libraries and theatres; a community of rabbis and gifted Talmudic scholars, intellectuals, poets, authors, artists, craftspeople and educators. In the Jewish world it was known as 'The Jerusalem of Lithuania' - a spiritual center of the first order." All that has been destroyed. More than 95% of Lithuania's Jewish population was massacred over the three-year German occupation, a more complete destruction than in any other country during the Holocaust.

In Lezajsk, Poland, where Pat's maternal grandfather, Israel Laub, was born, they found a town that had once been an important center of Hasidism in Galicia, but that was now entirely devoid of Jews.

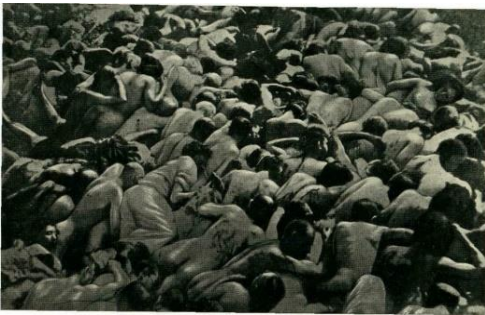
In Lvov, Ukraine, at the outset of World War II the Jewish population of 110,000



Laura and parents, Pat & Larry

Siegel Tour

found that several buildings had been owned by people named Gruber. Among the tragedies in Zolochiv there had been a terrible massacre at the Castle, which still stands, and in open areas where mass graves were later discovered.



Mass grave near Zolochiv

returned to Zolochiv after the war and his son might still be living there. Larry's grandmother's sister had married a Shapiro. Was he a family member? Grandmother Clara had left Zolochiv and had found her way to Leeds, England, but her sister Hencia and a brother had remained. Larry still has a letter written by Hencia shortly before the war, saying that her son had received papers and would go to America. He never made it. All the family members in Zolochiv were killed.

In Pokhivka, Ukraine, the birthplace of Larry's grandfather, Abraham Horowitz, they found a small farming village. They found an old man who remembered that there had been one Jewish family before the war possibly named Abraham.



Jew Street, Zolochiv

Laura and her parents learned of a Mr. Shapiro who had survived by falling into a pit of Jews who had been shot. He had pretended to be dead and hid under mounds of dead bodies and so he survived. He had

He remembered that the father had several daughters, and said that the Nazis had tied two of them together by their hair and thrown them into a well. After the war, when the story was told, some villagers built a Ukrainian Orthodox shrine over the well to honor the girls.




Laura studying a gravestone

In nearby Lysets, Ukraine they found an old man who remembered a family of nine Jews who had been hidden in a barn underneath the horses but were betrayed, found and killed. There they found a Jewish cemetery, overgrown with weeds.

In Ivano-Frankivsk, they found a larger town and therefore a place of even greater atrocities. It had housed 40,000 Jews when first occupied by the Nazis, and then took in many tens of thousands more from the surrounding areas. On February 27, 1943, after a final liquidation of the ghetto, the town was declared completely Jew-free.

In all, it was a very sobering trip but one that Laura and her parents are so happy to have made. Laura said that, after having researched her family's roots and history for several years, it was great to be able to visit some of the places from which they had sprung, to make some connections between the past and the present, and to catch some glimpses of the lives they had lived before the obliteration of the Holocaust.

And knowing Laura, I have no doubt that she will now be relishing the opportunity to tell so many more tales of the past to her dear husband Brian and their delightful children, Julia and Emily. ☆



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

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Norman and Myrna Kasser in honor of Nathan Kriegel's bar mitzvah and Ethan Malekar's bar mitzvah

General Fund

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Seth Cohen and Sherry Pitkotsky in honor of their daughter, Ellie's baby naming
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Paul and Marilyn Schreiber
Kareh and Krista Shabtaie
Ben and Lisa Zablocki

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING KIDDUSH:

