



The Shofar

Website:
oraynu.org

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Happy Summer!

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Summer's here and, as always, things slow down a bit at Oraynu, when many people are away at cottages, travelling, visiting kids at camp, etc. etc. But we have planned a few activities for you to enjoy. Hope you can join us. Here's a "teaser" for each one:

On Sunday July 8th, Evelyn Goldstein, has organized another visit to the Leslieville Farmer's Market. Join us—the market fare and entertainment are always terrific.

Our annual Summer BBQ and Potluck Social takes place on Tuesday July 10th. Roby and Jim Sadler will be hosting again at their home. It will be a fun evening with good food, schmoozing and maybe a little boozing (beer and wine—BYO), too. Join us!

On August 11th, Evelyn and her husband Stan have put together a terrific, fun event — a car rally! It begins and ends at the Sadlers'. You'll have to join us to find out where we go in between!

On Tuesday, August 28, we are holding another of our semi-annual info sessions. New title is: Secular Humanistic Judaism~What, Why, How? Do spread the word to others whom you think may be interested in learning about Oraynu and how we "do Jewish."

The holidays are so early this year, starting with Rosh Hashanah on Sept. 10th. More on the fall festivals (or should I say "late summer") to follow in the next issue.

Long-time Oraynu member, friend and supporter Gabe Glazer passed away recently in Israel. He was a co-founder of the international Secular Humanistic Judaism movement and the father of the late Davida Glazer, a beloved member who also served on our Board and in whose memory we have held many special events over the past 15 years. Gabe was also an occasional contributor to this publication, always offering his unique "View From Israel" See Rabbi Karen Levy's tribute to her good friend on p. 6.

Also on these pages is the Annual General Meeting report, Rabbi Eva Goldfinger's reflections on being a speaker at the vigil held in April for the Yonge Street van attack victims and her report on the Building Heart fundraiser, info from Evelyn Goldstein, who is our new SHJ Board rep, about the recent meeting in Michigan, some tidbits of wisdom from this year's Bnai Mitzvah grads on their humanistic Jewish heroes, plus other bits and pieces.

Enjoy your summer, whatever you do!

Sandi

Sandi Horwitz, Editor

Advance Notice:

HIGH HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES

Rosh Hashanah: Sept. 10 at 10:30 am

Erev Yom Kippur: Sept. 18, 8:00 pm

Yom Kippur: Sept. 19 at 10:30 am

This year, come experience our re-revised

Rosh Hashanah morning service with newly added readings, poetry and music.

Members and guests are welcome to submit articles and letters and photographs. Please email to: horwitz@rogers.com

Generally submissions should be no more than 800 words and should reflect a secular humanistic perspective. Please note that Oraynu reserves the right to decline or edit submissions in order to maintain the mutual respect our members enjoy and our reputation for fairness. Letters and articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinions of their writers and are not necessarily those of Oraynu Congregation.

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi
Denise
Handlarski



What are you going to focus on this summer?

This past weekend I was booked to officiate a wedding. The day before I got an urgent call asking if I could come a few hours earlier to the hospital because the bride's father is in cancer care and, unexpectedly, is now too sick to attend the wedding. I had just been away at a Rabbis Without Borders retreat, and was excited to spend the day with my kids. It was one of those moments when I had to explain to my kids, in the words of Rabbi Eva, that although they were more important to me than my clients, this time the clients were more urgent.

Also this past week, I had reserved a little island of time for myself on a Sunday night, feeling desperate for a break, when I got a call to meet with a family planning a funeral. Their mother had a scheduled physician-assisted death and they needed to plan the funeral quickly, even though she was still alive.

These moments represented two instances when I made the choice to sacrifice my own time for rest and rejuvenation because what was being asked of me was more important. I'm sharing the story with you with the details of my own desire for a break not because I wish to be the centre of this story — I'm not the centre; two people with cancer and their families are the centre — but because I wish to highlight that sometimes serving others requires sacrifice. I was tired. I was wanting time with my kids. But I showed up for these people anyway because, in my view, that's what Humanists do: we show up for people in need.

The flip side is that I really believe we need healthy and appropriate boundaries, including time that we protect and reserve for those closest to us. As you know, I have young kids, and I recently saw an online photo saying "we only get eighteen summers with our kids. After that, they no longer want to spend the summer with you." It really hit home! Summer is the time when many of us spend time away with family — at a cottage, in the place where we grew up, etc. It is a time when many of us have fewer work obligations and so we do get a chance to recharge. I want that for you this summer. I want you to figure out who and what are most important to you and make sure you devote them some time.

How do we strike the right balance between protecting time for ourselves and our priorities, and ensuring we are there for those who need us? Many of you are caring for others, be they aging parents, children, and members of your community. How will you recharge so you can best serve them, while still ensuring their needs are met? That's really my question of summer. I plan to ruminate on that as the lead-up to the High Holidays when we ask ourselves who we wish to be in the coming year. I want to be someone who serves others. I want to be someone who is attentive and present with my family. I want to be someone who has boundaries that are porous enough to make exceptions for emergencies but solid enough that they are meaningful. Are you with me? What are you going to focus on this summer?

SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM ~ WHAT, WHY, HOW?

Our semi-annual info session on Oraynu and our branch of Judaism

Tuesday, August 28 at 7:30 pm

Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Avenue (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

- For new members and those interested in learning more
- Get all your questions answered
- Join us and bring a friend!

