Our Next Year

By the time you receive this issue of the Shofar, the USH community will have moved into our new fiscal year. It has been an exciting year for me – my first as president of the Board – and we’ve have some real successes in our operations.

In terms of educational programs, the Kaplan Preschool ran at capacity this year with 133 children enrolled in our classes. The Learning Center had 145 students enrolled, in all grades and the year saw a number of programs for kids. The synagogue this past year also held a couple of adult-oriented educational programs, including a months-long class on Jewish ethical questions and issues in modern life, which was created by the Jewish Theological Seminary for use by Conservative congregations.

With our budget, we are on target to end the year with a very small surplus, which we will use to help offset some programmatic expenses for the coming year. In terms of fundraising, our two biggest programs of the year, the Yom Kippur Appeal and Casino Night, were both great successes—thank you to everyone who made a gift and/or participated in the event. It is a fact of life that nonprofits are supported, in no small part, by donations such as these. Thank you to everyone. In the membership category, we have slipped a little from past years, but I’m happy to say USH now includes 246 membership units (including household and individual memberships). This makes 410 adults who are members at USH.

The job of our community is to make sure that everyone finds something of value at USH in return for their willingness to spend time and money on this organization. We will continue to look at programs and opportunities to engage different groups of our membership — families, young professionals, singles, older couples, seniors, and children. We believe that we can increase our membership by finding ways to meet the needs and desires of individual members. We will do everything we can to identify those needs and respond to them.

And as we move into the new year, I would be remiss if I didn’t extend our thanks to the members of the board of trustees who give up time to help manage programs, oversee expenses, and offer guidance on a myriad of topics. Six board members have stepped down after dedicated service: David Plotka, Myrna Kasser, Philip Cohen, Sherri Satz, Amy Kron, and Cindy Altberger. The board now welcomes Mimi Lavine and Danny Cohen, who have joined the board for the coming year. I also want to say thank you to the rest of the board members: Rochelle Ohring, Mike Katz, Lauren Braun, David Heafitz, Matt Meistrich, Russell Kriegel, Adam Laden, Louise Kurtz, Elissa Aaronson, Beth Mayerowitz, Jeremy Morley, Lauren Sapira, and Adam Berkowitz.

And thanks also to Rabbi Scheinberg for his leadership, friendship, and guidance of this community; to Grace Gurman-Chan and Rachelle Grossman for leading our educational programs; and thanks also to Rabbi Scheinberg if you are interested in joining our Friday night musicians! And as we move into the new year, I would be remiss if I didn’t extend our thanks to the members of the board of trustees who give up time to help manage programs, oversee expenses, and offer guidance on a myriad of topics. Six board members have stepped down after dedicated service: David Plotka, Myrna Kasser, Philip Cohen, Sherri Satz, Amy Kron, and Cindy Altberger. The board now welcomes Mimi Lavine and Danny Cohen, who have joined the board for the coming year. I also want to say thank you to the rest of the board members: Rochelle Ohring, Mike Katz, Lauren Braun, David Heafitz, Matt Meistrich, Russell Kriegel, Adam Laden, Louise Kurtz, Elissa Aaronson, Beth Mayerowitz, Jeremy Morley, Lauren Sapira, and Adam Berkowitz.

And last but certainly not least — thanks to all of you for participating in this wonderful organization and community. I hope you have a wonderful summer. ☀️
One of the most extraordinary experiences while I was a student was the opportunity to do some outreach to the Jewish community of Poland immediately after the fall of communism. For two straight years, I spent Purim in Poland, reading the Megillah and teaching Jewish music in various communities which were only starting to come out of their shell after decades of intimidation under communism.

On my trips there, I got to meet the two Hasidic rabbis who each claimed the title of Chief Rabbi of Poland. Needless to say, they didn’t get along very well with each other. In fact, they could not have been more different. One was the rabbi of the synagogue in Warsaw at that time. He was a Hasid of the Gerrer sect, named Rabbi Joskowicz. He had grown up in Poland before the war - he was a survivor of the Holocaust - and after the war he was a refugee who made his way to Israel. Then in the mid-1980's, when things were starting to open up in Poland, he moved back, to assist the Jewish community in its process of revival.

