



It's our home . . .  
it's where we belong

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קונסוליה הכלליה של ישראל  
טורונטו

October 13, 2004

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to extend cordial greetings and convey best wishes to Shaarei Shomayim Congregation on the occasion of your 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation has served as a centre of Jewish life in the Toronto Jewish community. You provide individuals and families with the tools for the fulfillment of religious, educational, and social needs.

For three-and-a-half years now, the people of Israel have endured countless heinous acts of terrorism. As Israel currently battles against the forces of terror, it has never been more vital that the Jewish people, all over the world, stand as one. I know that Shaarei Shomayim Congregation stands with Israel, and that you continue to show solidarity by visiting Israel. I know that you will continue to inspire the community to greater commitments to Torah, the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Mazel Tov and best wishes on this special occasion.

Sincerely,

ו'א'קוב ברוש  
Ya'acov Brosh  
Consul General



קאנאדער יידישער קאנגרעס הקונגרס היהודי הקנדי

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS • CONGRÈS JUIF CANADIEN  
ONTARIO REGION

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8 Elul 5764

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National Vice-President  
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National Executive Director  
Pro-Tem  
MANUEL PRUTSCHE

It is with tremendous pleasure that we acknowledge the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Shaarei Shomayim synagogue and offer our sincerest congratulations on the contribution that your synagogue has made to the health and vitality of the Jewish community of Toronto.

The Jewish community of this city is blessed with an infrastructure that meets a variety of needs in a way that is envied by communities around the world. I cannot even begin to count the number of ethnic communities in this city who have approached CJC to express their admiration in the way in which our community conducts its business. They all ask the same question: how did you do it and how can we do it as well as you have?

The answer to the question is both simple and complex: look at synagogues like the Shaarei Shomayim. Look at how, over the course of decades, they have attracted volunteers of talent, distinction and commitment. Look at how they have strived to ensure that their Board of Directors continuously develops an understanding of the needs of the community – and then sets out to meet those needs in ways that are innovative and creative.

The world we live in today is very different from the world that saw the establishment of your shul. Much has changed, yet through the turbulent decades, at least one thing has remained constant: the special place that Shaarei Shomayim has made for itself as a place of prayer, study and consolation.

You are to be congratulated for all that you have accomplished. May you be strengthened to continue your important work.

Yours truly,

Joel Richler  
Chair  
Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region



October 13, 2004

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation  
470 Glencairn Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5N 1V8

Dear Friends,

It is a privilege for me to send greetings to everyone involved in the Shaarei Shomayim Congregation's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

From its beginnings in 1928 to its place today as a shining beacon in our midst, Shaarei Shomayim is a vibrant example of our collective commitment to the development of this great community and the modern State of Israel Bond. Your ongoing vitality is a testament to the values we all hold so dear, values that have allowed Judaism and Israel to flourish in the hearts and minds of so many.

I am reminded of the words of David Ben-Gurion, who once said in an address to the Israeli people, *"Whatever we have achieved is the result of the efforts of earlier generations no less than our own. It is also the result of unwavering fidelity to our precious heritage. At this moment, let us remember with love and appreciation the people who paved their way for later achievements."*

As we reflect on your 75 years of achievement, let this milestone also be a harbinger of great things to come!

ישר כח

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence A. Waller  
Executive Vice President



MIZRACHI PARTNERS IN TORAT YISRAEL

בקרית חם תשס"ד

August 24, 2004

Mr. Marvin Dorin  
75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee  
Shaarei Shomayim Congregation  
470 Glencairn Avenue  
Toronto, ON M5N 1V8

Dear Mr. Dorin,

On behalf of the Mizrahi Organization of Canada, Council, and all of our members, it is our pleasure to extend to Shaarei Shomayim our enthusiastic congratulations on your 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Over the years, Shaarei Shomayim has worked side by side with Mizrahi to host dinners and concerts, rallies, lectures and Shabbatonim, and of course our annual Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebrations. The space here is inadequate to list all of the many contributions that the synagogue, its lay leaders, and its Rabbis and professional staff have made to our Toronto Jewish community.

We wish you continued success to all the multifaceted elements that combine to form the valuable entity we call Congregation Shaarei Shomayim. May we have many opportunities to cooperate together on successful programs and events in the future.

Yours truly,

Jerry Tepperman  
Executive Director



June 10, 2003  
10 Sivan 5763

Maxine and I take great pleasure in extending our good wishes upon the 75th anniversary celebration of Shaarei Shomayim.

As we look back upon our years as part of this special congregational family, we realize the significant role it played in our lives. In addition to providing us with a special opportunity to serve one of Canada's major synagogues it provided us as well with many personal friendships which have lasted until today. Beyond that, representing as it does the pinnacle of Modern Orthodoxy in the Diaspora, Shaarei Shomayim clearly helped us meet the ultimate challenge of Aliya.

For all the above and more, we remain grateful.

Rabbi Emanuel Forman

הרב חיים אהרן שצקנוביץ  
Rabbi Chaim Sacknovitz  
44 Dell Park Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6B 2T6

From the Shaarei Shomayim 75<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Gala Concert (Jun. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003)

ערב ראש השנה  
Sept. 15, 2004

Dear Shaarei Shomayim Family,

Esther and I are delighted to extend our very best wishes to the entire Shaarei Shomayim community upon the celebration of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

This year marks the 35<sup>th</sup> year that I have had the pleasure of working at the shul. The years have passed quickly but the wonderful memories, the meaningful friendships and the *סיפוק נפש* (satisfaction) that I have had seeing dozens of children and their families become more committed to Jewish values and observance during that time have made our stay in Toronto very worthwhile.

It has been a unique privilege to have been able to contribute to the growth and development of the shul. The youth group, and the Minyan that developed from it, have produced a significant number of active leaders both in our shul and in the community. I am very honoured to have played a role in their lives. It is particularly exciting to participate in the Simchas of the second and third generations.

I am very proud to have been associated with Shaarei Shomayim over the years and am grateful for your continued support and friendship. May Shaarei Shomayim Congregation continue to be a leader of Modern Orthodoxy in Toronto and grow *מחיל אל חיל* - from strength to strength.

Mazel Tov!

Very best wishes,

*Chaim Sacknovitz*

Rabbi Chaim Sacknovitz

RABBI HENRY HOSCHANDER  
144 Shelborne Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M6B 2M6

Dear Friends:

I am not usually at loss for words. However, when asked to submit a congratulatory and "reflective" letter for your Diamond Anniversary Journal, I frankly did not know where to begin. How does one capsule 21 years of service to a Congregation within the span of several brief paragraphs? Obviously, a few brief observations will have to suffice.

I have often been asked: "What caused you to leave a thriving Orthodox Congregation in Rochester, N.Y., where you had previously been honoured with 'life tenure', to come to Toronto?" The answer is two-fold. The late Dr. Samuel Belkin, President of Yeshiva University requested that I do so, and, perhaps of greater consequence, when I visited the Synagogue's Shomosh and Chazzan Sheini at Sinai Hospital and saw a lovely young nurse comforting an elderly patient with a few well-chosen Yiddish remarks, I concluded then and there that this will be my and my family's home. I was never disappointed with my decision.

With G'd's grace, we were privileged to participate in Shaarei Shomayim's phenomenal growth from a membership of somewhat in excess of 800 to well over double that number. But more significant was the opportunity for me and my dear wife, Bea, to play a role in the spiritual development of the Congregation and the community. (Bea, as Pres. of the local orthodox Sisterhoods and National Vice-Pres. of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, and I, as President of the Toronto Vaad Horabbonim and President of the Canadian Rabbinic Cabinet of the State of Israel Bonds). In many respects, as Toronto's largest orthodox congregation, Shaarei Shomayim served as a role model for others by its well-attended Shabbat services, its vital Adult Education program, its multifaceted youth program, its Chevra Kadisha, etc., etc.

Yet, if asked, what stands out as the singular most rewarding aspect of my Rabbinic career at Shaarei Shomayim it was, and is, family and personal counseling to the ill, confined to hospital or home, to the bereaved, of the Synagogue tell me, "we miss you, Rabbi".

My prayer for Shaarei Shomayim's future echoes that of Moshe Rabbeinu after the dedication of the Tabernacle in the desert, 'Yehi Rotzon Sh'Tishrei Shechina b'maseh Y'deichem .....May it be G'd's will that His Presence rests in your midst'. Mazel Tov.

With warmest Torah greetings, I am

Sincerely

  
Henry Hoschander, Rabbi

From the Shaarei Shomayim 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert (Jun. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003)

הרב משה בן ציון דראטש  
RABBI MARK DRATCH

June 10, 2003  
יוני תשס"ג

Dear Friends,

What a thrill to wish you *mazel tov* on the occasion of the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Shaarei Shomayim. Not only does this occasion mark 75 years of physical growth from your humble beginnings on Christie Street, but it celebrates 75 years of spiritual development, community leadership, service to the greater Jewish community, and commitment to the State of Israel and world Jewry.

I am proud to have had the privilege of serving as rabbi of Shaarei Shomayim from 1992-1997. During those years I came to admire the passion and commitment of your leadership and congregation. During those years we shared many *simchas* as well as many sad events. During those years we davened together and learned together. During those years we continued to build a family, a *shul* and a community. I cherish those memories and the friendships that Sara and I forged during those years.

Shaarei Shomayim has served as a beacon for the Religious Zionist, Modern Orthodox world. Committed to Torah and Jewish traditional values, it has always been a warm, welcoming and nurturing home for all Jews of all backgrounds and commitments. Its rabbis, officers and congregants have always stood in the forefront of leadership and support for Jewish causes in the greater Toronto community as well as on the Canadian national scene and in Israel.

In my first sermon from your pulpit in June of 1992, I spoke about the concept of *kehillah* (community) and what makes up a *kehillah kedoshah* (holy community). I mentioned then that we can learn the secret of holiness and how to build a community that reflects this holiness from our prayers: "We sanctify Your Name in the world just as the angels sanctify It above, calling to one another saying, 'Kadosh' (holy)." The angels teach us that it is only by calling to one another, speaking to one another, sharing insights and ideas and dreams with one another that we sanctify God, and, ultimately, sanctify ourselves, our homes and our community. Shaarei Shomayim is indeed a *kehillah kedoshah* and its 75 proud and accomplished years reflect the hard work, commitment, financial support and personal participation of thousands of people, young and old, who shared their visions and who worked side by side to proclaim "Kadosh!"

"ואתם חזקו ואל ירפו ידיכם כי יש שכר לפעולתכם." (דברי הימים ב' ט"ז: 7)  
"Be you strong and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded."  
(II Chronicles 15:7)

Fondly,

  
Mark Dratch

From the Shaarei Shomayim 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert (Jun. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003)



# SHAAREI SHOMAYIM CONGREGATION

בס"ד

## MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

*Mena C. Shupak*

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Private Fax - 416 256-9548

### Assistant Rabbi

**YECHIEL GOLDBREICH**

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**MARILYN SOMERS**

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### Youth Director

**ROBIN EPSTEIN**

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### President

**SAM MOSKOWITZ**

### Vice-Presidents

**ELI DADOUGH**

**STEPHEN HANDELMAN**

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**JEFFREY HERTZ**

### Secretary

**TOM MOOS**

### Parnass

**PETER SEIDMAN**

### Gabbai

**GILBERT MILLER**

### Past Presidents

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**Jacob Marcus\***

**David Calner\***

**Louis N. Nadler\***

**Meyer W. Gasner\***

**Morris G. Goldenberg**

**Samuel J. Sable**

**Saul Sigler\***

**John D. Fienberg**

**Benjamin Kaminker\***

**Al G. Brown**

**Mark M. Gross\***

**Jeffrey Cohen**

**Archie Richmond**

**Louis W. Zeitman**

**Marvin Gerstein\***

**Bernard Green**

**Martin Sable**

**Melvyn A. Kay**

**Phillip H. Beinhaker**

**Sheldon I. J. Salzman**

**Alan J. Burger**

**Michael D. Goldrich**

**James M. Slavens**

**Bernard Kleinberg**

**Paul Herbert**



It is a great honour to chair the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee considering I did not grow up in Toronto or at the shul. For the past twenty years I have been a member of the synagogue and more recently served on the Board of Governors for the past three years. I learnt much looking through our "archives" in the form of bulletins that span the years of our synagogue's existence. It helped me learn about our forefathers and how our shul came to be what it represents today. Speaking to some of the long-standing family members profiled, it was hard not to share their enthusiasm and learn more about the camaraderie that took place over the years.

The Board of Governors designated the period June 2003 through to October 2004 for our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The culmination of our Diamond Jubilee will be the Celebratory Dinner honouring our Past Presidents, on October 13, 2004. The synagogue was formally incorporated on November 28, 1935. In 1928 on McKay Avenue our shul had its humble beginnings.

Since our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, our shul has burnt its mortgage, but not its debts. We are striving to keep pace with the ever-changing society that we live in, maintaining our traditions, customs, spirituality, life cycle events, welcoming our youth and offering our hospitality to a host of our fellow Jews in Toronto. We are in the forefront of the Modern Orthodox Community and have a high standard to live up to. Our core function is "Beth Tefillah", the House of Prayer, the second function of the modern Orthodox Synagogue is "Beth Hamedrash", a House of Study, and the third function is the development and fostering of community action in its fulfillment as a "Beth Haknesset", a House of Assembly.

The name **Shaarei Shomayim** chosen by A. Aaron Goldenberg and the late Benjamin W. Goldenberg in 1934 was taken from the Neilah Service of Yom Kippur that reads:

**"שַׁעְרֵי שָׁמַיִם פֶּתַח וְאַחֲרָךְ הַטּוֹב לָנוּ תִּפְתָּח "**

**"Open Thou the Gates of Heaven; open Thy goodly treasure for us".**

The late Pearl Goldenberg, mother of Merle Young and Dr. Leon Goldenberg, gave the English spelling.