Led by Rabbi Denise Handlarski & Music Leader Sandi Horwitz

Everyone welcome | No charge to attend | RSVP requested



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, July 8
11:00 am

**Jonathan Ashbridge
Park**
20 Woodward Ave.
(Meet at the corner of
Woodward and Queen
St. E.)

SUMMER OUTING — FARMER'S MARKET VISIT

Join Evelyn Goldstein and fellow members for a trip to the **Leslieville Farmers Market**. There is a wonderful array of market produce, foodie goodies, and usually some entertainment as well. This is a chance to socialize with and get to know other Oraynunik.

Member Asi Orbach's pottery studio L'Arterie is in the neighbourhood, so we will likely pop by for a visit afterward.

Please RSVP directly to Evelyn at: evelyngoldstein07@gmail.com/ know you are coming, so she will know to expect you. Street parking *is available*.



Tuesday, July 11
6:30 pm

Members' home
(Wilson/Avenue Rd)



SUMMER BBQ & POTLUCK SOCIAL

Join your Oraynu friends at Roby and Jim's home for a summer evening of food, socializing and fun!

- Burgers, dogs and fixings will be provided by Oraynu.
- Appetizers, sides/salads and desserts are potluck.
- Feel free to also add some wine/beer to the festivities.
- Please bring a lawn chair if you can to add to our seating.

Non-members welcome: \$15 + potluck contribution

Saturday, Aug. 11
5:00 pm

Start/end location:
Members' home
(Wilson/Avenue Rd)

ORAYNU CAR RALLY

You'll drive through the streets of Toronto, guided by a series of clues, to various historical Jewish sites within the GTA. Be prepared for a fun event that will test your knowledge (or Google's) of Toronto's Jewish Culture and Personalities.

You don't have to be Gilles Villeneuve to participate, just be willing to have fun and maybe earn the bragging rights as the winner of the Oraynu Car Rally.

Please register online, no later than August 4, to reserve your spot. You will receive starting location information when your registration is confirmed. We recommend two to four participants per car, depending on how many cars are involved. We will team you up with others, if you don't have your own partners. A maximum of 30 participants. And ... dinner will be part of the fun too!

Bring your friends, too — non-members welcome at no charge!



Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:
416-385-3910 | robby@oraynu.org | via Oraynu website Event link



Oraynu AGM Report

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday, June 13th at the Borochov Cultural Centre with 24 members in attendance. Following the approval of last year's minutes, **President Mark Brender** referred to the reports which all members had received in advance of the meeting.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski was unable to be there due to her attendance at the Rabbi Without Borders retreat, and since her Rabbi's Report had been sent out to all members and most attendees had seen it, it was not read aloud. In case you missed it, she mentioned several highlights of the year including the enlivening series of discussions on social justice series (Jews and white privilege, cultural appropriation, and pronoun usage), the many cultural and holiday programs. Eva's rave-reviewed adult ed series, and this year's Show Your Heart program in which our beloved Syrian family made lunch for us to raise money for African asylum seekers. She thanked Roby, specifically mentioning her production of our new regular-in-your-inbox Email Blast, and cited Sandi, Karen, Steve, Eva, Evelyn and the Board for all their hard work to make Oraynu what it is.

In closing, she added: "I am so honoured to be part of a community that does so much, and does it in a way that is truly affirming of everyone who participates. You are all a wonderful bunch of people to spend time with! I made that clear in my Rabbi's Without Borders application. ... I plan to spend my time with RWB learning and reflecting, and I will share with you what I discover. We will also, as always, decide our future together. We make our own fate, after all. I am excited for this chance to grow together."

In his Treasurer's Report, **Robert Horwitz** commented that Oraynu is in a strong financial position, with the General Fund having a Members' Surplus of \$135,000 (as at June 30, 2017) which represents about 6 months of our operating expenses. Our membership numbers have been fairly steady for the past few years, currently at 139 family units and the School with 53 students. We are projecting a small surplus of \$3200 for this fiscal year (ending June 30, 2018), after initially projecting an \$11,300 deficit in the budget. Many changes had occurred since the original budget was developed with the most important improvements coming from the Sustaining Member category and a very successful School Fund drive. Robert added: "**The generosity of our members via their donations or becoming sustaining members were key in driving positive results this past year.**" Lastly, after keeping our membership fees the same for the past three years, we will be taking a modest increase for 2018-19.

Mark Brender then delivered his President's report (see opposite page).

Two Board members resigned their positions: **Maia Miller**, who moved to New Zealand over the winter (guess the commute for meetings would have been too hard!) and **Hailey Meslin**. Both served the Board with strong commitment and lots of wonderful, creative ideas. Thank you!!

The Election of Officers took place and we are pleased to welcome two new members to the Board: **Risa Morris** and **Cara Wilkie** (long-time member who spearheaded our Syrian Refugee initiative). See the complete listing of Officers on the back inside cover. We are in for a great year.

Under **Other Business**, a suggestion was made that new members be informed about the structure of the Board and how one would go about becoming a Board member, if interested. Then, there was a solid discussion on declining attendance at events (sometimes, e.g. less than 20 for an interesting Shabbat program or discussion) and what the main reason keeping people from attending might be. Is it: (1) our location at Borochov, (2) lack of interest in the subject matter of the program, (3) the worsening city traffic so that people are reluctant to travel no matter where a program would be held, or (4) something else? It was suggested that members should, perhaps, be surveyed. The Board will take these comments into consideration.