And then there was the rabbi who seemed to be Rabbi Joskowicz’s opposite -- another Hasidic rabbi, who lived in the Polish city of Lodz. So much of his story was so similar to that of Rabbi Joskowicz. He had also grown up in Poland, survived the Holocaust, was a refugee, and made his way to Israel. He also came back to Poland, but earlier, in the 1950s (and thereafter split his time between Lodz and Brooklyn). But his motivation seems to have been different. From our limited perspective, he seemed to have the goal of trying to put a damper on any efforts to renew the Polish Jewish community. It seemed to us that he moved back to Poland essentially to remind everyone that the entire country of Poland is actually the world’s largest Jewish cemetery - once the center of the Jewish world, the largest, proudest, best-educated Jewish community in the world, that was then utterly destroyed, and can never be rebuilt.

And so this rabbi took an apartment in the old Jewish section of town, overlooking the courtyard of the only remaining functioning synagogue in Lodz - but he would never set foot in it, for one reason or another. The Mehitza (partition between men and women) wasn’t high enough. Who’s to say that all the people they’re counting in the minyan are really Jewish? And the entire notion of a Jewish rebirth in Poland is ludicrous, after so much was destroyed. So this rabbi would spend each Shabbat morning looking out of his apartment window at the rather small number of Jews coming to the synagogue. It seemed like he had moved back to Poland in order to remind Poland what authentic Judaism was supposed to look like, and to remind contemporary Polish Jews that they could never measure up to what had been.

These two rabbis in Poland began to epitomize for me two different responses to the Holocaust, and two different responses to any terrible tragedy. After all, these two men, of approximately the same age, had extremely similar life circumstances. Both had lived through absolute horror, displacement, and the loss of dear family members. The difference in their responses may have been connected to differences in their individual temperaments. One responded to destruction by brooding over the past, while the other responded to destruction by looking towards the future, making an effort to rebuild even just a little bit of what had been destroyed.

This year, the Shabbat of July 20-21 is known on the Jewish calendar as Shabbat Hazon - the Shabbat of the Vision. This is the saddest Shabbat of the year, when we look ahead to the fast day of Tisha B’Av - the 9th of Av - which is the catch-all day to commemorate the tragedies of Jewish history. (This year, Tisha B’Av begins on Saturday night, July 21.) And when you study Jewish history, the number of tragedies can just be overwhelming.

But what is equally amazing is that following almost every tragedy, the Jewish community starts out thinking like the rabbi from Lodz - assuming that nothing can be rebuilt - but ends up acting like Rabbi Joskowicz - making a courageous effort to rebuild even in desperate times.

The Torah refers to the Jewish people as עם קשוי-וארף - a stiff-necked people. Most of the time, this is not a compliment. But sometimes, the stiff-necked-ness can be a good thing. Over the centuries, the Jewish people have been so stubborn that we have refused to disappear on cue. The oldest archeological reference to the Jewish people is a monument in Egypt that was built 3,300 years ago by the Pharaoh Menephtah, with an inscription that says, “Israel is desolated; its seed is no more.” Our destruction has been predicted for over 3300 years - by others, and by ourselves. It’s been predicted that we would be destroyed by enemies, and it has been predicted that we would collapse from within, because of conflict, and it has been predicted that we would fade away and assimilate into the general society without a trace. Truly, all these threats continue to keep me up at night. And yet the Jewish people are still around, almost alone among ancient peoples. Certainly we’ve lasted a lot longer than most who tried to destroy us.

The fast day of Tisha B’Av is a time to focus on moments of tragedy, not only throughout Jewish history, but also in our own personal stories. Sometimes our challenges seem so overwhelming that they can even lead us towards hopelessness. And yet the persistence of the Jewish people is part (but not all) of its message, inspiring us at other difficult moments. May our lives as individuals and as a community be characterized by the same stubborn insistence to begin again that has characterized Jewish tradition for thousands of years.
The **Tikkun** is an event during which people remain awake throughout the first night of *Shavuot* studying Torah together. At USH we invite our own members to take on the role of teachers. This past Shavuot, one of the teachers was Audrey Merwin Grossman.