The summer of 2004 will be remembered by my fellow volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this anniversary celebration an event and a memory for all to enjoy. Thank you all for sacrificing so many daylight hours during the vacation season. I could never have undertaken this task without your help and support.

*Mena C. Shupak*

Mena C. Shupak  
Chair, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee

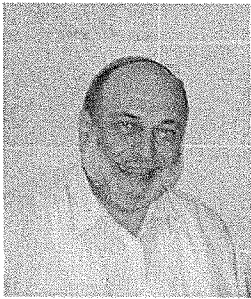
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**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
**Sam Moskowitz**

*A Diamond In The Rough*



An anniversary is generally defined as a day set aside by an exact number of years from some past event.

This year is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Congregation is used in the Bible to denote the people of Israel. In this particular instance in its sacred capacity we are called the ha-edah, the Congregation. We are in fact the “קהילת קודש שערי שמים”, the holy assembly of Shaarei Shomayim.

The synagogue has become the most important institution in Judaism, since the destruction of the Temple.

We all come to the Synagogue to pray and to talk to Hashem, every day of the year. It is our spiritual centre. After the destruction of the Temple the prayer services have become a substitute for the daily sacrifices.

Our Shul is not only for prayers, but is there to be used for the celebration of Life Cycle “Events”. These include Weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, Bat Mitzvahs, Circumcisions, Baby Namings, Sheva Brachat, and on sad occasions for a funeral.

We are a Modern Orthodox Congregation, striving to learn more Torah, observe more mitzvot, and practice more Chesed and Derech Eretz.

On behalf of myself and my senior officers I thank the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee headed by Mena Shupak for not only creating a wonderful exhibit, but also an informative souvenir book and a great memorable evening of October 13, 2004.

I wish the Shul and its membership continued success, growth and expanding horizons in its next 25 years.



הרב משה יצחק שולמן

Rabbi Moshe Y. Shulman

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation  
470 Glencairn Ave. ♦ Toronto, ON ♦ M5N 1V8

בס"ד

Happy 75<sup>th</sup> to a Very Special Congregation!

It is with great pleasure that I bring you greetings and words of brocho on this special occasion of the celebration of Shaarei Shomayim's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation has a proud and illustrious history, and an equally wonderful and dynamic future ahead. It is one of the leading Synagogue's in the Toronto Jewish community, if not in all of Canada, and it is easy to see why this is so, when one looks at the Synagogue's character and values.

The Synagogue's commitment to the State of Israel and to the ideals of religious Zionism is second to none.

Equally praiseworthy is its commitment to the wellbeing and strength of the Toronto Jewish community, with many of its members serving as leaders in the Jewish community as a whole, and active participants in the Jewish communal organizations of Toronto on all levels.

The Synagogue's unique expression of religious tolerance on the one hand, and spiritual growth on the other, has helped hundreds of families find a place for themselves within the Orthodox community that they would not otherwise have found.

And it's commitment to adult education and youth programming has made it a leading full-service synagogue, in which people of all ages and all walks of life can find a place to feel comfortable Jewishly and grow spiritually.

Our Sages tell us, in Ethics of our Fathers, *70 is the age of understanding. 80 is the Age of Strength.* Shaarei Shomayim, at age 75, is indeed a place of wisdom and understanding, Torah learning and dynamic religious life, as well as a place where the strength and future of the Jewish community can be felt. Throughout its 75 year history, the Synagogue has stood as a central pillar in the Toronto Jewish community. With G-d's help, its next 75 years of history will take it to even greater heights, and greater achievements.

I am extremely proud to have been the spiritual leader of this congregation for the past 7 years, and look forward to many more years working with the wonderful families that make up this very special community.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Moshe Shulman



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Shaarei Shomayim Congregation is a member of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America

## *A Brief History of Shaarei Shomayim*

In 1928, the first congregation, known as B'nai Jacob, was founded on McKay Street. A number of pioneering souls who moved "north" from downtown then established the Hillcrest Congregation in 1931, holding services first at the St. Clair-Robina Hall and then at the Talmud Torah at 563 Christie Street. In 1934 the name



Talmud Torah at 563 Christie St.



840 St. Clair Ave. West

Shaarei Shomayim was chosen

and a committee was struck to find proper accommodations for the growing Congregation. They succeeded in purchasing the lot at 840 St. Clair Ave W. The basement was completed and High Holiday Services were held there in 1936. Joseph

Kofman was elected first President and in appreciation of his work as a "Founding Father" he was made Honourary President upon retirement from this office.

Dr Judah Washer became Rabbi in 1944 following Rabbi Monson's departure and Lou Nadler was President from 1945-1951. Under their leadership, the basement Synagogue was expanded. Shaarei Shomayim was the first shul in Toronto to build a Talmud Torah building together with the Main Sanctuary and the first to establish a Nursery and Kindergarten. The appointment of Cantor Nathan Adler in 1950 brought added warmth and dignity to the services.

In 1953 Dr Walter S. Wurzbarger became spiritual leader. Under his influence the educational opportunities at the Synagogue widened with classes for adults and teens and special study groups. Additionally, outstanding scholars and lecturers were regular guests.

With the new emphasis on youth programs and many other simultaneous activities, facilities

soon became inadequate. During the administration of Meyer W. Gasner from 1951 - 54, Shaarei Shomayim assumed a more leading role in communal affairs and the idea of a Youth Centre was conceived. The ground breaking took place in 1958 under the Presidency of Morris G. Goldenberg. The architect was our own Ben Kaminker. In 1960, Mr Philip Zucker was appointed Baal Koreh – a position he would hold for 40 years!

Under the Presidency of Sam Sable, activities continued to expand. However, the Jewish population was moving further north and during the tenure of Saul Sigler, first steps towards relocation were taken. The current 2.5-acre site was acquired during the Presidency of John D. Fienberg and the first sod was turned in 1964. A ceremony moving the Torah scrolls from St. Clair to the new Glencairn building took place in Sept 1966. Services continued on St. Clair, however, until the building was ultimately sold in 1970.



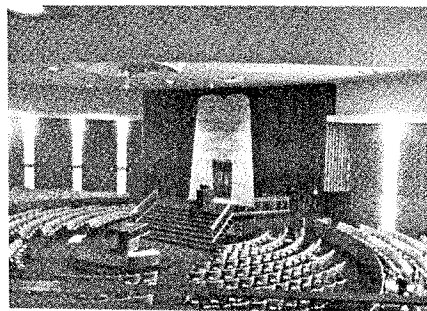
Ground Breaking  
at Glencairn Location

Rabbi Wurzbarger moved to the USA during 1967 and Rabbi Emanuel Forman was appointed spiritual leader later that year. The move to the new location, however, was not without its problems. It was hard to maintain a daily minyan and membership didn't grow as expected. On the contrary, membership fell causing the shul huge financial worries. However during 1968 – 1971, this was overcome and the Congregation neared the 800 family mark.

During his tenure, Rabbi Forman started what was then a bold initiative – the dancing on the front lawn of the shul with the Torah scrolls on Simchat Torah.

Al G. Brown, the President in 1972 faced a new set of challenges with the departure of Rabbi Forman for Israel and the illness and retirement of Cantor Adler. Rabbi Henry Hoschander and Cantor Harold Klein were appointed that year and Mark Gross was elected President.

Under the Presidency of Jeff Cohen in 1975, Shaarei Shomayim reunited with the Beth Israel Congregation and that name was perpetuated in the chapel. In 1978 under the Presidency of Archie Richmond, the shul celebrated its Golden Jubilee. As part of the celebration, the mortgage on the Glencairn building was burned! Another reason to



The Sanctuary

celebrate was the appointment of Myer Dorn as Executive VP for the shul. Myer became a stalwart of the shul making it his second home and helping to make it a home for all members.

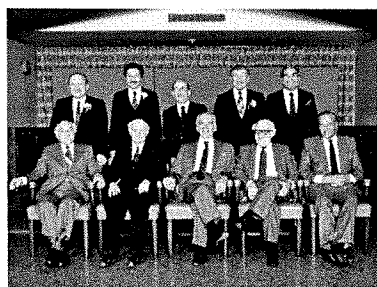
The shul amalgamated with the Dovercourt Shul-Machzikei Bnei Yisroel in 1981 during the Presidency of Dr. Marvin Gerstein. The shul continued its growth and by 1986 under the Presidency of Martin Sable, membership reached 1,350 families.

1982 saw the first of the successful Annual Weekend Retreats at Maple Lake in Muskoka, which were organized by Sam Rosen and Ruby Ezekiel. Each successive year featured a different Rabbi Scholar in Residence during the week- end of study and socializing.

Lou Zeifman became President a second time in 1987. Cantor Klein who had led a very successful choir of adults and youth retired in 1990. In 1992 Rabbi Hoschander retired and was succeeded by Rabbi Mark Dratch. During Rabbi Dratch's tenure, women started the Rosh Hodesh Program and for the first time were given a Sefer Torah to dance with on Simchat Torah. Additionally, Rabbi Dratch pioneered the Pray and Learn Service in 1995, which has been drawn worshippers from varied backgrounds ever since.

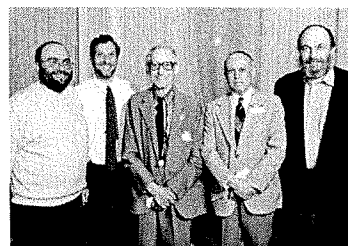


Rabbi Dratch left the shul in 1997 to return to Connecticut and Rabbi Howard Sacknovitz presided over the upstairs congregation for the High Holidays of that year. In August 1997, Yaakov Motzen was appointed Chazzan and in December 1997, Rabbi Moshe Shulman became spiritual leader of Shaarei Shomayim. The Banquet Hall was refurbished during 1997 in large part due to the fund raising



Some Past Presidents

efforts of Benny Stark.

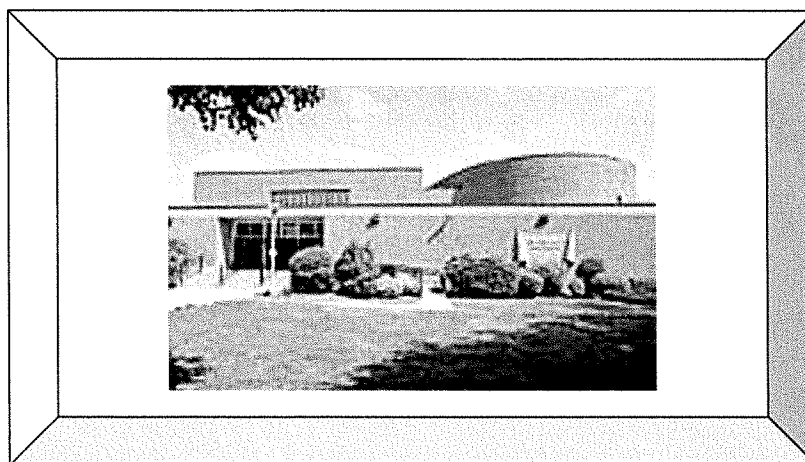


The Morning Minyan  
Committee - 1998

Mr Philip Zucker who had been the

Baal Koreh and Bar Mitzvah teacher at the shul all this time retired in 2000 and Ralph Levine joined the shul as Shammass

and Baal Koreh in February 2002. In April 2002, Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger passed away. Due to the growing work load for the Rabbi, Rabbi Yechiel Goldreich was appointed as assistant Rabbi in September 2002.



In 2003/4, Shaarei Shomayim celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

*May it continue for many years to come.*

## HIGH FASHION Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1967



Alma Waldman as  
moderator and Florance  
Reiber as model



Toby Verman  
as model



Beautiful and talented  
The Night's Entertainment - 1967



Brotherhood 1998



*President*  
**MICHAEL BERNSTEIN**

*1st Vice-President*  
**IAN TWEYMAN**

*2nd Vice President*  
**ORVIN ZENDEL**

*Treasurer*  
**IRWIN WOODROW**

*Recording Secretary*  
**MYER BOLDES**

*Corresponding Secretary*  
**JERRY GENESOVE**

*Immediate Past-President*  
**ELLIOTT DALE**

*Honourary Treasurer*  
**BENNY STARK**

## SHAAREI SHOMAYIM BROTHERHOOD

470 GLENCAIRN AVENUE, TORONTO, CANADA M5N 1V8

OFFICE: (416) 789-3213 FAX: (416) 789-1728

E-MAIL: info@shomayim.org

website: www.shomayim.org

בס"ד

It is with joy that the Brotherhood participates in celebrating the Shaarei Shomayim congregation's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Although the synagogue has grown, moved and developed in many ways, for the past 60 years the Brotherhood's commitment to the congregation has remained constant. We have responded to the physical needs of the congregation by assisting in fundraising to renew and improve the synagogue, including recently the chapel, the parking lot, and the McCowan Road Cemetery. We have also tried to respond to some of the social and educational interests of the congregation. These interests have changed over the years, and with them, so have the Brotherhood's programs. In years gone by, the Brotherhood sponsored a bowling league and weekly Sunday morning breakfasts. In the beginning, our annual draw was limited to 100 tickets and the grand prize was a Cadillac. We no longer bowl. The number of Sunday morning breakfasts has shrunk, but the size of our annual draw has grown significantly. The Brotherhood's annual picnic, which has existed for over 40 years, has remained much the same, although we have recently introduced chicken dogs and beef burgers, much to the chagrin of traditionalists.

Over the past number of years, the Entertainment and Cultural Connection, in cooperation with the Brotherhood, has sponsored a continuing series of lectures on a variety of interesting contemporary topics. These lectures have been a great success. Through the years, our commitment has extended beyond the synagogue into the larger community; and we have helped a variety of schools and community charitable organizations.