Following adjournment of the meeting, **Louise Sherman** and **Mark Brender** spearheaded a discussion on Oraynu's upcoming 50th anniversary and what it should look like regarding preferred day of the week and potential dates, programming, displays, who to invite, entertainment, etc. Volunteers to work on the planning committee were solicited and several members signed up. Then, as always at Oraynu events, we noshed and schmoozed to end the evening.

Board President Mark Brender's A.G.M. Report

Greetings to our Oraynu members and the broader Oraynu family. It feels like the past year has flown by, even though I might not have said so during what was once a painfully long winter. But now in June, all is forgiven. In my acronym-filled day job, we might call this having an 'HofG' for winter. **HofG stands for 'hermeneutic of generosity', which basically means to think the best of something or someone, to give the benefit of the doubt and maintain it as a general orientation or outlook.**



spent considerable time examining options to reverse the trend. One of the measures we decided to adopt was a new category of Sustaining Members. So many of our members stepped up to truly sustain Oraynu – far more than we could have hoped. To all the too-numerous-to-name sustainers, and to members who made exceptional gifts at all levels, thank you for your generosity.

There was also HofG illustrated time and again in other conversations throughout the year. Not all of them were easy, but they were all respectful – and there was never a doubt that anyone always had the best interests of Oraynu at heart. Thank you to everyone involved.

Which is easy to do for winter, in June.

But it also feels like HofG is the general order of things at Oraynu, and for that I'm very grateful. Our High Holiday services are filled with a generosity of spirit and keep getting better with each refresh, as took place with the Rosh Hashanah service last fall. Our rabbis, Denise, Eva and Karen, are endlessly generous with their time and wisdom and uplifting commitment to Oraynu, to say nothing of their progressive programming. The same goes for principal Steve Shabes, among his many funky Oraynu-related hats, Sandi for her Shofar and musical magic, and Roby and so many volunteers on committees and at various events throughout the year. You can now read about these events in our brilliantly formatted and predictably scheduled emails, which I hope everyone has noticed – the result of another HofG-filled team effort this year. A special shout-out as well to Evelyn Goldstein for her work as Oraynu's community development coordinator over the past 12 months. Evelyn will continue to be deeply engaged this year in a volunteer role.

We're also saluting two members stepping off Oraynu's board and so give gratitude from afar to Maia Miller, who for some strange reason saw fit to leave Toronto in January for New Zealand; and gratitude closer to home to Hailey Meslin, who has decided to step off the board due to other time commitments.

It's often the case that HofG is most evident when there are challenges, and we had some of these too. A year ago at this time we were coming off several years of not insignificant annual deficits, and so the board and staff

We hope that doesn't scare Cara Wilkie and Risa Morris, whom we are thrilled to welcome to the board for 2018-19, with approval of our membership. Cara and Risa, we ask for your HofG on the very rare occasions when board meetings last past 9pm. To the other board members, I hope you'll agree that if nothing else this year, we've proved there can be some laughs mixed in with efficient and productive and important meetings. Your contributions are many and lasting.

The biggest thank you goes to our members, who together foster the richness and community and sense of belonging that makes us all know in our hearts that Oraynu is something special. I look forward to much more time together as we plan celebrations for Oraynu's 50th anniversary in the coming year.



50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Next year Oraynu will mark a half century since a few families (including Sheila and Jerry Bain) founded the Secular Jewish Association, which was renamed as Oraynu Congregation in the late 1990s. We will be celebrating in a big way (not sure how yet) during 2019 and will need interested volunteers to help with all the planning and execution. Let Roby know if we can add your name to the list: robby@oraynu.org

Every Oraynunik can be inspired by the life story of my friend Gabriel "Gabe" Glazer, who died on June 3 in Tel Aviv. To the depth of his being Gabe lived and breathed the values of secular humanism and progressive Zionism.

Gabe was born and raised in Montreal. While studying at McGill he formed campus Zionist groups, despite the opposition of Hillel, the Jewish student organization. As president of the Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America, he travelled around North America to support similar efforts on other campuses.

At one of the many Zionist meetings at McGill Gabe met Gitty, his soulmate and life partner. Their first visit to Israel in 1954 marked a dramatic turning point, as they made the decision to move there. They spent the next decade saving and planning. When they finally arrived with Davida, their 9-year-old daughter, Gabe did not speak Hebrew. By working extremely hard, he finished the ulpan as valedictorian, studied for and passed the Israeli bar exams, and became a respected lawyer with clients in Israel and Canada.

Gabe chose to work for peace by bringing together Jewish and Arab lawyers in Israel, the Middle East and around the world. He also helped form both Hebrew and English speaking secular humanist groups in Israel, and was an ardent member of the International Humanist movement his entire life. People working together had more political influence than any one person alone. When asked to run for the Knesset in the secular, progressive Meretz party, Gabe declined, feeling that this grassroots work would be more effective.

Through these connections Gabe met other like-minded Jews around the world. They decided to build an international Secular Humanistic Jewish movement, to create a unified voice for their shared goals. With public leaders such as Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Rabbi Sherwin Wine, Gerry Revzin, Prof. Albert Memmi, David Susskind and organizers from every continent, Gabe was a founding

member of the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews and of its academic Institute, which today is the backbone of the movement, training rabbis and other leaders. When his work on this was complete, Gabe doubled his efforts for peace in Israel.