*I asked her some questions* about her presentation and she also provided me with interesting materials.

| Q. What was the theme of your Shavuot topic? | The role of repetition in learning. |
| Q. What was the essence of your presentation? | I used sources and a live demonstration that involved a song. |
| Q. Why did you choose that topic? | Recently, Rabbi David A. Lyon wrote a D’var about Parashat Emor that looked at the repetition of the Hebrew root for the word “say” -- alef-mem-reish -- in the opening sentence of Emor, where God tells Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and you shall say to them...." This reminded me of the importance of repetition in teaching at the Learning Center. |
| Q. Did you have any stories that accompanied your presentation? | To show how repetition works, I recalled how a child in my family would repeat, "Am I annoying you yet? Am I annoying you yet? Am I annoying you yet?... " and the message worked! |

**Audrey prepared** some great materials for her presentation. Here are some of them:

1. **Rabbi David A. Lyon**, senior rabbi, Congregation Beth Torah, Houston, teaches, “In the portion called, *Emor*, a significant redundancy occurs in the Hebrew text. We read that God said to Moses: *Emor el hakohanim b’nei Aharon, ve-amarta aleihem... ‘Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and you shall say to them...’* (Leviticus 21:1). An examination of this verse reveals a double use of the word, ‘say,’ from the Hebrew root *amar*. The first occurrence is in the imperative form, *Emor!* said with force. The second is in the imperfect form (familiarly, the future tense), *ve-amarta*, ‘and you shall say to them.’”(*The Educational Value of Repetition, Reform Voices of Torah, Parashat Emor [Leviticus 21:1−24:23], May 5, 2018*)

2. **Dr. J. Carl Laney**, professor of biblical literature, Western Seminary, writes: “The biblical key to learning the Bible (or any other discipline for that matter) is repetition. I discovered this key tucked away in Deuteronomy just after the greatest commandment in the law, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). Moses continues his exhortation in the verses that follow: “These words, which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:6-7). ... What I learned from this text is that repetition with variety is the key to learning. In other words, people will learn best when their lessons are repeated. (*The Biblical Key to Learning, Transformed: Living the Gospel in an Everyday World, 2018*)

3. **A psychologist from UCLA** shares this: “A problem both teachers and students confront is that approaches to studying that make performance improve rapidly often fail to support long-term retention and transfer of skills and knowledge. We want quick results. This makes us susceptible to things like cramming — a form of massing — right before an exam. While this might be successful in the short-term, when the exam is over, forgetting what you crammed will be very rapid. Better conditions of learning — such as spacing your studying for an exam instead of cramming — actually appear to create difficulties for the learner, slowing the rate of apparent learning, but in reality, they often optimize long-term retention and transfer.” (*Judy Lin, “Q&A: UCLA Psychologist Robert Bjork on the Science of Learning*).
My presentation at the Shavuot Tikun was on "Egypt's 'Torah': The Laws of Ma'at." Ma'at is the ancient Egyptian goddess of justice and ethics.

The Egyptians believed that when a person dies, that person appears before a tribunal, at which time Anubis weighs the person’s soul, represented as the heart, on Ma'at's scales against a feather, which is her symbol.

If the soul is as light as the feather, Osiris admits the person to the afterlife. If the soul outweighs the feather, i.e., is heavy with sin, the soul will fall and be devoured by Ammit, the god of destruction.

While the weighing is going on, the person recites a 42-part affirmation that he or she has not committed various offenses against the gods and fellow human beings, both physically (things like injury and theft), and ethically.

This affirmation strongly resembles parts of our Torah.

Many of the subjects covered are those in the Ten Commandments and Parashat Kedoshim (the "Holiness Code" of the Torah), as well as in other parts of the Torah. The recitation seems similar to the Vidui confession that we say on Yom Kippur. As surely these weren't going to be sprung on the dead at the last minute, they must have been principles that living Egyptians strove to live by, which is at odds with our normal perception of ancient Egypt (and yes, they had rules about the proper treatment of slaves).