While our past initiatives represent a fine history, the legacy of which we are the most proud of is not a tangible one. The history of the Brotherhood is, first and foremost, a history of cooperation and friendship. Over the decades, generations of members have regularly met and have pitched in together as 'brothers' to help sustain the synagogue. The commitment to the Brotherhood has been passed from father to son. In reflecting on our past, we look forward to the future.

The Shaarei Shomayim has always been a warm and welcoming place. It has grown to be one of the largest modern orthodox synagogues in Canada. On this important occasion, the Brotherhood congratulates Past Presidents, who through their skill and commitment, have made the Shaarei Shomayim the very special place it is.

Yours truly,  
*Michael Bernstein*

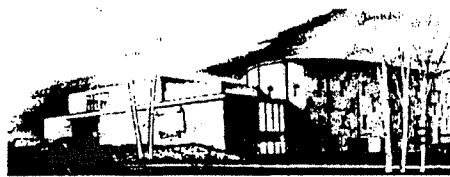
Michael Bernstein, Brotherhood President



Shaarei Shomayim Picnic - June 86



Play rehearsal  
The drama group 1977



## SHAAREI SHOMAYIM SISTERHOOD

470 GLENCAIRN, TORONTO, ON. M5N 1V8  
OFFICE: (416) 789-1728

ב"ה

The Shaarei Shomayim Sisterhood is pleased to participate in this 75th anniversary celebration as we honour the men who have served the Congregation as President.

Throughout the years, the Sisterhood has actively supported the Synagogue programs in addition to our own activities.

In the past, our members have raised funds for the Synagogue by having teas, fashion shows, musicals, Hebrew calendars and donation cards.

Although our numbers have dwindled, we still meet regularly with very interesting luncheon programs.

We wish the President, Sam Moskowitz, his Officers and Board all the best for the coming years.

Sincerely,

*Ruth Fruitman*

Ruth Fruitman, President,  
Shaarei Shomayim Sisterhood.



Mary Swartz installed as Sisterhood president by R. Wurzbürger z"l - 1963



Sisterhood president Mary Swartz and members - 1963



Sisterhood 1998



Alma Waldman installed as Sisterhood president by R. Wurzbürger z"l - 1959

## Greetings from the Entertainment & Cultural Committee By Jerry Genesove

It all started in 1984. My wife offered to run an Entertainment & Cultural program at the shul. It's surprising to realize that we are still doing it 20 years later. We started with a magician, Steve Shrott. Then Dr. Izzy and Batya Eisen spoke about "Bringing up a Husband Jewishly on two Continents," where Izzy described his work at Laniado Hospital in Israel. We were delighted when 103 people came. Subsequent topics ranged from "Jews in Prison", a series on Zionist leaders by Gerry Ziedenberg, who talked on Jews in Arab Lands and Jewish customs around the world, Alan Feld spoke on Syrian Jews, Dr Joel Miller on "From Toronto's Yorkdale Mall to China's Great Wall", Professor David Novak on "Jewish Attitudes towards Christianity throughout the Centuries", to Rabbi Moshe Stern on "When is non-violence a sin", Ralph Wintrob in an interview with Saadia Gaon and the Comedy Guys with Sam Rosen z"l and Norm Winkler and many more programs.

We are proud of our yearly Shpeelers program in support of Jews for Judaism sparked by Leslie Train, Shayne Train, Josh Charlat, Martin Zatzman and other talented musicians. As a result of their work, Jews for Judaism has been able to continue many of its vital programs combating missionaries and keeping Jews Jewish. Brotherhood has given its support, leaving me proud to be a member of the Brotherhood and Sandra and myself proud to be members of Shaarei Shomayim.

Special thanks to all the members of our committee who are always available to help set up.

Mazel Tov to Shaarei Shomayim on its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, may we go from strength to strength.

## *Samuel J. Sable*



How fortunate Shaarei Shomayim has been in having a member like Sam Sable – a man who has devoted his life to helping other people and having a lifelong commitment to preserving Jewish family life and values.

Sam was born in Russia and with his parents, and siblings came to Canada in 1912, where they settled in Winnipeg. In 1921 they moved to Toronto. Sam was educated at York Street School and McCaul School. He started at the University of Toronto but after almost two years had to leave to get a job as it was the depression. He started as a clothing salesman, but subsequently he became involved in real estate.

In 1936 Sam married Jean Finer, and they had three children – Marlene, Martin and Heather, all married and they have 5 grandsons. The grandchildren and great grandchildren are the light of Sam's life and he adores them and is adored by them in turn.

The Sables joined Shaarei Shomayim in 1943. When asked why he became so active, he explained that they lived at Collegeview and Eglinton and on Rosh Hashanah he took his son Martin, who was just seven years old, to Shul with him. It was a long walk for a little boy and when they got there, he wasn't allowed in the Sanctuary. The ruling then was that children under nine years of age were not allowed to attend the Adult Service. Sam expressed his feelings in no uncertain terms at the general meeting: the next thing he knew he had been appointed to the Board of Governors.

Sam with his wife Jean made a trip to Israel in 1956 and stopped off in Paris, France, to join up with the American U.J.A. Mission to Israel to gain some first hand experience of the mission. After arrival to Israel, Sam met with Prime Minister Ben Gurion and of course was impressed and said "If you could have been with me, when I had the privilege of an interview with David Ben Gurion, you would have received a vital clue to the wellspring of his youthful strength. To hear this great man, whose life is the very epitome of the struggle and achievements of the young State, is to feel the electric shock of courage and the unshatterable confidence in the future, that is the mark of a young people." This meeting took place almost on the eve of the Sinai Campaign. What a wonderful experience for Sam, who was the one who subsequently started the program for U.J.A. missions to Israel.

In 1955 when the new Youth Centre was built adjacent to the shul on St. Clair Ave., Sam was the Chairman of the Buildings and Planning Committee. It was felt that this building would be a rallying point for the children of the Congregation, offering them a fine gymnasium, meeting rooms, lounges and offices. 1956 saw Sam being elected President of

the Congregation. It was felt that the dynamic leadership he had shown demonstrated his enthusiasm as a leader and volunteer worker. That same year he received "The Man of the Year Award" in recognition of the able and aggressive qualities displayed by him in the vital post of General Chairman in one of the most critical campaigns ever undertaken by the U.J.A. The outstanding success of the campaign was a measure of the moral obligation Sam feels for his fellow Jews.

Jean and Sam were honoured by the Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University at a tribute dinner to establish the Samuel J. and Jean Sable Chair in Jewish family social work at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University.

When it came to fund raising Sam always looked for ways that would interest people and make giving a little easier. With that thought in mind, when he got involved with the arrival of the Israel Bonds in Canada, he brought Jack Benny to Toronto as a violin soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at a fund raising concert in aid of Israel Bonds. At another fund raising event – the opening of the Downtown YMHA at Bloor and Spadina, he arranged for Bob Hope to appear as a guest for that function. Bob Hope then took time to look over the plans of the new Shaarei Shomayim on Glencairn Avenue.

Sam Sable was involved in so many different ways, but who will ever forget Shemini Atzeret just after the Yom Kippur War. He and Jean were away at Grossingers when he received a call from Al. G. Brown asking if he would come back and make a plea for funds for Israel at this crucial time in its history. There was only four days to organize it and the passionate speech he made persuaded members to keep raising their pledges. It was truly a memorable time, one that is still remembered to this day. He was allotted twenty minutes for his pitch but because the congregation kept increasing its commitments, he had taken up one hour and forty five minutes.

There are so many more organizations that the Sables were involved with... too many to list. In 1958 he was the recipient of the President's Award from the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. This Gold Medal was given annually to leaders throughout North America for outstanding service to the Jewish Community.

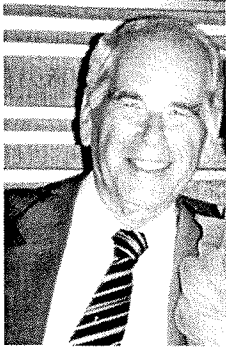
There is so much more to write about Sam, but unfortunately this book does not have enough pages to mention all his accomplishments, including being one of the founders of CHAT and his involvement in assembling all the parcels of land and houses so that the new Shul could be built.

Sam is a man who has provided exceptional service to both the Jewish Community and the State of Israel. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation is proud and honoured to have been associated with him for so many years.



## Benjamin Kaminker

Benjamin Kaminker, z"l, was a wonderful man – a mild, unassuming individual, devoted to Shaarei Shomayim, but firm in the spirit of his convictions. This was evident when he was appointed architect for the new shul to be built on Glencairn Avenue.



Ben was a partner in one of Canada's top architectural firms. He was the only Jewish partner in that company and the second Jewish architect to graduate from the University of Toronto. Throughout his career he was highly respected by his colleagues and associates for his wisdom, ingenuity and integrity.

When it came to designing the shul, Ben worked tirelessly with numerous committees evaluating the needs of the Congregation and always felt that the relocation of the shul was the reason for its survival. He worked closely with Rabbi Wurzbarger, who during the initial planning was adamant that a traditional shul must be built according to the dictates of halacha. Ben always felt that the building merged perfectly the requirements of halacha with modern concepts of aesthetics. He also used to record with pleasure that the plans of the building were approved by the members without a single dissenting vote at the Special General Meeting, which was the best attended meeting ever held at the shul.

Ben never charged for the hundreds of hours he personally devoted to the job. When the shul was being built, he would go to the site every morning before going to the office. The shul was a labour of love for Ben Kaminker, for he was a true builder in both a spiritual and a physical sense.

In 1968 Ben was elected President of the Congregation. His family was very proud of him and felt that it was a major achievement. The shul prospered under Ben's leadership. He organized a package deal for young families joining the shul, which is still used today with great success.

Shaarei Shomayim was always very important to the Kaminker family. Ben's wife Freda z"l, wrote a monthly column about the Sisterhood in the shul bulletin. Ben left an enviable and priceless legacy to his sons David, Andrew and Harry, and his daughter in law Sandra. David and Andy have both worked on various shul committees and have taken their place in areas of leadership. David was not only President of the Brotherhood, but was President of the Council of Jewish Brotherhoods of Toronto. He was also elected a Vice-President of the Congregation. Andy was a President of the Brotherhood and worked on many committees. The Kaminker family funded the refurbishing of the Chapel with David and Andy both involved in the planning and implementation of the project.

The Kaminker family can look with pride at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, built by a group of people whose ideals and philosophy inspire us all to this day.





## Brenda Gasner Lass

Around Shaarei Shomayim the name Meyer Gasner is legendary. To many the shul is what it is because of him and a few others like him.

Brenda Gasner Lass has been living with that legend all her life. It guides her and energizes her, she says. Her earliest childhood memories are walking with Zeide Meyer and a sibling or two over the “scary” Cedarvale bridge on the way to Shabbat services at the old St. Clair Avenue shul, hustling to keep up on three-, four- and five-year-old legs and beyond. “We used to live a long way away, so staying over Shabbat with Grandma and Zaide Gasner was the biggest treat,” Brenda recalls.

Once she got to shul she had the run of the building: “I went to have fun with my friends and I guess we got to know every inch of the building in the process.” After shul there were always additional people making the trek back, and when they got home there was always a big kiddush laid out on the dining room table.

When the shul moved to Glencairn Avenue, Brenda was already a teenager. But the Shabbat routine never changed. Shul day was friends day, and Shabbat afternoon was sometimes NCSY afternoon, and Motzei Shabbat occasionally had something as well. Even as a teen, says Brenda, her whole life revolved around the shul. “Of course my parents were involved, too,” Brenda said. “But that’s not what I remember about growing up in Shaarei Shomayim. It was my Zeide’s name, the respect he and his name commanded. To me he was superhuman, larger than life.”

So when her turn came, after she was married and moved into the Shaarei Shomayim area, “even though it was too expensive a house for its size at the time for us, I couldn’t imagine us living anywhere else.” In fact, her whole family is within walking distance of the shul, and every single family lifecycle event – weddings, baby namings, brises, bar/bat mitzvahs, whatever – is all still centred around the shul. But more than that, “I wanted the shul to be for my children what it was for me – a safe, secure and sacred place for them to play, pray, meet friends, and socialize,” says Brenda. And that is exactly what she got.

It was only natural, after participating as a family in all the shul programs available, that husband Brian was asked to sit on the Board, and that she was asked to take on a shul responsibility, in her case chairing the Bat Mitzvah program that grew to include 19 girls doing classes, volunteer service, arts and crafts, and visits to Jewish communal institutions. The program concluded with a Shabbat dinner that brought up to 350 people together to celebrate the girls’ coming of age.



Meyer Gasner with grandchildren -  
Myra, Robert & Brenda

And now, Brenda’s own children are following in their great-Zeide’s footsteps. “It’s all their own choice,” Brenda says, “just as it was all my choice. No one pushed us.” Son Jordan, for example, attends the Youth Minyan and looks after the kiddush afterwards, lays when asked, leads preteen services, and helps with other youth programs as needed.

“I feel that we’re doing all these things because of Zeide Meyer. Creating a viable and enduring Jewish community meant everything to him. I think he would be so proud to see us all following in his footsteps.”

“I’m always meeting people who ask me if I’m related to Meyer Gasner,” Brenda says. “They are so awed when I say I am. Never mind them. It makes me feel so special that I can carry on his legacy. He would be so proud to see how what he started has grown and prospered. Creating a proud Jewish community is what he was all about. And that’s the flame I hope my family and I can keep alive for him.”