It was at a meeting in Michigan, in 1985, that I and other members of Oraynu (then the Secular Jewish Association) first met Gabe and Gitty, and began our warm, life-long friendship. When Davida moved to Toronto with her husband Mark Guttman and their young children, Shawn and Sheara, they became active Oraynu members. Gabe and Gitty were welcome visitors every year in Toronto.

After Davida's untimely death from cancer, through the generosity of the Glazer and Guttman families and friends, Oraynu established the Davida Glazer Memorial Fund to sponsor educational events in Davida's memory. Until his illness Gabe avidly participated in choosing the topics and speakers, and he and Gitty joined us for every event.

Gabe was a frequent speaker, not only at Oraynu, but at conferences world-wide. His erudition, insight and political passion moved all of us. His friend Herzl Katz said at the funeral, "Gabe exhibited a huge grasp of political history related to the state [Israel] and to its existential challenges. Gabe knew the thinkers whose opinions rose above the noise and the philosophers that we should be guided by."

Gabe was never just an armchair activist. Despite the despair that we have all felt at times, he never wavered in his ethics and his hands on work for equality and peace in Israel.

Gitty has requested that donations to honour Gabe go to Oraynu. This may be done on the website or by calling Roby in our office at 416-385-3910.

Tribute Donations

Oraynu gratefully acknowledges the following donations in memory of Gabe Glazer from:

Content removed for privacy reasons

Members and friends of Oraynu are welcome to make donations at any time. See inside back cover for information.

RESERVE NOW: TWO OUTSTANDING CULTURAL EVENTS FOR 2019

Organized by Rabbi Eva Goldfinger for Members, Families and Friends

Saturday
March 9, 2019
8 pm

Jeanne Lamon
Hall, Trinity-St.
Paul's Centre
427 Bloor St
(just west of
Spadina)

Experience The Toronto Consort's Presentation of

FOUR QUARTERS OF JERUSALEM

An extraordinary concert by the acclaimed early and world-music ensemble Rose of the Compass with guest Artistic Director Nina Stern celebrating the Diversity of Faiths and Musical Traditions of Jerusalem

**** Followed by a party with the ensemble ****

Travel through the Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Armenian Quarters as oud, kanun, recorders and chalumeau act as gateways to ancient lands — creating a diverse soundscape while unifying us in the hope of understanding and acceptance.

Early Bird Prices (until Aug. 31, 2018): Members: \$42.00 / Friends: \$55.00
After Sept. 1, add \$5.00 per ticket



Friday
May 24, 2019
8:00 pm

Mainspace,
Tarragon
Theatre,
30 Bridgman
Avenue
(e. of Bathurst, n.
of Dupont)

Join us for a remarkable theatre experience!

OLD STOCK: A REFUGEE LOVE STORY

A 2b theatre company production

by Governor General Award-winning writer **Hannah Moscovitch**
Songs by **Ben Caplan & Christian Barry** Directed by **Christian Barry**

**** Followed by a private Q&A and post-show party ****

Halifax, 1908: two Romanian Jews stand in line at Pier 21 in Halifax, would-be immigrants to an unknown country. Chaim's entire family was murdered in a pogrom; Chaya lost her husband to fever and starvation. But the New World is giving them a second chance, and they embrace it to the fullest. This humorously dark folk tale narrated by The Wanderer — part showman, part rabbi — is a genre-bending rock/klezmer concert/theatre hybrid starring Klezmer-folk sensation Ben Caplan and is inspired by the real-life love story of Moscovitch's great-grandparents.

"A hugely engaging experience" – The Guardian's Top Recommended Shows (Edinburgh 2017 Fringe Festival)

★★★★★ *"Emotionally engaging, visually stunning and at 80 minutes leaves us still wanting more." – Musical Theatre Review*

N.B. — Early-bird pricing only until August 31, 2018:

ADULTS: Members \$50, non-members \$60 / SENIORS: Members \$42,
non-members \$52 / STUDENTS: Members \$25, non-members \$30

As of September 1, add \$5 to each ticket category.

Moscovitch always sells out early – First come, first served!

Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:
416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org | via Oraynu website Event link

#TorontoStrong Interfaith Vigil for Victims of the April 23, 2018 Van Attack

By RABBI EVA GOLDFINGER

When I heard of the major massacre near Yonge and Finch, my first reaction was 'THAT'S CLOSE TO MY HOME! WHAT IF SOMEONE I KNOW AND LOVE WAS A VICTIM?' Then fear turned to anguish for those who had lost loved ones, followed by sadness for the family of the perpetrator; and finally, sadness and frustration for the killer whom we had failed. He was ill and disturbed, and we did not give him the care he needed to avoid the sense of isolation, fear and rage that resulted in his horrendous murders.

By now you have read details of the massacre, stories of those killed and injured, and the intense trauma of the Toronto community who were feeling scared and vulnerable. I wanted to help but was overwhelmed with work at the time. Then the head of a small committee planning an interfaith vigil for April 29th at Mel Lastman Square called. Clergy representing Christian, Mennonite, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist communities would be speaking, and because of my work with interfaith couples and families, and my involvement with the Interfaith Council, she wanted me to be the closing speaker representing the Humanist and Interfaith communities. Our role as clergy was to take the community from the pain of chaos towards hope and healing. They were expecting family members of the deceased, dignitaries like Justin Trudeau, Julie Payette, Kathleen Wynne, John Tory and others, and close to 20,000 people from the community. How could I say no? This was an opportunity to help so many while putting our humanist attitudes and ethics in the public eye.