I chose to do this topic because I had learned about the Laws of Ma'at from some fictional works set in ancient Egypt that I had read. I did a little research and found out about the 42 Principals of Ma'at and noted how strongly they resembled our own mitzvot.

Whether this is because they all came from some ultimate divine inspiration, or because they are the product of common human striving toward the right and the good, I cannot say, but I thought others would find this subject interesting.

In fact, I don't think anyone present had even heard of Ma'at or these principles, and so the presentation made a pretty big impression, I think. It was a very interesting subject to learn about and to teach.

EGYPT’S ‘TORAH’
by Anne Pettit

THE 42 LAWS OF MA’AT
1. I WILL NOT DO WRONG
2. I WILL NOT STEAL
3. I WILL NOT ACT WITH VIOLENCE
4. I WILL NOT KILL
5. I WILL NOT BE UNJUST
6. I WILL NOT CAUSE PAIN
7. I WILL NOT WASTE FOOD
8. I WILL NOT LIE
9. I WILL NOT DESECRATE HOLY PLACES
10. I WILL NOT SPEAK EVIL
11. I WILL NOT ABUSE MY SEXUALITY
12. I WILL NOT CAUSE THE SHEDDING OF TEARS
13. I WILL NOT SOW SEEDS OF REGRET
14. I WILL NOT BE AN AGGRESSOR
15. I WILL NOT ACT GUILEFUL
16. I WILL NOT LAY WASTE THE PLOWED LAND
17. I WILL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS
18. I WILL NOT SET MY MOUTH IN MOTION (AGAINST ANY PERSON)
19. I WILL NOT BE WRATHFUL AND ANGRY EXCEPT FOR A JUST CAUSE
20. I WILL NOT COPULATE WITH A MAN’S WIFE
21. I WILL NOT COPULATE WITH A WOMAN’S HUSBAND
22. I WILL NOT POLLUTE MYSELF
23. I WILL NOT CAUSE TERROR
24. I WILL NOT POLLUTE THE EARTH
25. I WILL NOT SPEAK IN ANGER
26. I WILL NOT TURN FROM WORDS OF RIGHT AND TRUTH
27. I WILL NOT UTTER CURSES
28. I WILL NOT INITIATE A QUARREL
29. I WILL NOT BE EXCITABLE OR CONTENTIOUS
30. I WILL NOT BE PREJUDICE
31. I WILL NOT BE AN EAVESDROPPER
32. I WILL NOT SPEAK OVERMUCH
33. I WILL NOT COMMIT TREASON AGAINST MY ANCESTORS
34. I WILL NOT WASTE WATER
35. I WILL NOT DO EVIL
36. I WILL NOT BE ARROGANT
37. I WILL NOT BLASPHEME NTR (THE ONE MOST HIGH)
38. I WILL NOT COMMIT FRAUD
39. I WILL NOT DEFRAUD TEMPLE OFFERINGS
40. I WILL NOT PLUNDER THE DEAD
41. I WILL NOT MISTREAT CHILDREN
42. I WILL NOT MISTREAT ANIMALS
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

General Fund
Alix Biel
Naomi Kaplan in memory of Abraham, Esther, Hinda, Moshe, Mary and Julius
Jeremy and Eriko Morley

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Ceil Chait and family in memory of Fred Adaman, beloved father and grandfather
Cynthia Epstein in memory of her husband, Alan Epstein, father of Joe Epstein
Jay and Nancy Spitzulnik in honor of their granddaughter, Zara Rose
Zachmann's baby naming
Annette T. Trincher in honor of Doug Hernandez's conversion
Jim and Alicia Weinstein

Siddur
Vivian Greene in memory of Fredienne Wendy Joseph and in honor of her sister, Sherry Navasaitis

PJ Library
Mike and Lauren Blumenfeld
Steven Gleicher and Tara Tripodi in memory of Ida Tripodi