## ❁ Charles Anthony ז"ל ❁



Still in his Canadian Army uniform before demobilization in 1946, Charles entered Shaarei Shomayim, which was then only a basement, and heard Rabbi Washer give a sermon. He had been searching for a congregation, which was orthodox, but with modern ideas and decorum and he had found one. Given his administrative background, he was offered the job of Office Director and thus became the very first one at the end of 1947. He worked closely with many of the “builders” of our congregation – Lou Nadler, Max Sharp, and Meyer Gasner to name just a few.

As the shul was being built his son John used to ride around in the basement, on a tricycle given to him by Goldie Gasner. John watched as the building took shape above him. He made good use of it later attending Bar Mitzvah Club, Youth Groups, Cubs and Scouts.

And I suppose we could blame Charles for the founding of the nursery at Shaarei Shomayim as upon the birth of his daughter Marilyn, he and Lotte insisted that a nursery be set up to allow young parents to attend High Holiday Services.

Charles served on the Board for many years, holding the position of Secretary for many years and later as Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. Ironically, his son John cost the shul a goodly sum. During his Bar Mitzvah, he was corrected twice in the same place while reading the Torah. John pointed out that he was simply reading what was written as he hadn't memorized his parshah. And to the surprise of all there, they found that he had, indeed, found a mistake in the scroll. Rabbi Wurzburger, in his address to the Bar Mitzvah boy, pointed out that it was probably the costliest Bar Mitzvah to be held thus far at the shul! No doubt that was a budget item that Charles had not counted on.

The life of his young family revolved to a great extent around the synagogue. Both John and Marilyn attended the Sunday School and the Talmud Torah, the Shabbat Junior services and the various Youth activities. “I think that basically I was either at Public School, at home or at the Shul during my youth,” says Marilyn. “After all, back then Talmud Torah was after school daily from Monday to Thursday and then again on Sunday morning. I'd simply stay on after Hebrew school for Brownies or Guides and on Sunday stay on for the Youth Groups. And, of course, I walked to shul every Shabbat with my Dad – then it seemed such a long way.”

Charles was a stalwart of fund raising both for the synagogue and for Jewish and Israeli causes in general. He was determined to stay a foot soldier although he did agree to lead the shul's Israel Bond Drive in 1977.

If there is one thing that Charles would want to be remembered for, it was his struggle, won only with his passing, to have a system whereby the Cohanim could be inside the shul for funeral services instead of having to stand outside in the rain or snow. It is due to his incredible patience and determination that despite numerous debates on the subject, it is now accepted that the coffin stays outside and the Cohanim come inside.

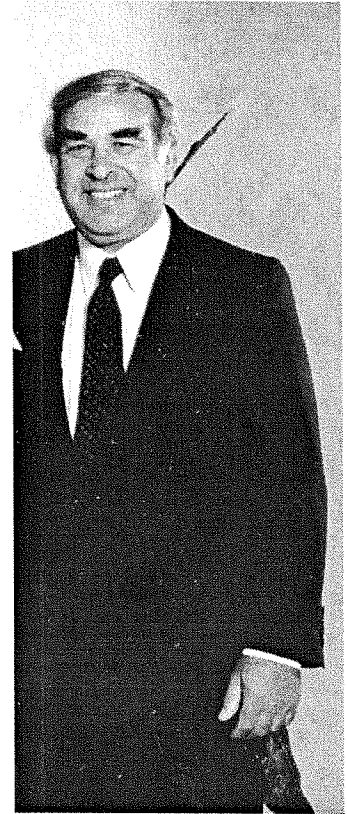




## ❁ Jeff Cohen ❁

"I suppose you could say that I married into Shaarei Shomayim when Rabbi Washer married Dodi and myself." But Jeff did not become actively involved with our shul until he started to walk home from Shabbat services with Rabbi Wurzburger who happened to be his neighbour. In fact, Jeff was sandwiched between two regular Shabbat walkers, the Rabbi and Charles Anthony who lived just on the other side of him, so he probably had little choice in the matter.

Those walks greatly influenced the rest of his life as they motivated Jeff to start studying about Judaism, which he did by himself during the week and then together with Rabbi Wurzburger on Shabbat afternoons. From there he started a life of volunteer work with Shaarei Shomayim, first serving on the Board during the time of the move from St. Clair to Glencairn and then for many, many years as the Secretary. He recalls very well the day that he received a call from Ben Kaminker asking him, out of the blue, whether he would be willing to serve as President. "What I did when I hung up the phone, was, I sat around the family table downstairs and told them what it was about and said that if I say yes, it means that they will not see me for 2 years! And if any of them object, I won't mind and I'll just say no. But they all encouraged me to take it." Since the end of his term in 1976, Jeff has stayed actively involved with the synagogue.



One of Jeff's actions as Youth Chair has had a long lasting effect on Shaarei Shomayim and that was the employing of a then, young Rabbi from Hamilton – Rabbi Howard Sacknovitz. After hiring him for our shul, Jeff was also instrumental in helping him get an interview at the Associated Hebrew Schools where he has been since, thus ensuring that he would stay in our city for the long-term.

A highpoint of his time at the shul was the relationships he was able to form with our Clergy. Although he served as President to only one Rabbi, Rabbi Hoschander, Jeff has stayed in touch throughout the years with the late Rabbi Wurzburger, Rabbi Forman and Rabbi Dratch even after they had all left Toronto. And if our various Rabbis saw themselves as being the "managers of the team" Jeff, in his role of President, saw himself as the "owner of the team", thus representing the interests of all the members. In his opinion, all the Rabbis brought different skill sets to the shul and each enriched us in his own unique way.

He looks upon the resolution of the issue of the mechitzah in the chapel downstairs as an important aspect of his Presidency. He laughs about it since he recalls, during one of his walks home with Rabbi Wurzburger, being asked to speak at an upcoming meeting in support of the Rabbi's wish for a mechitzah in our new shul on Glencairn. "I walked home repeating mechitzah, mechitzah, mechitzah the entire time under my breath. I got into the door of the house and turned to Dodi, asking "what is a mechitzah?"

Well, Jeff certainly knows what it is now!



## ❁ Marvin Donin ❁



A friendly suggestion, that's all it took, and four generations of the Donin family were hooked on Shaarei Shomayim.

Marvin Donin's dad Harry had just moved into the old Shaarei Shomayim neighbourhood and had some business dealings with Meyer Gasner, z"l, a shul leader already. "Why don't you join now that you're living in the area?" Gasner suggested.

The year was 1948, and the main floor sanctuary of the old St. Clair Ave. shul had just been completed. That High Holiday, the first in the new sanctuary, was also the Donins' first in the shul. They had to walk over loose cables and put up with temporary lighting, but there wasn't a building inspector in sight over the whole High Holiday period.

Within two years Harry was on the Board, was editing the shul bulletin, and was planning Adult Ed programs. He was responsible for the shul logo, having engaged the graphic artist who submitted the design that still identifies the shul to this day.

Marvin, a teenager when his family joined, became a willing member of the first confirmation class organized by Rabbi Washer. The next year he became a teacher's aide in the religious school. And at the first shul picnic way back then, the Donins were part of the father-son baseball challenge that was the highlight of the event.

To keep teens coming back, R. Wurzbarger organized a T'fillin Club followed by a discussion, held in the only available room Sunday mornings—the boiler room, where Marvin was the leader. That was followed by sports activities. Presidents-to-be who were part of that first T'fillin Club included Martin Sable, Mel Kay, and Bernie Green.

Marvin and his wife Karen became active in their own right in Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Karen participated in the annual Sisterhood musicals, which were the highlight of the shul social calendar in the '60's and '70's. Marvin was elected to the Board ... like father like son ... and chaired the Religious School and the Program committees.

When the shul moved to its new building on Glencairn Avenue in 1967, Marvin was the last one to hand over a Torah to Rabbi Wurzbarger to be placed in the new *Aron Kodesh*. When Rabbi Forman arrived, he urged the Board to have a shul Purim Seudah, and it was Marvin and two others who undertook to make the first one happen.

Why bother? As Marvin put it: "In those days there was always a new task, a new challenge. But there was also a lot of satisfaction getting the job done."

Daughter Cheryl was in the first Bat Mitzvah group that Rabbi Hoschander organized. Marvin's daughter Hyla was married in Shaarei Shomayim and there were times, Marvin says, when four generations were celebrating together a simcha or holiday in the shul.

Though Marvin now lives quite far from Shaarei Shomayim, he sticks to the shul.

"I've tried other shuls but," he reflects. "at Shaarei Shomayim I feel at home. It's where I belong." And to think it started with a friendly word. A suggestion. You just never know.



## Ted & Alma Waldman

Alma and Ted immigrated to Canada in 1951. They came with their daughters Anne and Susie, Alma's parents and Laddie the Irish Setter.

They arrived in Toronto a few weeks before Rosh Hashanah so their priority at the time was to find an orthodox shul. After visiting several, they were told, "why don't you go to the one on St. Clair Avenue". There, Charles Anthony, a fellow Englishman and office director of the shul greeted them. He said "Come on in, dues are \$37.50 a year and a reserved seat in the main sanctuary will cost you \$12.50 each". He didn't even bother to ask us to complete an application form; he was so pleased to have us join.

This was the beginning of an enduring and wonderful friendship that exists to this day. "Our family has made so many friends through our association with Shaarei Shomayim," said Alma.

Alma and Ted have generously given their time and talent for more than fifty-three years to the Toronto Jewish Community. The Waldmans' willingness to help wherever needed has led to their involvement in a broad range of activities.



Alma is Past President of the Shaarei Shomayim Sisterhood and led the Brownie Troup for several years. Along with Elaine Spring and Lil Reiss, she produced the annual Sisterhood plays, which consisted of Yiddish and English dramas and musical entertainment.

Ted served as President of the Shaarei Shomayim Brotherhood, sat on many committees, and has been a member of the Board of Governors for many years. Ted was elected the 18<sup>th</sup> President of Men's Service Group of the Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care when Baycrest celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> year in 1993. Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care honoured the Waldmans at a tribute dinner on October 27, 1996. Because of his close connection with Shaarei Shomayim, going back more than fifty years, Ted reached out to Shaarei Shomayim members to become active volunteers.

Ted and Alma served as Co-chairs for the Adult Education Committee for three years. They were responsible for bringing Rabbi Shlomo Riskin of the Lincoln Square Synagogue, New York, for a Great Weekend of exciting lectures in March 1980. Rabbi Dr. Moses D. Tendler, Professor of Biology at Yeshiva College of Y.U., a scientist of international reputation in cancer research and editor of *Medical Ethics* was guest lecturer at the Meyer W. Gasner Memorial Lecture in April 1980. Rabbi Heskell Lookstein also came for one of the Great Weekends.

The Waldmans served on the Golden Jubilee (1928-1978) Celebration Committee. Alma was Co-chair of the Publicity Sub-Committee as well as Co-chair with Ted for the Adult Education Sub-Committee. Alma and Ted also served on the Executive for the Golden Jubilee chaired by Sam Sable.

Ted and Alma are always seeking new challenges in community service. They currently serve on the shul's Diamond Jubilee Committee, the Souvenir Book, Dinner, and Exhibit Sub-Committees.

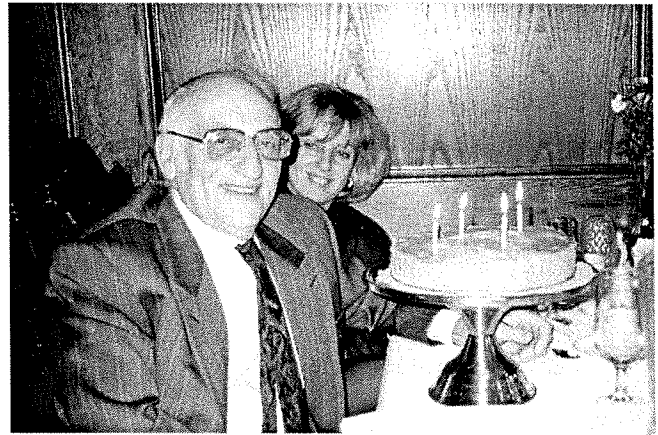
Ted and Alma's daughters were very active with the youth of our shul. Anne graduated as a Sunday school teacher before going to Stern College and Susie, as well as leading the Girl Guides, was very active with the conclaves and seminars of the Shul. At one youth seminar when they hosted young people from other Orthodox shuls, the guest scholar was Rabbi Shlomo Riskin who created such an impression on them that they stayed in the shul listening to him until the early hours of the morning. They were so fascinated with what he had to say that they couldn't wait to come back for breakfast at 9:00 a.m.

Yashar Koach to the Waldmans for their long-standing commitment to Shaarei Shomayim.



## ❁ Golda Brown ❁

You would imagine that in most cases children would be pleased when their parents were elected to high office. In fact, Golda was sad when her father was President simply because she “lost” him to shul affairs. She remembers the wonderful Shabbat relationship she had with her Dad, but once he became President, she felt she had to share him with the entire shul. Her father, Al G. Brown, worked many long hours for the shul. But despite her disappointment at losing her quality time with him, the lesson of volunteering was not lost on Golda. Having worked with Helen Kay in the Youth Groups on St. Clair and having helped run the nursery school downstairs on Glencairn, she graduated to serving on the Board for many years and on the Religious Committee.



Golda Brown and her father Al G. Brown

In fact, Golda was a driving force in the women's movement at Shaarei Shomayim, which led to the setting up of the Women's Rosh Chodesh program. “It was central to me because it was focusing on Rosh Chodesh which is a women's holiday plus it also brought together women from the upstairs and downstairs minyans. Unfortunately, some Rabbis outside of our shul told women that they should not come despite the fact that the shiurim and Rosh Chodesh davening was done in accordance to halacha and acceptable by the Rabbi of our shul.” The first year attracted large numbers of women but over time the numbers dwindled and the program was cancelled.