I had under three minutes to diminish the pain of so many but recognized that **being there together** was more powerful than any words I could say. Participating in this amazing event made me so proud to be a Toron-

tonian. Yes, it was nice to have my hand shaken by all the dignitaries and family thanking me for my participation... but the real meaning came later from the endless emails, phone calls and personal encounters with people I knew, and total strangers who approached me in public places to thank me and tell me how moved they were by my talk and how much it had helped them.

So here's the talk I delivered if you haven't already heard it. Let's all work together to heal the sick, to share in other's joys and to make life better for all of us.

"Personally, and on behalf of Oraynu Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism, I'd like to add my heartfelt words of sympathy and consolation to the families who have suffered this unbearable loss, and to all who were injured and traumatized by last Monday's tragedy.

So many words have been said and written about this act of anger and its consequences, but if we are to move forward towards healing and renewal, I'd like to add a few more. We cannot change the past, but we can and must change the future. Each of us needs to move from judgment towards understanding of others—to seeing that although we all appear different, essentially, we are all the same. Each of us needs to be vigilant in cultivating more acts of inclusion and loving acceptance of others, so we will diminish the sense of isolation that can lead to such terrible acts of despair.

Let today's vigil also prompt us to continue to remember those who have died, for as we remember them, they become a part of us, and thus live on. Each of those who died are remembered as wonderful human beings who brought light into our world through a combined 539 years of their own acts of loving kindness. To make up for the loss of their continuing light and ⇨⇨⇨



Rabbi Eva and the other clergy, representing the Christian, Mennonite, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist communities, along with the ceremony emcees

love, it behooves us to keep their light burning by continuing and multiplying their acts of openness, generosity and compassion. This will be their immortality. This will be the hope of a better future for us, for Toronto and for our world.

It feels appropriate to end my words with extracts from "Merger" by Judy Chicago, an American feminist artist and writer:

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong.
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the earth's abundance

And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life's creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth.
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

Let the light of the following continue to shine through us to bring about Eden on earth:

Betty Forsyth (94) - Munir Najjar (85) - Geraldine Brady (83) - Dorothy Sewell (80) - Renuka Amarasingha (45) - Chulmin "Eddie" Kang (45) - Andrea Bradden (33) - Anne Marie D'Amico (30) - Sohe Chung (22) - Ji-Hun Kim (22)

May their memories live on in all of us and may the love and support of family, friends and community bring healing and hope to their families and all who are now suffering."

Nizkor - We Remember

We acknowledge the following memorial anniversaries (yahrtzeits) to be marked by our members:

Content removed for privacy reasons

May their memories be a blessing.

Members are encouraged to add the names of family members to this list. Please take a moment to email the information for inclusion (date, name and relationship) to Roby Sadler at: robysadler@oraynu.org



UBUNTU AND HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

Excerpted from Rabbi Denise's column in the May 22nd *Email Blast*

"**Ubuntu**" is a South African word meaning "a person is a person through other people." It is also sometimes quoted as "I am because you are." Rabbi Denise came across this concept frequently when doing her PhD research on South African literature. What she did not consider at the time is how nicely the concept works with Jewish wisdom.

Hillel, the Jewish sage, is frequently quoted as having said: "If I am not for myself, who will be? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" This Jewish idea pairs beautifully with South African "Ubuntu."

What we call "Jewish values" are not uniquely Jewish, but they are rooted in Jewish wisdom. What we can call "Humanist values" are values that take seriously the worth of each human being and their right to thrive. It's sometimes a nice reminder that cultures different from our own share some of our same beliefs. It's a nice reminder that we are all in this together.

Society for Humanistic Judaism BOARD MEETING REPORT

By EVELYN GOLDSTEIN, Oraynu's SHJ Board rep

A short time ago, Rabbi Denise asked me if I would represent Oraynu on the National Board of the Society of Humanistic Judaism. During the weekend of April 27-29, 2018, I attended my first Board Meeting. The Board convened at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Representatives from many American congregations attended. Needless to say, I was the only member to represent a Canadian congregation.

In addition to the socializing, eating, and noshing, I learned about the following:

- There are several videos for classes and lectures presented at the Birmingham Temple Congregation for Humanistic Judaism available at libraryshj.com.
- Oraynu is one of only four Humanistic Judaism congregations in North America with 100+ members.
- An important initiative of our movement is Jews for a Secular Democracy. Information is available at jfasd.org.
- During the last weekend in April 2019, SHJ will celebrate its 50 Anniversary. The theme is "Brand New at 50" and the event probably will take place in Farmington Hills, MI. It would be great to have Oraynu representation at this event.
- The Humanistic Jewish Role Model of the Year is Grace Paley. According to Margalit Fox, in her N.Y. Times article dated August 23, 2007:

"Ms. Paley was among the earliest American writers to explore the lives of women — mostly Jewish, mostly New Yorkers — in all their dullness. She focused especially on single mothers, whose days were an exquisite mix of sexual yearning and pulverizing fatigue. In a sense, her work was about what happened to the women that Roth and Bellow and Malamud's men had loved and left behind.