Nov 4 Mike and Judy Shaw in honor of Taylor's bat mitzvah
Nov 11 Billy Truong and Shira Ein-Dor in honor of Nevo's bar mitzvah
Nov 18 Douglas and Suzanne Heyman in honor of Marcus' bar mitzvah
Nov 25 Norma DeRuggiero in memory of her husband, Robert DeRuggiero

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Taylor Shaw on her bat mitzvah and to her parents, Mike and Judy Shaw and to her brother, Jason
Nevo Ein-Dor Truong on his bar mitzvah and to his parents, Shira Ein-Dor and Billy Truong and his brother, Nesai Ari
Marcus Heyman on his bar mitzvah and to his parents, Doug and Suzanne Heyman and his brother, Alexander
Dave and Laura Ortner on the birth of their son, Bodhi, and to brother, Auden.
Adam Parker and Irina Shutovsky on their aufruf and wedding
Rabbinic Intern Rafi Spitzer and his wife Rachael on the birth of their daughter, Ellie
Scott Mack and Jessie Mishkin on the birth of their son, Jason

CONDOLENCES TO:

Rachel Behar on the loss of her father, David Behar and to his granddaughter, Sophie Behar (LC student)
Kathy Prussack on the loss of her father, Stuart Rawitscher and to Kathy's husband, Bruce and their children, Micah and Jessica.

The USH Refugee Support Committee

Refugee Dinner to Support Refugee Families: By the time you read this, 24 lucky people will have gathered together on December 2nd to dine on wonderful Syrian Kurdish and Eritrean food. Of course, we're writing this before the event so we'll share more about the evening with you next month. Past events have been huge successes. Look for news about upcoming dinners with our refugee friends. We hope you'll consider attending and/or hosting a gathering. For more information you can contact Ben Zablocki at zablocki@rutgers.edu.

Gift Drive: Welcome Home is planning a holiday celebration on December 16th for over 100 refugees. Let's help this organization reach its goal of giving everyone a gift from their Wish List. To participate, send an email to jcfamiliesforrefugees@gmail.com with your name, contact number and the number of people you'd like to sponsor. Casey, Laura or Kara will respond to you with all the details about the individuals you will be sponsoring and what items on their Wish List. **Gifts must be received by December 13th!**

Volunteer Opportunities: While the number of incoming refugees has slowed, those who are already here continue to need support. There are many ways to get involved. Some people need help completing paperwork. Others need help finding doctors who take their insurance. Church World Service is the main organization tasked with resettling refugees locally. You can find out about current volunteer opportunities by signing up at <http://cwsjerseycity.org/get-involved>.

There is a constant need for English tutors. Although some refugees have a good working knowledge of English when they get here, others are absolute beginners. Adults and children both need help completing ESL homework. Many children also need tutoring to complete regular homework assignments. If you would like to learn more about existing tutoring opportunities, contact Razel Solow, razelsolow@gmail.com or Bess Morrison, bessmorrison@gmail.com.

Two other groups, Welcome Home and Jersey City Vigil for Refugees, have Facebook pages where they post volunteer opportunities as they arise. In addition, Jersey City Vigil has a weekly gathering at 6:30 on Thursdays at the restaurant LITM near the Grove St PATH station. This is a good way to get involved. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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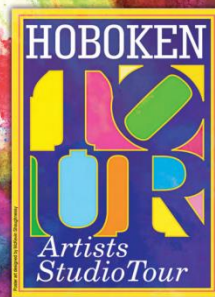
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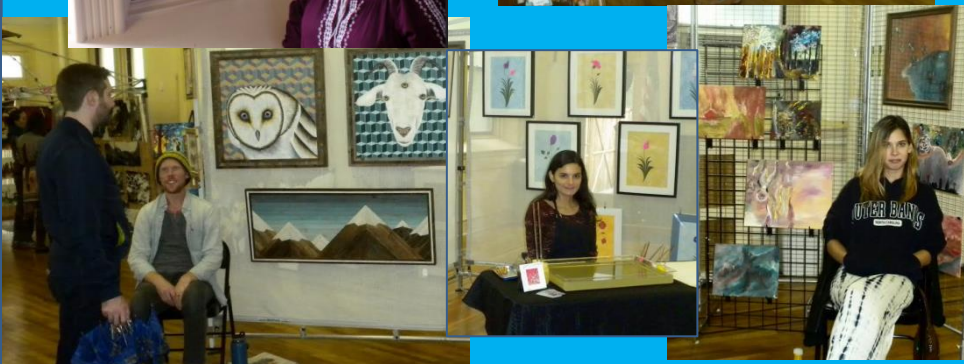
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www.HobokenRadiology.com