What has flourished, however, is the women's participation in our Simchat Torah celebrations. “One of the highlights of my life was the day Rabbi Dratch handed me the Sefer Torah. It was the most wonderful feeling in the world. I had many talks with Rabbi Dratch on the subject of women and their role in Orthodox Judaism.” In fact,

Golda feels that we gained a great deal from Rabbi Dratch's ability to direct women to many rabbinical sources and help us in the process of learning and “doing”, but still staying within our halachic framework.

Holding a Torah on Simchat Torah was not the only first in Golda's Shaarei Shomayim life. She was the very first girl to celebrate a Bat Mitzvah during services and she remembers it well. “I studied with Rebbetzin Wurzburger about the importance of women in Judaism. Then during the actual davening between Mincha and Maariv, I sat on the Bimah next to Rabbi Wurzburger and gave the D’var Torah in both English and Hebrew. This was followed by a dinner in the banquet hall.”

The St Clair shul holds many warm memories for Golda. She recalls when children were not allowed into the Sanctuary on the High Holidays and had to sneak in. “In those days, our parents had assigned seats and thankfully it was bench seating so, as little kids, we could squeeze in. We always sat in the same place, as did everyone else, so we knew each other and watched the families grow. And on Simchat Torah back then the children would march around the Sanctuary with flags crowned with apples and lit candles! Not to mention how we used to sneak up and tie together the shoelaces of the person reading the Megillah on Purim. Shul was a great deal of fun for a youngster then.”

One could say that our synagogue was pivotal to Golda’s life as it was at a Shaarei Shomayim Single’s Club which she organized with Marilyn Anthony and Jeanette Goldman that she met husband Harry Krakowsky.

Following in her mother’s footsteps, Golda’s daughter learned with Rabbi Dratch for her Bat Mitzvah, doing a D’var Torah to commemorate it. For two years Anna-Rachel ran the 3-5 year olds’ Shabbat Tefilah Group. Golda’s son, Yonah, ran the Youth Service and was involved in Bnei Akiva at Shaarei Shomayim.



## ❁ Dora Miller ❁

Ninety-two year old Dora Miller was raised on St. Clair Avenue W. Her family lived above their store two blocks west of Dufferin Street. On that particular block, all the stores were owned by Jewish families, except the fruit store that was owned by Italians, who got along well with their Jewish neighbours. Dora vividly remembers that they used to daven at the Rubin's house on Harvey Avenue. They later had services on McKay St. and then the services were moved for the High Holidays to the Robina Hall, above the liquor store.

At the time the Millers joined, in 1943, the Rabbi was Judah Washer and it was his wife who started the Sisterhood in order to get the women involved in shul life. Shaarei Shomayim was only a basement at the time with the Sanctuary and Talmud Torah being added in 1948.



Dora was married to Jack Miller in 1941. Her late husband was active on both the Board and the Executive of the Brotherhood. Her sons, Joel and Ted were in the T'fillin Club and took part in the youth activities. The Millers made many good friends through their association with the shul – friends Dora has to this day.

In addition to being a member of the Sisterhood, Dora was a member of the Friendship Club and participated in their art and exercise programs. She proved to be an excellent artist and her artwork is displayed throughout her apartment.

Her son, Joel, followed in the family tradition, becoming President of the Brotherhood and Chairman of the Brotherhood Draw, in addition to his service on the Decorum Committee. Her other son, Teddy, a doctor, has lived in Jerusalem for many years with his wife and family.



## ❁ Victor Sefton z"l ❁

Victor Sefton was born in Poland and raised in Britain, serving in the British Army for 5 years in Algeria, Tunisia, Palestine and Italy. His knowledge of spoken Hebrew while wearing a British Army uniform led to some interesting times for Vic!



Victor and his wife Edith emigrated to Montreal in 1950 shortly after the birth of their second son, Michael. After 2 years, they moved to Toronto and joined Shaarei Shomayim. Their daughter, Sarah, was born and the family settled down to a life filled with community activities.

Victor was elected to the Board of Governors of the shul and worked on numerous committees including the Bulletin of which he was the editor. He helped found the PTA of the Talmud Torah, was very active in the Jewish community, particularly in Jewish education and PNAI, and was also a strong supporter of the shul Adult Education Committee. Our wonderful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book was edited by Victor.

As a civil engineer, he was very much involved in the building of our own Shaarei Shomayim on Glencairn. In fact, it is thanks to Vic that we have the wonderful totally open area between the sanctuary and the banquet hall under the hanging balcony.

Their son Michael and his wife Cynthia are members of our shul, David helped found Sha'ar Shalom Synagogue in Thornhill and Sarah lives in Ma'ale Adumin Israel with her husband and family.





# *Shaarei Shomayim Klai Kodesh*



- |    |                                 |      |
|----|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Rabbi Dr. David Monson          | 1939 |
| 2. | Rabbi Judah Washer              | 1944 |
| 3. | Rabbi Dr. Walter Wurzbarger z"l | 1953 |
| 4. | Rabbi Emanuel Forman            | 1967 |
| 5. | Rabbi Henry Hoschander          | 1972 |
| 6. | Rabbi Mark Dratch               | 1992 |
| 7. | Rabbi Moshe Shulman             | 1997 |



5



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- |    |                                |      |
|----|--------------------------------|------|
| 8. | Mr. D. Goldberg z"l            | 1935 |
| 9. | Cantor Alexander Steinberg z"l | 1941 |



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Picture  
not  
available



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9

- |     |                         |      |
|-----|-------------------------|------|
| 10. | Cantor Nathan Adler z"l | 1950 |
| 11. | Cantor Harold Klein     | 1972 |
| 12. | Chazzan Yaakov Motzen   | 1997 |



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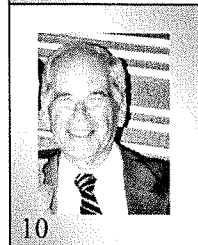
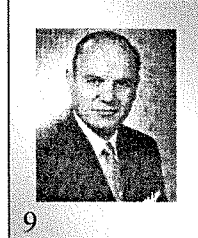
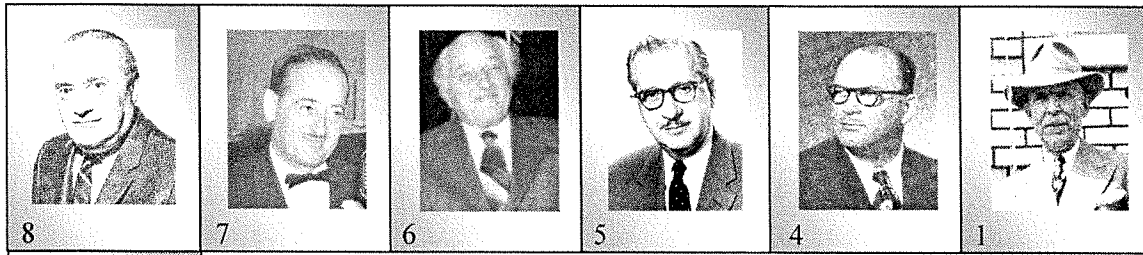


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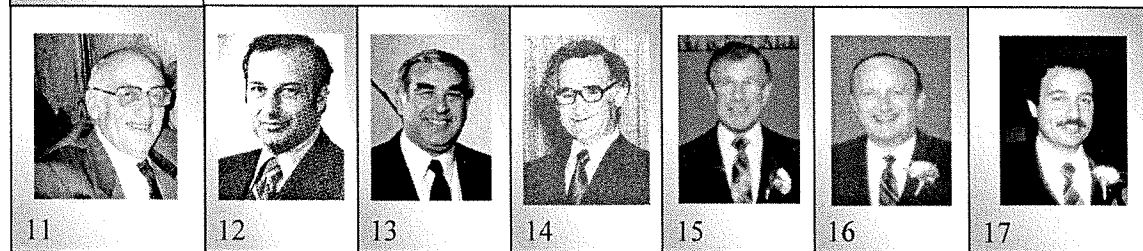


# *Shaarei Shomayim Presidents*



- |    |                      |                   |
|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Jacob Kofman z"l     | 1936-37 / 1938-43 |
| 2. | * Jacob Marcus z"l   | 1937-1938         |
| 3. | * David Cainer z"l   | 1943-1945         |
| 4. | Louis N. Nadler z"l  | 1945-1951         |
| 5. | Myer W. Gasner z"l   | 1951-1954         |
| 6. | Morris G. Goldenberg | 1954-56 / 1967-68 |
| 7. | Samuel J. Sable      | 1956-1959         |

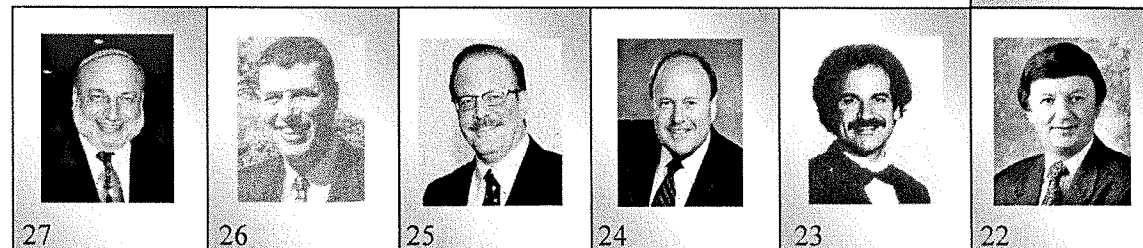
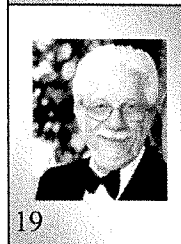
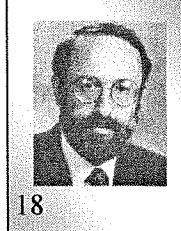
- |     |                       |           |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------|
| 8.  | Saul Sigler z"l       | 1959-1962 |
| 9.  | John D. Fienberg      | 1962-1967 |
| 10. | Benjamin Kaminker z"l | 1968-1970 |
| 11. | Al. G. Brown          | 1970-1972 |
| 12. | Mark M. Gross z"l     | 1972-1974 |
| 13. | Jeffrey Cohen         | 1974-1976 |
| 14. | Dr. Archie Richmond   | 1976-1979 |



- |     |                         |                   |
|-----|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 15. | Louis W. Zeifman        | 1979-81 / 1987-89 |
| 16. | Dr. Marvin Gerstein z"l | 1981-1983         |
| 17. | Dr. Bernard Green       | 1983-1985         |
| 18. | Martin Sasble           | 1985-1987         |
| 19. | Dr. Melvyn A. Kay       | 1989-1991         |
| 20. | * Philip H. Beinhaker   | 1991-1993         |
| 21. | * Sheldon I. J. Salcman | 1993-1994         |

- |     |                     |           |
|-----|---------------------|-----------|
| 22. | Alan J. Burger      | 1994-1996 |
| 23. | Michael D. Goldrich | 1996-1998 |
| 24. | James M. Slavens    | 1998-2000 |
| 25. | Bernard Kleinberg   | 2000-2002 |
| 26. | Paul Laurie Herbert | 2002-2004 |
| 27. | Samuel S. Moskowitz | 2004-     |

\* Pictures not available



## Benny Stark

Benny Stark joined Shaarei Shomayim when it opened on Glencairn Ave. He liked the type of service it offered and felt certain he would feel comfortable as a member.

Only one year after joining, he was invited to join the Board. He recalls Sid Greenstein, then Chairman and first V.P, visiting him at home and persuading him to take the position of House Chairman. Benny didn't know exactly what that would involve and was told that it meant coming in once in a while for half an hour just to see what was going on... nothing much else... so he accepted.

He quickly found out that doing a good job as House Chairman meant much more. And he was eager to do it and put his heart into it. He came to the shul almost daily and was "on-call" constantly, day or night. He was aware of all the shul's problems, small and large, and was involved in all aspects of managing the shul infrastructure, including building repairs, equipment, the custodial staff, maintenance inside and out etc...just as he is today. He always was and still is happy to do it.

Benny remembers the years in which he struggled to raise funds to pay off the \$500,000 mortgage on the Glencairn property. He organized parlour meetings in his and his friends' homes and he fondly remembers the great day when the bank's letter arrived announcing that everything was paid up – after which they celebrated with a huge party.

Benny also remembers working hard to increase shul membership when, at the time, there were only about 350 members. He speaks warmly when he recalls Ben Kaminker who was Membership Chairman. Together, they were determined to sign up new members and used the best strategies they could think of in consideration of people's financial situations including a "special" low fee of \$350 to join. And it worked. Three hundred new people joined in one year! He is still very proud of that.



Since then, Benny has been on every shul committee. He's been the Treasurer and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and has been a dedicated House Chairman for over thirty years. He personally hired tradesmen and supervised the renovations of the Chapel, the upstairs Banquet Hall, the downstairs Brotherhood Hall, as well as the Bride's Room. Benny also manages all safety procedures that are required for the security of the members. As everyone knows, he is deeply involved with every aspect of the shul and we know we can turn to him whenever anything – absolutely anything – has to be done.

Benny is proud of the shul, not of himself. He says simply that he does what he believes in, and does it with the best of his knowledge. He felt deeply honoured when the shul paid him the highest tributes on May 28, 1995 honouring him and his wife, Barbara, for their tireless efforts when they affixed a plaque in his honour in the lobby. But he was even more pleased with the fundraising efforts for that evening which garnered the sum the some of \$600,000.

Benny truly loves and believes in Shaarei Shomayim and it's obvious that we all feel the same about him.



## ❁ Lou Zeifman ❁

Interestingly enough, Lou, who served as President of Shaarei Shomayim not once, but twice, was actually one of the ten founders of a different shul – Shaarei Tefillah. “But this was because I lived up there at the time.” In fact, Lou had been involved with our shul since the 1940’s when his father was a member but only actually joined in the late 1960’s when he moved further south. At that time he davened at Torah Vavodah since our shul was still somewhat far away, although his son’s Bar Mitzvah took place at our St. Clair location. It was therefore a natural move to join Shaarei Shomayim when it moved to the Glencairn location.