To read Ms. Paley's fiction is to be awash in the shouts and murmurs of secular Yiddishkeit, with its wild onrushing joy and twilight melancholy. For her, cadence and character went hand in hand: her stories are marked by their minute attention to language, with its tonal rise and fall, hairpin rhetorical reversals and capacity for delicious hyperbolic understatement."

Finally, Paul Golin, Executive Director of SHJ, was in attendance and I enjoyed getting to know him better. It was great to reconnect with him when he visited Oraynu during the first weekend of June; I know many of you got the chance to meet and hear him speak.

JK-SK FAMILY PICNIC

Here's a photo of the students and parents from the picnic organized by JK-SK teacher Lina Vishnevsky, which was held following the last school class on May 13. Naomi and Gareth Peek hosted and even Principal Steve joined in the fun. Looks like a great time was had by all!

Thanks to Steve Bertin for the great photo.



REMINDER ~ SCHOOL REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

All School families and members have received an email from Roby. Info is available on our school website: www.oraynu.org/school under the REGISTER tab on the menu. And, remember to tell your friends how much your kids enjoy the School — we offer a \$100 referral gift.

BUILDING HEART 2018 (Heart to Heart Program Fundraiser)

By RABBI EVA GOLDFINGER

Oraynu was one of the sponsors of this year's fundraising and recognition event celebrating Heart to Heart, a joint project of Givat Haviva, Hashomer Hatzair and Camp Shomria Canada. Our very own **Jenny Isaacs** is the Director of Heart to Heart and emceed the event. Check out the website of this wonderful organization--www.heart-to-heart.ca/about.html. One of its programs bring together Arab and Jewish Israeli teens in a camp experience in Ontario so they can recognize and accept their differences and similarities and learn that only by talking to each other can they create peace for the future.

The celebration started out on a very sad note as Jenny shared with us that Romi Cohen, one of the alumni of the Heart to Heart program, drowned along with nine other youth in an Israeli flash flood on April 26th. We extend our sympathies to the families who have suffered such a terrible loss.

But then stoically, the celebration moved forward as we ate a delicious Arab and Israeli inspired dinner. Then, Dr. Karen Mock, a passionate human rights activist, a mover and shaker in Toronto JSpace Canada, and one of the founders of Heart to Heart, was celebrated and spoke a few words about the importance of the work of the organization and how crucial it is for us all to turn our beliefs into action—to reach out to 'the other', work to end repression and build peace. Karen has just been named to the Order of Canada because of her human rights work. It was such a delight for me to be there because Karen is a friend and, due to a previous engagements I was not able to attend a private dinner in her honour.

Karen's talk was followed by a musical performance by the wonderful singer Ella Gladstone Martin, an alumnus of Camp Shomria, accompanied on guitar by Oren. First, she sang *Song of the Mothers* in Hebrew, English and Arabic, then the popular *I Get by With a Little Help from my Friends*.

Zena Abo Zarka, a 17 year-old Muslim Palestinian and alumnus of the program, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at a previous Heart to Heart celebration in Toronto, gave a rousing talk about how her experience at the Ontario camp helped break down stereotypes about 'typical' Arabs and Israelis. Since that experience her younger brother is now attending a unique school where both Moslem and Jewish kids learn together, and she is active in extra-curricular programs at Givat Chaviva in

Israel. She recently instituted a new program of teaching Arabic to Israeli Jewish kids and Hebrew to Arab Moslem kids to enable the dialogue necessary to form relationships and bonds of friendship. She closed with a quote from the poet Kahlil Gibran that we need to work with love to achieve common goals.



Savyon Tzorf, an Israeli 17 year-old who met Zena in the Toronto camp program, spoke eloquently about the impact of Heart to Heart on her life. She is incidentally learning Arabic in the program Zena started. She noted that the success of the program so far has been that in Israel the teens cannot communicate without feeling pressured, but in Canada they let their guards down and found that the openness changed their attitudes towards each other profoundly. They spoke mostly in English so there was no fear that when the other kids spoke a language you did not understand, they were dissing you. Back home they are now in the mindset that it's up to them to change the culture. She is hoping that they can also set up 'safe spaces' in Israel because not all the kids can come to Toronto. Savyon feels that it is imperative that all Jewish kids learn Arabic and all Moslem kids learn Hebrew so they can work together to create peace.

It was such a delight to hear the passion and commitment of these teens but also to hear them sharing some of their typical youthful and funny memories from the camp experience. Jenny closed the presentations with a reiteration that 'communication' was central to creating a shared society that we all dream of. We heard about the alumni conference she planned in Israel which was accepted as just a day program and was so successful that next year it will be what she originally requested, a two-day program with an overnight component. I feel so hopeful when I see that young people have taken over the responsibility of making the necessary changes to create peace in Israel.

The evening ended with dessert, and a very successful auction led by Zane Caplansky to help sponsor more teens for the Canadian and Israeli programs. I bid on a number of things in the silent auction, but I haven't heard back so obviously someone outbid me.

This is such a worthwhile cause for Oraynu. I hope we continue to sponsor it and I hope more of you will attend next year and/or become involved in the work of Heart to Heart and its partners.