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING KIDDUSH:
June 2 The families of Anna Cohen, Jason Davidoff, Sebastian Haas, Joshua Landera, Jason Shaw and Sam Spector in honor of all 12th grade graduating seniors at USH
June 9 Frank and Tina Berman in honor of Hannah's bat mitzvah
June 16 Justin Joffee and Alexandria Ketcheson, in honor of their aufruf
June 23 Avi and Rochelle Ohring in honor of Max's graduation
June 30 Zalman Newfield and Jenny Labendz in honor of Maya's birthday

CONGRATULATIONS TO:
Hannah Berman on her bat mitzvah and to her parents, Frank and Tina Berman and her sister, Isabel
Alexandria Ketcheson on her conversion to Judaism
Thomas and Dayna Sessa on the birth of their daughter, Livia and to her sister Madeleine
Samantha and Steven Benet on the birth and brit milah of their son, Ari and to his brother, Elijah
Jackie Danicki on her conversion to Judaism

CONDOLENCES TO:
Rachelle Grossman, KPS Director, on the loss of her mother, Sybil Grossman; and on the loss of her father, Isaac David Grossman. We also extend our condolences to Rachelle's husband, Bob Seelenfreund, and their daughters, Emily and Michelle.
Matthew Cheng, USH member, on the loss of his father, Matthew John Cheng Sr., and to Matthew's wife, Talya Schaeffer and their daughter, Chaya.
Christian Gonzalez, USH custodian on the loss of his father, David O'Neil
Jeri Slavin, USH member, on the loss of her husband, Avin Slavin and to Jeri's husband, Marty Gottlieb and their children, Walt, Zach and Sly.
Karen Nemet-Nejet, USH member, on the loss of her mother, Sarah Waldman and to her husband, Mordechai, and their sons, Daniel and Rafael.
Joel Levinson on the loss of his mother, Paula Levinson, and to Joel's wife, Nora.
Jessica Petner on the loss of her father, and to Jessica's husband, Adam.
Craig Teitelbaum on the loss of his father, Marty Teitelbaum, and to Craig's daughter, Lucy.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Helping a USH member with meals/companionship
A member of USH, who lives in midtown Hoboken, has some health difficulties that make food shopping and preparation somewhat challenging. She has requested assistance with 4 meals each week (either lunch or dinner on Tues and Wed; dinner on Thurs; lunch on Fri).

Task includes: Text our member the day before to confirm that you are coming and whether you are coming at lunchtime or dinnertime;
Come to her home around 2pm (lunch Tues/Wed/Fri), or 6pm (dinner Tues/Wed/Thurs), bringing a meal for her (no dietary restrictions, and she is happy to eat anything you would be likely to eat)
Most importantly, stay and chat.

Signup sheet at http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090448a4ac2ba1f85-helping1
More information (including name / address of the person you will be visiting) will be provided upon request or upon signup. Please contact Jane at klueger@gmail.com for more information or any questions.

Mon. July 9 is our night to serve meals at the Hoboken Shelter, 3rd/Bloomfield, 6-8:30pm – contact Mike at mikesshaw1021@yahoo.com, for more info.

Family Promise - Family homeless shelter seeking volunteers:
Several months ago, a new organization called Family Promise started in Hudson County. This organization provides shelter for a few homeless families, with different houses of worship taking the responsibility for providing housing for a week at a time.

The one and only reason why USH has not signed on as a full participant is because we simply don't have the space to host the families. However, we have pledged to help out with volunteers, when hosting congregations could use some help filling up their required volunteer slots.

For the week of July 15-22, these families will be housed at Temple Beth-El in Jersey City. They could use some more volunteers, including a couple of hard–to–fill slots for volunteers to sleep overnight. If you can assist, you are invited to sign up at this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0548a8a92ca4f58-family.
While on vacation this summer in Copenhagen I visited the Danish Jewish Museum. It’s striking for its unusual interior architecture, designed by Daniel Libeskind in the shape of the four Hebrew letters of the word Mitzvah, as a symbolic reflection of the good deed of the rescue of the Jews of Denmark in October 1943. For me, what was far more inspiring than the somewhat gimmicky design of the museum itself was the meaning of the building that houses the museum and its location in Copenhagen.