“I became an Officer, the Parnes, in 1972 or 1973 and got kicked up to be the Vice President temporarily. My wife, Dorothy encouraged me, saying that it would be good for me. She was a strong supporter and as a result of her support, I reached heights that I never knew would be accessible.” Although it was meant to be temporary, Lou proved himself highly capable in this position and he stayed on as Chairman of the Board. He was then asked to step up to be President in 1979 and despite work commitments, he accepted. “Later on I got ‘recycled’ in 1987,” becoming President for a second time. And despite Dorothy’s having been a ‘President’s widow’ once already, she told him to do it “for the good of the shul.” Lou attended all his

committee meetings when President, 15 plus and all after 6 in the evening. It was no wonder that his social life revolved around the shul!

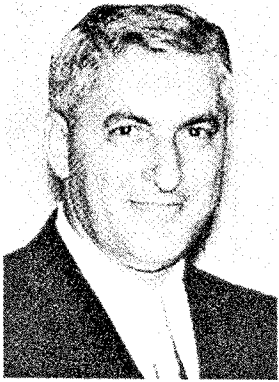
During his terms as President, Lou managed to keep the balance of the peace when problems arose between the Clergy. And it was during his second tenure that the issue of the Clergy was resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. But in Lou’s view his major achievement as President was the adoption of a legal constitution during his first term, as previous to that time there were no consistent rules in place.

Lou feels that our shul plays an important role in the Toronto Jewish community. “The glory of Shaarei Shomayim is that once you are in the Shul it doesn’t matter if you have peyot and a beard or are clean shaven and wearing an open shirt and aren’t all that religious in your personal life. Once you are in the shul, you are the same person as the next guy. And that has been the beauty of Shaarei Shomayim- that people who aren’t very ‘frum’ feel very comfortable because no one is looking down on them. That is why we were able to succeed the way we did. People from all walks of life could fit in.” He feels that the situation in the city is changing today and doesn’t know quite how the shul will define who our community is in the future.

Lou is still very involved in the shul – so much so that he was named “Volunteer of the Year” in 2003. “One of the highlights of my term as President was that we had so many people volunteering to do things. But you know the most meaningful thing had nothing to do with honours or Kavod. The absolutely proudest part of my Presidency was a religious one. Opening the Ark for the Neilah services with the Rabbi and being Chazan Bereshit four times – now *that* was the real highpoint of it all.”



## ❁ *Myer Dorn* ❁



Myer Dorn started his career at Shaarei Shomayim on St. Clair Avenue in 1962. He was the perfect Executive Director and “Boss”. His staff could never refuse to do anything he asked for, because his manner was so polite, and it was as if they were doing him a favor – even though it was their job.

Helen Davis, accountant for the shul, remembers that he would stand at her desk quietly waiting for his turn to speak and would never interrupt her. To his staff, he was always “Mr. Dorn” and received much deserved respect for being a “Mensch”.

He felt that it was his responsibility to be at the morning and evening davening every day – and could take over and lead the services if the Shammas was late or didn’t show up. If the shul couldn’t make a minyan, Myer would phone around, or even go out to Bathurst Street to bring in a few men.

Where could you find a “gentleman” who took responsibility for everything that went on in the shul and make it his business to solve all the problems? He had the love and respect of everyone in the shul and he strived to make it run perfectly. Subsequently, he was appointed Executive Vice President of Shaarei Shomayim and Ruth Podeswa was promoted as assistant to Myer Dorn with the title of Assistant Executive Director.

Myer needed to keep all his employees happy and when he saw one of the janitors (Peter) upset, he would tell him to relax and have a drink from the liquor cupboard. What he didn’t know was that Peter had a key and had already helped himself! Mr. Dorn trusted him with the key and if anything happened to be missing, he himself took the responsibility.

Myer attended every Board, Executive and Committee meeting and recorded everything in detail. It was then Ruth Podeswa’s job to transcribe, type and distribute the

information to the appropriate committees. Mr. Dorn wrote many wonderful articles for the Bulletin and also for his own satisfaction – so that they would be ready for publication when needed. He also loved to keep statistics and would always have them available for committee use.

He was so involved and dedicated to his position that he felt he had to be in the Shul whenever it was open and people were there. This meant he would stay right through from the early morning – all day, and make sure the Shul was completely locked up before he went home – even though our superintendent lived on the premises. He loved Jimmy's (Chef for Firestone Caterers) food – and Jimmy made sure he had lunch and even dinner – and sent him home with a parcel for Shabbat, before he married Laura.

Myer was the watchdog of the Shul's finances and understood budgets. He would have meetings with Helen Davis and he fully understood what she was talking about – dues, collections, investments, etc. He always strived to make the balabatim happy and knew the "Shul Business" from beginning to end. He was completely involved and put his heart and soul into his job.

He attended every house of Shiva, led their services and gave a D'var Torah. If the Rabbi was unable to "get the family up from Shiva – Myer would go and give a talk to the family. He would also make hospital visits and would cheer the sick with his presence.

On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, Myer was official greeter to the whole membership as they entered the Shul for services. He was a well-known and familiar figure at the door and knew every member by name.

His wife, Laura, was always concerned for Myer's health and worried constantly about the long hours that he spent at his beloved Shaarei Shomayim.

There was, however, no place that he would rather be – Shaarei Shomayim was his second home.



## *Dr. Bernard Green*



The Green family has been attending Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue for more than a half century, both as members and Board Members. "Shaarei Shomayim was a hot topic at home because my mother was Sisterhood President in the fifties and helped install Rabbi Walter Wurzburger. Subsequently, she was Program Chairman up until the late seventies. My father was on the Board and Chairman of many committees and was elected to the Board from 1948 until 1990." Bernie can still recall what a wonderful voice his mother had, hearing her as she rehearsed for the many musicals performed by Sisterhood and Brotherhood. "One of the nicest things was when I was on the Board in the seventies together with my mother, father, and a cousin. Now I am on the Board with my son, Jared!"

Bernie's earliest memories of Shaarei Shomayim are of attending nursery school on St. Clair and later attending Junior Services. "I walked along St. Clair picking up friends." Young Israel had thirty members at that time. His sister, Sheila, taught Sunday School at the shul. Bernie attended Cheder after school when in grade 9 and 10 and played on the baseball team in the gym on St. Clair.

Mr. Zucker taught him for his Bar Mitzvah down at his house near Dundas Street with the lessons being on a Saturday night after Shabbat. Subsequently, Mr. Zucker taught his three sons, Jared, Adam and Shael. All the Green boys have had their Bnei Mitzvot at Shaarei Shomayim.

Bernie applied for the position as Leader for the T'fillin Club but barely got the job because everyone thought him too young - even though he was in first year university. "I was second in command," Bernie said. He led the Shaarei Shomayim contingent to the first N.C.S.Y. Shabbaton in Canada that included Herb Milne and Shlomo Riskin, students at Yeshiva University who later obtained their smichas. "I eventually worked my way up to Youth Director and while performing this task I met my future wife, Helene Meingarten. Rabbi Wurzburger, who came up from New York, officiated with Rabbi Forman, at our wedding at Shaarei Shomayim. Subsequently Rabbi Wurzburger again officiated, together with Rabbi Shulman, at our son Jared's wedding."

"What was significant when I attended the Youth Services was that Rabbi Wurzburger came downstairs to address us and gave a D'var Torah every Shabbat." He also held a class for high school students during the week that Bernie attended. When Helene and Bernie returned from Vancouver in 1970, Bernie became involved in the Youth Committee, eventually becoming Chairman. During a trip to New York with Rabbi Hoschander to hire a Youth Director, the Rabbi told Bernie that he would become a Senior Officer. "Sure enough, that year I was elected Secretary and seven years later became President. Rabbi Wurzburger was guest speaker at my installation."

Marvin Gerstein asked for volunteers to set up a medical room with supplies. Bernie was the only one who volunteered and subsequently, set up the medical services at Shaarei Shomayim. He has continued ever since. It was the first emergency room in a Toronto shul and is equipped with a stretcher, oxygen, a defibrillator (donated by Ben Frumkin) and medical supplies. Bernie has continued to ensure that supplies are always on hand with the generous help of Norm Stern of Glencairn Shoppers Drug Mart.

In conclusion, Bernie mentioned that he was Chairman of the Program Committee for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and looks forward to addressing us at the upcoming celebration this fall, where we will honour our Past Presidents.



## ❁ Martin Sable ❁

If there's one way to get hooked on a synagogue, it has to be to know - and use - every nook and cranny of it. That's the way Martin Sable sees it, and he has a lifetime love affair with the shul to prove it.

"I was always waiting, after services or Sunday School or some other activity, for someone to take me home," he says of his childhood days at the old St. Clair Avenue shul. "So I took to wandering around the building. I even knew what was on the third floor, which few people knew even existed." One day he walked through the open door of the Rabbi's study, only to find a young man he had never seen before. With a 12-year-old's chutzpa, Martin recalls, he said straight out, "'You're not supposed to be in here, you know.' And the man said to me, 'It's O.K., I'm the new Rabbi.'"

That was Martin's first encounter with Rabbi Wurzbarger, z"l, but by no means his last. Save for Sunday School, prior to his Bar Mitzvah Martin did not participate in many shul activities because "we lived too far away and I always had to go with someone," nor did he attend the shul cheder because "I was scared stiff of the principal." Rabbi Wurzbarger encouraged Martin to attend Shabbat shiurim, and later Tfillin Club in the boiler room and Young Israel in its third floor hideaway. Martin and his wife Gayle joined the Young Marrieds group when the time came, too.

Although Martin's father Sam was active in the synagogue as long as Martin can remember, he was also active in many Jewish community projects and organizations. "My dad was always having meetings in our house," Martin recalls. "And I was always taking phone messages from people whose names became familiar but whose roles I never learned until I was older." But although his dad encouraged him to go to shul, he never pushed him to get involved.

As a young father, though, Martin had his ideas about how a youth program should be run. So he soon found himself, along with Mel Kay, chairing the Youth Committee. And one thing led to another until he finally agreed to serve as a senior officer. "It was both daunting and energizing to stand on the *bimah* at High Holiday time to speak for the synagogue, or Israel Bonds, to that sea of faces," he says. "There's no experience quite like it."

Describing himself as a hands-on person, who was in the shul seven days a week during his term of office, Martin has to stop and think what made him do it. "Well," he says finally, "I never ever thought about there being something in it for me. I never sought or received one single client as a result of volunteering at the shul. I guess I was just so comfortable there it just seemed natural to get involved."



Martin's three sons grew up in the shul. They all sang in the choir, and one, Josh, participated in the shul plays that were a highlight of the youth program for a decade. Even today, their young grandchildren are learning the ropes from Bubbi Gayle and Zeidi Martin when they visit.

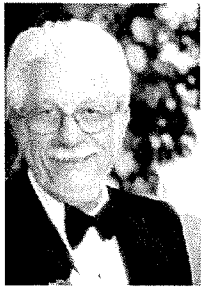
Adding it all up, Shaarei Shomayim has been home to five generations of Sables over their nearly 60-year association. Although today his activity in the shul is limited to singing in the choir, after a lifetime at Shaarei Shomayim Martin says he is not about to change.

"When you've been haunting this place as long as I have, it's another home," he says. "It's where I belong."





## *Dr. Mel Kay*



Mel Kay's first day on the job will probably go down in shul history as the most tumultuous one any Shaarei Shomayim president ever experienced.

It was a beautiful Shabbat morning in the Spring of 1989 when the pediatric dentist was sworn in as the shul's top boss. Mel and his family attended morning services as they did every Shabbat, with Mel giving his first presidential speech and sharing in the ceremonies and luncheon feting the new slate of senior officers. Mel was on a real high, eager to start his duties and infuse some new ideas into the place he had called his second home for more than 30 years.

He didn't have to wait long to get started.

Sometime between Motzei Shabbat and early Sunday morning, vandals attacked the shul's façade, spraypainting it with anti-Semitic graffiti including swastikas and words such as "zog." This brought shul members, neighbours and the entire community to tears. Mel rushed over to the shul as soon as he got the call and immediately took charge.

"The city hadn't seen anything like this in years and there were police and TV cameras everywhere," he recalls. "The shul custodians were just about to start removing the hateful graffiti when I said, 'Stop. We have to let the people of Toronto know that this is happening.' It was extraordinarily emotional for all of us. It was very personal, yet very public."

Thankfully, the rest of Mel's tenure as president didn't make the Six O'clock News but his contribution to the shul certainly made headlines within its walls.

Mel's parents, Harry and Betty Kay, joined Shaarei Shomayim in 1952 when it was on St. Clair Avenue and Mel celebrated his Bar Mitzvah there a year later. Mel and his sister Francine were regulars at Junior Congregation and later at the Young Israel minyan. Mel was one of the first group of boys to attend the shul's Sunday morning

T'fillen Club that was held in the shul's boiler room ("I still have two T'fillen Club sweatshirts to prove it," he quips). He married his wife Cookie at the Glencairn Avenue location, and his children Stephen and Joanne were married there, too. Both children were shul youth leaders in their younger days.

Mel first got his hook into shul politics in the early 1970s as co-chair of the Youth Committee along with Bernie Green and Martin Sable. At the time, says Mel, much of the shul's youth activities were under the auspices of the National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY) and the halls were filled with children of all ages from morning until night. He was involved in a variety of other committees including Membership.