**WISDOM
FROM
OUR 2018
BNAI
MITZVAH
CLASS**

As part of the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony, each student does an individual presentation on a Jewish role model. Enjoy these excerpts from the speeches of this year's graduates:

Noah Buncel spoke on Dr. Erwin Buncel, renowned organic chemist:

Dr. Erwin Buncel, my grandfather, was born in 1931 in Czechoslovakia. ... Deported to Auschwitz in 1944, he survived by saying that he was older than his age and thus sent to the side with the able-bodied men. In 1946, he was sent to a boarding school in England that accepted children orphaned in the war. There he became fascinated by organic chemistry. He later was accepted on full scholarship to University College in London, and eventually became a Professor of Chemistry at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. ... Erwin accomplished much in his field of physical organic chemistry, collaborating with scientists in many other countries. Perhaps, he is best known for the establishment of an classification system called Buncel nomenclature, and in his work on the effect of solvents on organic chemistry molecule reactivity, his novel method of measurements is now referred to as the Buncel Method. ... Erwin never spoke negatively about his former captors during the war and did not endorse hatred towards anyone. His story is inspiring because despite all he has been through, he has remained a kind person. ... He believes that education can turn a person's life around; that it can prevent conflicts and wars. ... that collaboration could lead to breakthroughs in science and better the world. ... He believes in and has worked for reconciliation. And, he believes in tikkun olam. This is why he is my role model.

Alex Cherkassky spoke on Sarah Aaronsohn, a WWI spy:

Sarah Aaronsohn was born in 1890 in Zikhron Ya'akov, an agricultural colony in Ottoman-controlled Palestine. While travelling from Istanbul to Haifa in 1915, she witnessed the Armenian genocide, and later other atrocities in Palestine at the hands of the Ottomans. ... and decided to assist the British forces by spying for them against the Turks. ... She believed that liberating Palestine from Ottoman rule and replacing it with a British mandate was Zionism's best hope. ... She helped form a spy organization called 'Nili' ... which developed into the largest pro-British espionage network in the Middle East with a membership of 40 spies. ... Sarah wanted freedom for her people. She fought for her people who were oppressed and needed protection. She fought to save Jewish lives and protect them from persecution at the hands of the Ottomans. She was loyal to the end and it was this loyalty that would guide her to commit suicide in 1917 to keep the secrets of Nili from the Ottoman soldiers. ... Sarah Aaronsohn's ability to run a spy business calmly gives me confidence to do the right thing even if no one else thinks it's the right thing to do. It gives me the courage to stand up for people and to not give in to bullies. Sarah Aaronsohn also gives me the courage to help others when they cannot help themselves, even when times are tough.

Jenny Freeman spoke on actress and humanitarian Natalie Portman:

Born in Jerusalem in 1981, Natalie Portman is not only an Israeli-American actress and director, but also a Harvard graduate and a philanthropist. She has appeared in many movies, and in 2010 won both an Academy Award and Golden Globe for her performance in "Black Swan." ... Besides her film work, she devotes herself to many humanitarian causes. In 2004, Natalie became the first Ambassador of Hope for FINCA, an international village banking microfinance program providing small loans and savings programs to the world's poorest families so they can create their own jobs, raise household incomes, and improve their standard of living. She is also very involved in a Canadian charity called ME to WE. ... In 2017, she was awarded the Genesis Prize which honors individuals who ... inspire others through their commitment to social causes and connection to their Jewish roots. The \$1 million award was donated to programs (mostly in Israel) focused on advancing women's equality in education, health and safety, and political participation. ... Natalie Portman has worked consistently to secure children's rights, gender equality, education for girls, animal rights and has contributed much to the fight against poverty. ... She inspires me to give to other people throughout my life. She also inspires me as an animal rights activist. Currently, I work for an agency that takes cats off the streets and out of kill shelters and fosters them until they get good safe homes. I plan on continuing this work as I get older.

Marisa Kay spoke on feminist Betty Friedan:

Betty Friedan was born in Peoria, Illinois in 1921. Growing up, Betty experienced some anti-Semitism and this spurred her to think about the other injustices and inequalities that were all around her. The issue that struck her the most was gender inequality. ... To her, feminism was the true meaning of tikkun olam. ... Although the patriarchal nature of Judaism and other religions was a challenge to meld with her views on female equality, Betty Friedan took from Judaism the concepts of justice and support for community and demanded that it be extended to all women. ... As a feminist, Betty was a leading figure in the women's movement. Her 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, is often credited with sparking the second wave of feminism. Shortly after her book was published, Friedan co-founded the National Organization for Women called NOW, which would bring women "into the mainstream of American society [in] fully equal partnership with men." ... (She was also active) in the National Women's Political Caucus and ... founded the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws. Betty remained active in politics and advocacy for her entire life. Her book, *The Second Stage*, critiqued what Friedan saw as the excesses of some feminists. ... Betty Friedan did so much for feminism, Jewish women, and women in general. She fought for many rights that women now take for granted. And recent events have shown us that there is always more work to do. Researching her has taught me not to take the rights I have as a female for granted. The fact that one person was able to change so much has inspired me to contribute to tikkun olam.