The museum is located in the absolute heart of Copenhagen in Slotsholmen, meaning “Castle Island.” Known in Denmark as ‘the Island of Power,’ the island has been the center of the Government of Denmark since the Middle Ages. It is dominated by the Christiansborg Palace, which houses the Danish Parliament, the Supreme Court of Denmark, the Prime Minister’s Office and the State Rooms of the Queen. Adjoining the Palace are the most important ministries, as well as the Danish National Archives and the Royal Danish Library - and now the Danish Jewish Museum.

The space now occupied by the Museum is within the Royal Boat House, which was built at the beginning of the seventeenth century by King Christian IV as a key part of the country’s new military harbor complex. The building was later incorporated into a larger building, the Royal Library, which was built in 1906.

Christian IV was the leader who first invited (some) Jews to settle in Denmark as merchants about 400 years ago. The community lived in Denmark in almost complete peace until the time of the Nazi occupation of Denmark in 1940. During the early years of the occupation, Danish officials repeatedly insisted to the German occupation authorities that there was no "Jewish problem" in Denmark and the Germans did not take measures against the Jewish community. However, in 1943 the Danish Government’s protection ended when the German authorities took direct rule over Denmark and planned to deport the Jews to concentration camps.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum explains what happened next: The Danes responded quickly, organizing a nationwide effort to smuggle the Jews by sea to neutral Sweden. Warned of the German plans, Jews began to leave Copenhagen, where most of the almost 8,000 Jews in Denmark lived, and other cities, by train, car, and on foot. With the help of the Danish people, they found hiding places in homes, hospitals, and churches. Within a two-week period, fishermen helped ferry some 7,200 Danish Jews and 680 non-Jewish family members to safety across the narrow body of water separating Denmark from Sweden.

The Danish rescue effort was unique because it was nationwide. It was not completely successful, however. Almost 500 Danish Jews were deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia. Yet even of these Jews, all but 51 survived the Holocaust, largely because Danish officials pressured the Germans with their concerns for the well-being of those who had been deported. The Danes proved that widespread support for Jews and resistance to Nazi policies could save lives. Denmark was the only occupied country that actively resisted the Nazi regime’s attempts to deport its Jewish citizens.

Knowing a little of this story, and learning more about it in the Museum itself, was heartwarming. And bumping into the Museum while wandering in the epicenter of the Danish “Island of Power” was totally inspiring. ✡
First Fridays... a new Shabbat evening experience at USH

Welcome Shabbat with vibrant music and community - for all ages with Rabbi Rob Scheinberg, Adam Laden, and other musicians!

Fri June 1: special community-wide kabbalat shabbat at Sinatra Park, 5:30pm (regular 7pm service WILL take place)
Fri June 8: “First Fridays” at USH at 6pm (regular 7pm service will NOT take place)
Also: meeting at 6pm on Fri July 6 United Synagogue of Hoboken, 115 Park Avenue
Free; RSVP office@hobokensynagogue.org

ACTION MEETING TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND ASYLUM SEEKERS
MONDAY, JULY 16, 2018 AT 6:30 P.M.
ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL PARISH
701 WASHINGTON STREET, HOBOKEN

Learn how you can help right here on the ground.
Sign-up for a pen-pal who is in detention.
Hear first-hand stories about the lives of those seeking refuge here.

“I am only one. But still I am one.
I cannot do everything. But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”
(Edward Everett Hale)

For more information, please contact office@allsaintshoboken.com

SHABBAT IN THE PARK

Join us for song, prayer and friends to welcome Shabbat!

Bring a Picnic Dinner (Kosher or Vegetarian, Please!) and We’ll Provide the Challah and Grape Juice!

Free and open to the community, special activities for families with children 5 and under. RSVP appreciated

FRIDAYS AT 6 PM

2018 Dates & Locations*

May 18 Church Sq. Park - Ice Cream Party! (All the Park & Willow)
Jun 8 Maxwell Place Park (3rd and the river)
Jun 22 Church Sq. Park
Jul 13 Van Vorst Park (Montgomery St. & Barrow in Jersey City)
Sept 7 USH - Pizza Party! (158 Park Ave.)

*Starts at 6pm unless otherwise noted

For more information, please contact ushpreschool@gmail.com