Among Mel's achievements as president was the introduction of the Historical and Exhibitions Committee – or the "museum" as he likes to call it. The concept was Marvin Gerstein's, z"l, and was spearheaded by Mel. Mel also organized the Board of Governor's first Strategic Planning Committee that has met twice since.

Today, Mel still sits on the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors and is a regular shul-goer. Still, he wishes more people would get involved in helping the shul, even if they have to do it in small doses.

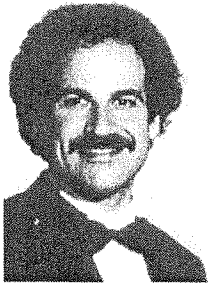
"In my days, we didn't have as many other things to occupy our time so people congregated within the shul walls," says Mel. "But today the community has spread so far and wide and people work harder, they don't have the same time to devote to the shul as they used to and we have trouble recruiting volunteers."

So what does a person like Mel get out of volunteering?

"It was an exciting time," recalls Mel of his presidency. "Cookie and I met so many interesting people. We really got to know the shul family better. My understanding and perception of people is so much more acute since being president. I also got to know the Jewish community, its people and their activities in a different way. It was a time of much personal growth for us."



## Michael Goldrich



Michael's parents, Saul and Pearl Goldrich, joined Shaarei Shomayim about forty years ago while the shul was on St. Clair Ave. and Michael always attended with his Dad.

He had his Bar Mitzvah after the Synagogue moved to Glencairn with Rabbi Forman. Naturally, Michael studied with Mr Philip Zucker. Michael had been a regular at the Youth Services and he remembers how he learned to lead the services at this time. The leaders made it interactive and fun, with the boys all getting a chance to daven. As everyone did it, they were all on a level playing field, no matter what their backgrounds. After his Bar Mitzvah, Michael moved on to the T'fillin Club where he became President. It was his duty to call the members each Sunday morning to attend the service and breakfast. In 1982, Francine and Michael were married at Shaarei Shomayim.

Michael has consistently been active in the shul starting out as a member of the Decorum Committee for twenty years and serving as Chairman of the High Holidays Committee and on the House Committee. He served for many years as an Officer before becoming President in 1986, holding all the available positions – Gabbai, Secretary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Vice-President. And despite holding all these previous offices, Michael believes that at 39 he was the youngest person ever to be nominated for President.

Michael, however, did not really want the job as he had a young family and a growing business both of which required his presence. He realized how time consuming the position of President was and did not feel that he would be able to give it 100%. Despite his hesitation, others, including Charles Kasner, Jamie Slavens, Avrom Silver z"l, Rob Gasner, Rob Erlich and Jeff Zeifman all came forward and volunteered to serve with him and back him up so that he would be able to take the job. "I felt that the shul could do without me personally, but not without all those other people," said Michael. "I felt that the shul could simply not pass up that level of people so, reluctantly, I agreed."

Michael does not regret that decision at all. "At the end of the day, I wanted to look at myself in the mirror and say that I did the best job possible and I feel that I can do that." Michael is proud of the Banquet Hall redecoration and, even more so, that his administration brought in people such as Paul Hebert, Bernie Kleinberg and Sam Moscowitz.

Michael is still very active serving as a member of the Board, Chairman of the Religious Committee and a member of the House Committee. Francine has also served on the Board and is currently on the Historical and Youth Committees. The Goldrichs have four children, all of whom are involved in Jewish communal life. Their son Yaakov is the co-ordinator for the floor hockey youth program and their other children attend the youth activities. This coming year, their daughter will be attending school in Israel.



## Shlomo Sufrin

Shlomo was born in Manchester, England and was educated in London by the Lubavitch School system. He trained in England and Israel. Shlomo is one of thirteen children, with eight brothers who all daven in synagogues throughout the world. His father is a Rabbi.

In February 1993, Shlomo joined our synagogue, coming from Montreal where he was Chazan at Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem (a.k.a. TBDJ) for five years. He led the daily minyan upon arriving, taught Bar Mitzvah boys to layn and lead services, was involved with Bar and Bat Mitzvah classes, taught Adult Education classes and served as Cantor until Yaakov Motzen joined the shul as Chazzan Rishon. Both Cantors were acquainted with one another in Montreal. Together they have performed in seven cantorial concerts in the shul, launched Carlebach Friday evening minyans and have performed at Melava Malkas. Shlomo has often become a mentor to the youth with whom he worked.



The name Shlomo Simcha was coined in the early 90's when Shlomo became involved in the music business. His first album "That Special Melody" was produced in 1993. He has since produced twelve albums as well as two exclusively for Shaarei Shomayim with Yaakov Motzen, "A Guide to the High Holidays" and "A Guide to the Pesach Seder".

At Shaarei Shomayim there is a large sense of community that ranges across a large religious spectrum ranging from right to left. Shlomo developed a name in the city, being involved in Yom Ha-Atzmaut celebrations hosted by Shaarei Shomayim, public rallies for Israel, Israel at Fifty and is frequently called upon to sing at community events. He has performed at simchas both in the shul and the community at large.

Shlomo's sons were born in Toronto. They often stand at his side as he davens. His daughters, Faygie and Leah celebrated their Bat Mitzvahs at the shul. Faygie was the first girl to present a D'var Torah in the sanctuary for her Bat Mitzvah.



## *Mardi Hirshberg*



Mardi has been an official shul member since her parents Murray and Frieda Cornish joined when she was five years old (“I remember how the shul always smelled like chicken cooking,” she laughs). She went on to celebrate many happy family occasions at Shaarei Shomayim, including her own wedding to Haim and her children’s Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Although she began attending services more regularly as her oldest son prepared for his Bar Mitzvah, it wasn’t until the day her good friend, the late Bernice Sandler, asked Mardi to try out the shul’s Pray and Learn service that she really found her place.

It was a hit, and today Mardi is the coordinator of Pray and Learn, led on Shabbat morning and holidays by Rabbi Elliott Diamond. It’s a service that learns as well as prays, much to the delight of its small but faithful following. They come from all backgrounds and all walks of life but share one common trait: they yearn to learn.

“Pray and Learn started as an outreach group, but quickly it became a really good place for people who were on the cusp of the shul – like myself – to become more knowledgeable and feel closer to the religious aspects of Judaism,” she says. “Sometimes shul can feel mechanical to people. Pray and Learn gives them the opportunity to put a bit of passion back into the performance.”

But don’t think of Pray and Learn as Judaism 101 or as a springboard to more intense services, she says. It’s not just for newcomers to prayer, she insists, nor is it what she calls a “pray and move on” type of service. Rather, many people come to Pray and Learn for part of the service “because they want an electric shock to put them in the mood” and then retreat to their regular service afterwards. And that suits Mardi just fine.

“We should think of our synagogue not as isolated communities but we should draw from each other much more,” she says. “We should feel free to go anywhere in the synagogue and gain as much as we can from each unique service. That’s what makes Shaarei Shomayim so special.”

Some of Pray and Learn’s highlights introduced over the past year include D’var Torahs given by congregants and the Java and Judaism evening of Torah study held occasionally in private homes. Team Miriam, comprised of Pray and Learn and other shul members, will take to the streets this October for its second 5K run to support the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. The team honours the memory of Mardi’s friend Bernice as well, unfortunately, of the many other shul members who have lost their battle with cancer.

“Through Pray and Learn, I have become much more involved in the shul,” says Mardi. “Haim and I have made so many new friends and I cherish these friendships. We get together and share our lives, and we have been able to help each other through good or bad. That, to me, is what community is all about. It’s the way I was raised. The support around us, the successes we share – that’s what’s important to me now.”

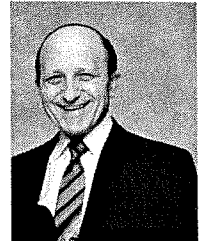


## ❁ Philip Zucker ❁

Mr. Zucker became the Baal Koreh at Shaarei Shomayim in 1960, having held the same position for seven years prior to that at the Shaw Street shul. And although it seems to many people that Mr. Zucker spent all of his time either *layning* at the shul or teaching and checking Bar Mitzvah boys, it was, in fact, his second job and only a part time one at that. In fact, Mr. Zucker's major occupation for many years was that of a garment operator.

Mr. Zucker's career as Bar Mitzvah teacher started "out of the blue" on the recommendation of a friend: "In Europe I did not have this job. There was no such thing as a 'Bar Mitzvah.' Kids grew up in the synagogue. They watched the Baal Koreh and they knew how to *layn* at seven or eight years old."

During the first two years of teaching, he nearly lost his voice. Before the tape-recorder he had to teach chanting in large groups. Once the boy had mastered the *trope* (note sequences) he began individual lessons. Mr. Zucker gave the slower boys extra time. "There were some who did a Haftorah in five or six lessons and there were some who could not get it in thirty!" Mr. Zucker loved to encourage boys who showed an interest in Torah reading, even if their families were not members of the shul: "I said [to the Gabbai], my Zaidy taught me that the worst customer is the one that does not come in. But one that comes in and buys is a good customer."



Gaining confidence is an important step in Bar Mitzvah: "I teach them *chutzpah*. I tell them that to be a *chutzpahnik* is not good, but *chutzpah* G-d created it. There is a time you need it...pretend nobody knows better than you..."

Pride in his work came from having students who mastered their Haftorah in just four or five lessons. He wasn't supposed to teach them the whole portion of *parsha*, only the Maftir and Haftorah: "If I would have taught the entire *parsha*, I would have had to sleep there! I had 60 or 70 students. Many times I brought my lunch back home--I was teaching during lunch hour because I was killing myself. But if I had an extra special good student, I volunteered to teach the *parsha*."

And today? "The boys are the same but the method is not the same. Today you have machines, a tape-recorder."

Mr. Zucker shows great modesty about his long time position in the shul, feeling that he played only a small part in a much larger picture. But after forty years of dedicated service, it is certainly a part he can feel proud of and for which the Congregation is very grateful.





# *Rabbi Chaim Sacknovitz*

## *Youth & the Downstairs Minyan*

It was one year after Rabbi Chaim Sacknovitz, a native of Philadelphia, married his wife Esther from Baltimore that he became involved with Shaarei Shomayim in September 1969. Earlier that year, Rabbi Sacknovitz visited the shul on Shabbat Hagadol for a Shabbaton with a group of youth from Hamilton and met Jeff Cohen who was Youth Chair at the time. "My being at Shaarei Shomayim is all due to that one weekend with Jeff Cohen," said Rabbi Sacknovitz.

Rabbi Sacknovitz joined the shul as Youth and Educational Director. He started the first Cheder at the new Shaarei Shomayim on Glencairn with forty students growing to over 100 in a few years. Some of the students included Joy Koplowitz (Winbaum), Myles Nadel, Linda Rosen (daughter of Sam and Elsie Rosen), and Dr. Eliot Melamed. Additionally, he started a study session for teens, which made lasting impressions on those involved.

The youth group that was established that year became the centre for NCSY activities in Toronto. Youth from various shuls in the city congregated at Shaarei Shomayim.. We learned together, davened together and created chevra that was the envy of the other shuls. We were awarded the NCSY Chapter of the Year Award that year and it was our teenagers who became the leadership of the region the following year. Dozens of our shul's youth were actively involved during those years and a significant number of them became seriously committed to deeper learning and observance. Seven of the boys became Orthodox rabbis: Rabbi Elliot Diamond, is currently V.P. Netivot, Rabbi Jay Goldmintz is Principal of Ramaz, NYC, Rabbi Yaakov Kruger lives in Israel, Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger is Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University, Rabbi Toby Torem is in Milwaukee, Rabbi Richard Vale is Rabbi of Manhattan Beach Synagogue in Brooklyn and Rabbi Moshe Hattin, who lives in Israel, writes a weekly column on Parashat Hashavua That NCSY group added excitement and vibrancy to Shaarei Shomayim, which had an impact on the shul for many years. An integral part of our program was our learning. We met weekly on Shabbat afternoons and often during the week for shiurim and discussions for over 22 years. Many of



Rabbis Sacknovitz & Forman with Young Israel



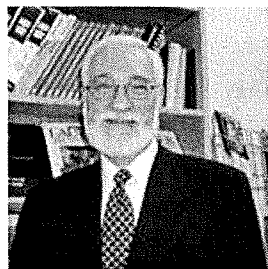
us still have fond memories of those Pirkei Avot sessions. “That Youth Group had a tremendous impact on the shul”.

In 1977 Rabbi Sacknovitz was honoured at a dinner in the shul where he was presented with a Sefer Torah cover now used in the Downstairs Minyan. “The shul and my family have had a very pleasant relationship over the years”. Some thirty-five years later some of the original members and their children still daven in the Downstairs Minyan.

Rabbi Sacknovitz is a father of three children and has four grandchildren (with a fifth on the way).

For the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert held on June 10, 2003 Rabbi Sacknovitz wrote the following article entitled “Reflections”.

“In those days when I first started working at Shaarei Shomayim, the youth of our shul was expected to daven Shabbat mornings at the Young Israel service in the Chapel. Our NCSY group gave new life to that Minyan and the seeds for our present Downstairs Minyan were planted at that time. We quickly outgrew the chapel and moved to the Sisterhood Hall. Our young men led the services, read the Torah and offered Divrei Torah. Our young women were always included in our classes and were urged to give Divrei Torah as well. Our mechitza was designed and the seating arrangement was established with their input. The Minyan became the centre for young men and women from all over Toronto who were serious about halachic observance and wanted a place to daven that was inclusive, participatory, informal and Zionist. Our name soon grew outside of the city as well, and dozens of young people from Vancouver to Montreal made Shaarei Shomayim their home. Many of the practices and innovations that originated in our Minyan over the years have been adopted “upstairs” and in other synagogues. And a significant number of young people became involved in the lay leadership of the shul.