USH. was a featured stop on November 5th for the Hoboken Artists Studio Tour. Here are some of the presenters – including of course Susie Klein with her magnificent stained glass windows that adorn our sanctuary.



Susie Klein, Karen Jurman & Marilyn Freiser



Many thanks to Susie Klein and docents Karen Jurman and Marilyn Freiser, to Joe Epstein for bringing, setting up and taking down the presentation stands, and to organizers Jeremy Morley and Allen Reuben.

PARENTING with Jewish Values

Saturdays 10:30 - 11:30 AM
(Concurrent with Shabbat morning services)

RSVP for all programs at hobokensynagogue.org. Space is limited.
Free for parents of Learning Center students
\$18 donation requested for non-members

DATE	TOPIC	TEACHER/SPEAKER
12/9	How do we transmit Jewish identity to our children?	Rabbi Steve Wernick, CEO, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
1/20	How can Jewish values help our children to thrive and flourish ?	Grace Gurman-Chan
3/17	How can Judaism help us to respond to illness and death ?	Rabbi Naomi Kalish
4/21	What can Shabbat do for our family?	TBA
5/12	How do we talk with our children about Israel ?	Rabbi Robert Scheinberg

VODKA/LATKE YOUNG PROFESSIONAL SHABBAT DINNER

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Friday, Dec. 15, 2017

7 PM Services

8:15 PM Shabbat Dinner

United Synagogue of Hoboken
115 Park Avenue, Hoboken, NJ

Tickets: \$18

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201.659.4000



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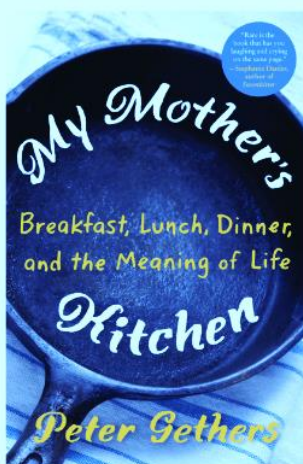
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brought him closer to his discerning parent and member of the Ratner family, owners of the famous kosher restaurant.

Sun., Jan. 7, 2018 \$18 for members
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM \$25 for nonmembers



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RSVP: 201.659.4000 office@hobokensynagogue.org
or online at HobokenSynagogue.org

Dec 8-9: Scholar-in-residence weekend

Rabbi Steven Wernick,
CEO, USCJ
"21st Century Judaism"

Rabbi Steven C. Wernick serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the network of over 600 Conservative congregations in North America and over 1 million congregants and participants. In 2010 Rabbi Wernick was named one of Newsweek's 50 Most Influential Rabbis in America and was on The Forward's 50 List of Influential Jewish Leaders. Join Rabbi Wernick in dialogue about North American Judaism in the next century!



Friday Dec 8, approx 7:45pm (following 7pm services):
"Shifting paradigms: 21st Century Judaism"

Free and open to the public. Followed by shabbat dinner, 8:30pm.
\$18/members, \$25/non-members (RSVP by Dec 5)

Sat Dec 9, approx 11:45am (following services):
"A Vision of Authentic and Dynamic Judaism"

Free and open to the public, followed by kiddush/refreshments

Sat Dec 9, approx 1:15pm:
Dialogue: "Talking about a Wall:
The state of Israel/Diaspora Relations"

Free and open to the public

United Synagogue of Hoboken, 115 Park Avenue, Hoboken NJ 07030
RSVP for all programs at www.hobokensynagogue.org

With the support of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