Cameron Turner spoke on scientist and DNA pioneer Rosalind Franklin:

Born in London in 1920, Rosalind Franklin grew up in a family of cultural Jews. ... Setting her goal to become a chemist at age 15, Rosalind eventually earned a PhD in physical chemistry at the University of Cambridge. ... Having used reason rather than faith to guide her, Rosalind was inspired to improve the world through learning and discovery. ... She started working as a research associate in a Biophysics Unit at King's College London, alongside James Watson and Maurice Wilkins, who didn't believe she had the same abilities as them not only because she was a woman but also Jewish. Franklin is best known for her work on the X-ray diffraction images of DNA, particularly "photo 51", ... the first photo to prove that DNA had a double helix structure. This early 1950's picture was Watson's and Crick's inspiration to create the famous DNA model, which they could not have made without Rosalind's photo. ... However, her contribution was not acknowledged when Watson, Crick and Wilkins went on to share the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the DNA double helix molecule in 1962. ... Sadly, her discovery of the structure of DNA was buried under the weight of sexism and perhaps racism, although after her death Crick said Franklin's contribution had been critical. ... Even though Rosalind struggled as a scientist in the 1940s, I like to think what her life might have been like if she was a scientist in 2018. She would have received more credit for her work. What inspires me is knowing that so many women like Rosalind helped clear the path for other women and for me. I like science and one day I might choose a career in it, and I know that because of her I can.

**Mazel tov to our 2018
Bnai Mitzvah class!**

(From L) Alex Cherkassky, Marisa Kay,
Jenny Freeman, Cameron Turner,
Noah Buncel

Photo by David Morris Photography



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WHAT WE BELIEVE ...

- ◆ A Jew is someone who identifies with the history, culture, and fate of the Jewish people.
- ◆ Judaism encompasses the civilization created by the Jewish people. It includes art and music, folk culture, and the treasured masterpieces of our great writers and thinkers, from the Bible to the present.
- ◆ We have the power and responsibility to shape our own lives independent of supernatural authority.
- ◆ Our ethics and morality serve human needs. We participate in *tikkun olam* (building a better world) for all people.
- ◆ We strive to express our Jewishness in a manner consistent with our beliefs.
- ◆ We stand in solidarity with the State of Israel and with Jewish communities in Toronto and around the world.
- ◆ The freedom and dignity of the Jewish people must go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of all people.
- ◆ We warmly welcome into our community all those who share our values and who are connected to the Jewish people, whether by birth, adopted identity or by family relationship.

ORAYNU TRIBUTE DONATIONS/CARDS

Members and friends can choose to honour a person or an event (memorial, birth, birthday, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, anniversary, achievement, etc.) by making a tax-receiptable donation of \$18 or more to Oraynu. An **Oraynu Tribute Card** will be sent to the person or family of the honouree and the donation will be also recognized in *The Shofar*.

To arrange this, please contact Roby at:

416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org

PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Jewish Guidance is a service that many of our members expect from their congregational leaders. Oraynu provides part-time services of:

- Steve Shabes for guidance about Jewish education for children and youth
- Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, for guidance regarding life cycle transitions and conversion
- Rabbi Eva Goldfinger and Rabbi Denise Handlarski for pastoral guidance regarding intermarriage, Jewish practices, adult education and ethics

Guidance is offered, but not counseling or tutoring, which can be provided on a fee-for-service basis. **For referral to the appropriate person, contact Roby at: 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org/**

GET INVOLVED!

- Chesed Circle (Sunshine Committee) - Roby Sadler: roby@oraynu.org
- Fund Raising Oraynu (FRO) - Chair, Kevin Fine: kevinfine@sympatico.ca
- Tikkun Olam Oraynu - Rabbi Denise: rabbidenise@oraynu.org
- New Member Welcome - Rabbi Denise: as above
- Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Committee - Chair, Cara Wilkie: caralw@yahoo.com
- School Committee - Chair, Erin Winocur ewinocur@rogers.com

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Oraynu Children's School gratefully acknowledges funding support from:



Check website
for updates:
oraynu.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, July 8 at 11 am (More info: p. 3)

LESLIEVILLE FARMERS MARKET

Location: Queen and Woodward Ave. (e. of Greenwood)

Tuesday, July 10 at 6:30 pm (p. 3)

SUMMER BBQ & POTLUCK SOCIAL

Location: Members' home (Avenue Rd./Wilson)

Saturday, Aug. 11 at 5:00 pm (p. 4)

ORAYNU CAR RALLY

Starting/Ending point: Members' home (Avenue Rd./Wilson)

Tuesday, Aug. 28 at 7:30 pm (p. 4)

SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM~WHAT, WHY, HOW?

Location: Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Avenue (Sheppard/Wilson Hts.)

Mark your calendars for the HIGH HOLIDAYS:

Monday, Sept. 10 at 10:30 am **ROSH HASHANAH**

Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 8:00 pm **EREV YOM KIPPUR (Kol Nidrei/Nizkor)**

Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 10:30 am **YOM KIPPUR**

Location: The Avenue Banquet Hall, 1600 Steeles Ave. W. (at Dufferin)

For all events,
kindly RSVP
to Roby:
416-385-3910 or
roby@oraynu.org
*For potlucks,
indicate your
contribution and
number attending.*

**WATCH YOUR EMAIL/MAIL FOR MEMBERSHIP, HIGH HOLIDAY
AND SCHOOL REGISTRATION INFORMATION.**

**YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REGISTER FOR EVERYTHING ONLINE.
MEMBERS WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS MAY STILL REGISTER
THROUGH THE MAIL OR BY CONTACTING ROBY DIRECTLY.**

LAST WORD: Topics for Dinner Table or Car Talks

Want to inject a little more Judaism into the life of your family? These are suggestions from Rabbi Denise for a topic of conversation you can have at your next dinner party, around your family table, or in the car.



THIS ISSUE'S TOPIC

Given the recent use of the Bible to justify separating families at the US border, let us remember and discuss:

"You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 23:9).