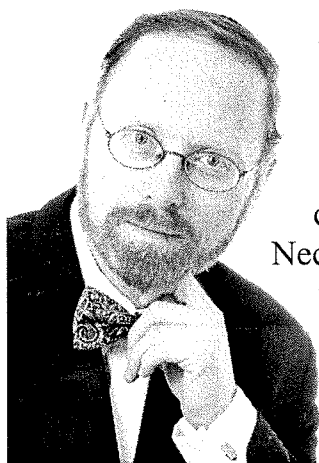
Hundreds of young people have davened at the Downstairs Minyan over the past years. Many met their spouses at the Minyan but eventually had to relocate to other neighbourhoods once their families began to grow. On occasion, when Esther and I have an opportunity to spend a Shabbat at other shuls, it is a pleasure to see these people as involved leaders in their respective communities. We are also especially pleased that, as a Religious Zionist community, we have had over 25 individuals and couples make Aliyah from our Minyan.

The Downstairs Minyan has been functioning as an alternate Minyan for thirty-four of the shul's 75 years. We are proud of our contributions to the growth of Shaarei Shomayim, and to the direction it has taken. We look forward to continuing to achieve our shared goals of Religious Zionism: commitment to learning, enhancement of halachic observance and strong support for the State of Israel.”

**Yashar Koach !!!**

# Chazzan Yaakov Motzen

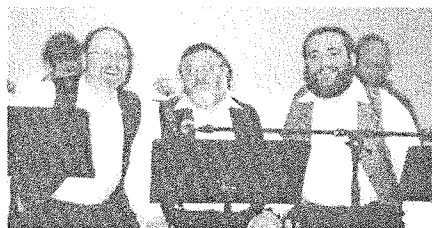
## *& Music at Shaarei Shomayim*



Yaakov Motzen, a native of Tel Aviv, Israel joined Shaarei Shomayim congregation on July 5, 1997. Yaakov is a product of the Kol Toah, Be'er Yaakov and Ponevitz Yeshivot in Israel. He studied music and vocal technique with Yosef Goland and chazzanut with Cantor Yitchak Eshel. Yaakov is married to Nechama, a native of the United States. They have six children and three grandchildren. Cantor Motzen performs throughout the world. His exceptional voice and outstanding cantorial repertoire have earned him a place of prominence that is unique in his field.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert took place on June 10, 2003, jump-starting the synagogue's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The concert featuring four renowned chazzanim: Yaakov Motzen, Shlomo Simcha Sufrin, Benjamin Warschawski and Moshe Haschel, was conducted by Cantor Beny Maissner and accompanied by the Shaarei Shomayim Choir.

Shaarei Shomayim's Cantorial Concert in honour of Israel's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held on May 26, 1998. Cantors Miller, Mizrachi and Motzen, along with Shlomo Simcha Sufrin, thrilled the sold-out crowd with an eclectic, exciting program, which included beautiful selections of Chazzanut, a piece by Shlomo Carlbach, songs honouring Israel, and an operatic medley. Also in May, Cantor Motzen performed at a concert for "Israel at Fifty" in Toronto held at the National Trade Centre, attended by the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien.



Komsitz & Cafe

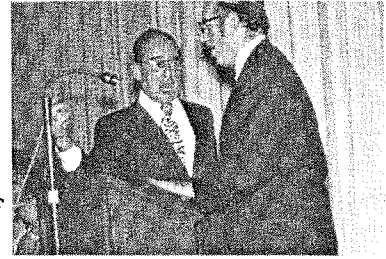
In 1997, Cantor Motzen, Shlomo Sufrin, Rabbi Shulman and Rabbi Sacknovitz produced a tape with High Holy Day tunes and explanations of the prayers. In 2003, a CD, "A Guide to the Pesach Seder" was produced by Cantor Yaakov Motzen, Shlomo Simcha Sufrin and the Shaarei Shomayim Choir with explanations from our Rabbis Moshe Shulman, Yechiel Goldreich, Chaim Sacknovitz and Elliott Diamond. These recordings were the brainchild of Yaakov Motzen so the congregation could have additional learning materials.



Cantor Adler and the choir

Some 200 people attended the Kumsitz and Café held at our shul on Motzei Shabbat Shira, January 30, 1999 that was initiated by Yaakov. Chazzan Motzen and Shlomo

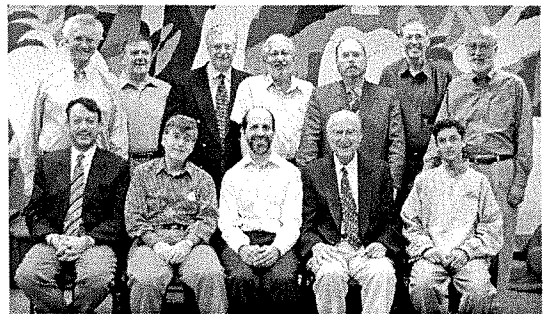
Simcha Sufrin led this delightful evening of song. The popularity of the Kumsitz and Café led to a second evening of Jewish and Israeli song led by Cantor Yaakov Motzen, Benzion Miller and Shlomo Simcha Sufrin on Motzei Shabbat Shira on February 10, 2001.



Sam Sable & R. Emanuel Forman  
singing with heart and soul

The Synagogue Solidarity Concert for Israel - a message of Hope, Peace, and Love of Israel through Song - took place on November 29, 2000. More than fifteen hundred people from all streams of the Jewish Community came together to hear our incredible Cantors Motzen and Sufrin with Cantor Maissner (of Holy Blossom) and Cantor Sapir (of Beth Tikvah). Among the guests were the Consul General of Israel, Meir Romem, Minister of Defense, Art Eggleton and MPP Monte Kwinter.

Cantor Motzen said: "One of the most beautiful and important rituals in a Jew's life is prayer-an opportunity to pour out one's heart before his maker. When one joins other Jews to daven together in a community, one becomes part of a greater, more powerful entity". Cantor Motzen invited any adult or boy over ten who is musical and can carry a tune to participate in the choir for shul services.



Chazzan Motzen and the Choir

Since joining Shaarei Shomayim, Cantor Motzen has performed in annual concerts for the past seven years. The Yom Yerushalayim Concert took place this year on May 19, 2004.



Cantor Harold Klein and the Choir - 1974

About Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, when some eighteen hundred Jews pray in the sanctuary, Cantor Motzen says "It is a moving experience."

At the 10k Zareinu Miracle Run on June 22, 2003 Cantor Motzen and Rabbi Shulman laced their sneakers to raise money for a unique school for Jewish children with disabilities. Again this year the clergy team raised money for this special school. Yaakov led this initiative.

At the upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lodz ghetto Cantor Motzen will sing in the presence of the Presidents of Israel, Poland and Germany.

# Maple Lake



Relaxing together - Retreat 1984



Having some fun in the sun



Sam & Elsie Rosen with  
Ruby Ezekiel

Shaarei Shomayim's successful and enjoyable summer Retreats were the brainchild of Sam Rosen.

It all started when Sam and Herb Cohen attended a weekend Beth Tzedec Retreat for men only at Maple Lake Lodge in Parry Sound. Sam came home and raved about the weekend and said he would love for his wife, Elsie to see the place. A year or two later, a Victoria Day Weekend Retreat was held jointly with Associated Hebrew Schools Bowling League and Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Several Shaarei Shomayim couples were there and when Sam returned from that weekend, he told Dr. Marvin Gerstein z"l, what a wonderful experience it was; Dr. Gerstein gave him the mandate to try arranging a weekend for Shaarei Shomayim members.

And so... in 1982, the Shaarei Shomayim Retreat was born. Sam asked Ruby Ezekiel to help him and she agreed, capably

looking after the finances and publicity, while Sam looked after programming and reservations. It ran for 12 years from 1982 to 1993 and by special request a 13<sup>th</sup> retreat was held in 1999.



# Retreat

Shaarei Shomayim was proud to host Israeli soldiers for a couple of years at the retreat. Bernie and Zivia Mintz brought them up to Maple Lake and they greatly enjoyed the time there.

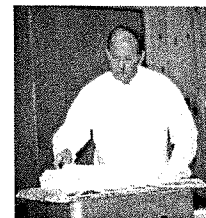
These weekends were a highlight event and Scholars in Residence included Rabbi Irwin Witty, who came for three years, our own Rabbis, Howard Sacknovitz and Elliott Diamond, Mark Dratch and Michael Skobac. The topics were always enlightening and well received. There was much food for the soul and Jacques Perez z"l chef par excellence, always made sure that there was also plenty of food for the physical appetite. Eagerly looked forward to was the Motzei Shabbat treat - usually a huge strawberry shortcake which was served after the evening's program of Sam's comedy shtick or a game of Jewish Trivia. Elsie took photos every year but one - and this was because she forgot her camera at home.



Retreat – June 1999



Rabbi Witty  
food for thought

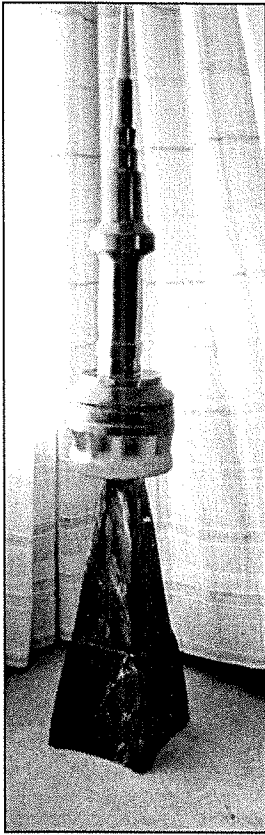


Chef Jacques  
food for ... FOOD !

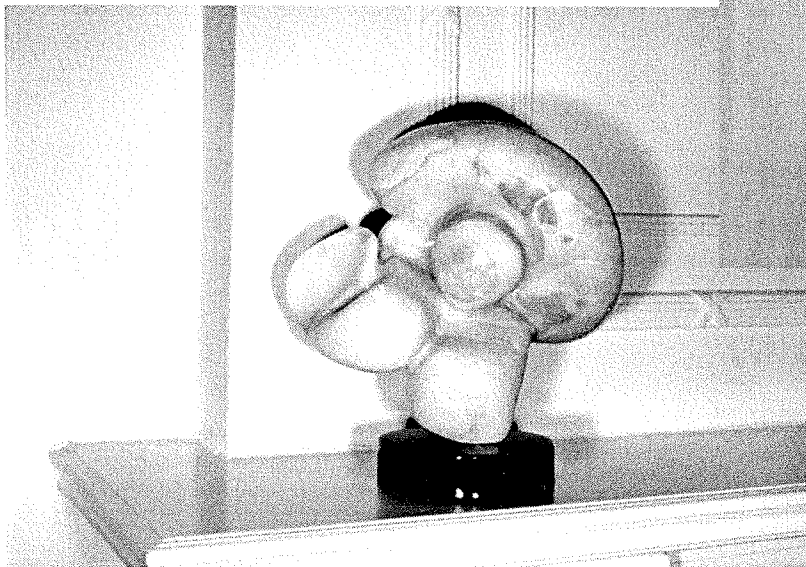
All those who attended the retreats look back on them with fond memories and grateful thanks to all the organizers.



# *Shaarei Shomayim*



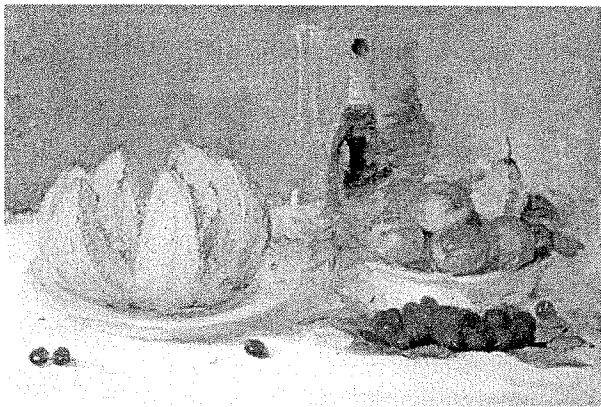
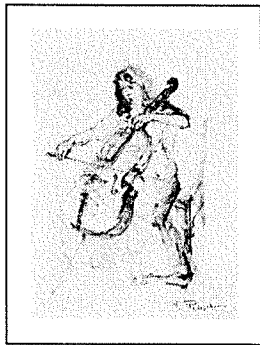
*"C.N. Tower"*  
by Murray Schwartz



*3 Sculptures by  
Naomi Freudman*



# *artists & their works*



*From the paintings of  
Yehuda Podęwa*



*"Metamorphosis"  
8" x 26" polished bronze with green patina  
by Gena Tenenbaum*





# *Celebrating*





*75 years of...*







*being a*





*community.*



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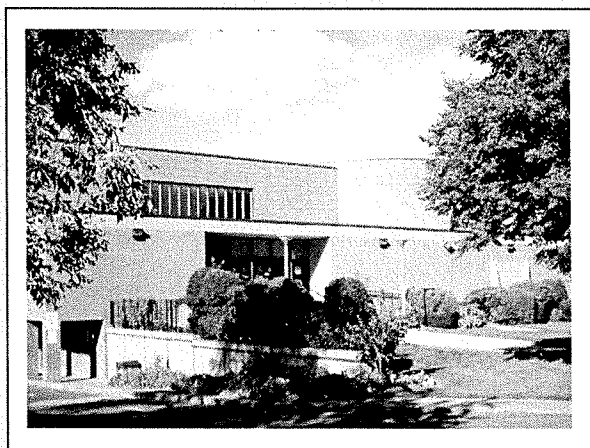
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Kitty and Ralph Wintrob  
Suzanne Wintrob  
Louis W. Zeifman

Marilyn Somers and the entire office staff  
Marika and Alex Babos

*SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO:*

*Les Firestone  
Lawrence Savlov*



*It's our home . . .  
it's where we belong*

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