

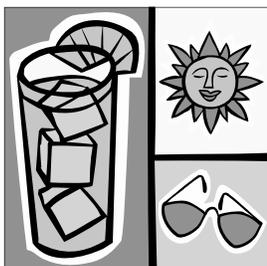


# The Shofar

Website:  
oraynu.org

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**Happy Summer!**

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

Summer's finally here and, as always, things slow down a bit at Oraynu, when many of our members also slow down. But we do have a few activities planned for you to enjoy. Hope you can join us. Here's a "teaser" for each one:

On July 16th, Evelyn Goldstein has organized an outing to the Textile Museum to see the unique exhibition, Tapestry of Spirit: The Torah Stitch by Stitch Project. Don't miss this opportunity to view this Jewish version of the Bayeux Tapestry!

Our annual Summer BBQ and Potluck Social takes place on Tuesday July 23rd Sarah Lavine and Cary Paul will be hosting once 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 Tuesday, August 20th, Rabbi Denise will host a talk on her new favourite book, "Kaddish.com." Read it over the summer, then come learn why she likes it so much!

Heads up for a very special event coming on Tuesday, Sept. 10th: Thanks to another generous donation from Sue and Rod McLeod, we are presenting the Yidlife Crisis guys, Chaimie and Leizer, in an evening of Yiddish fun and entertainment called "YidLive." It will be open to the public and we expect a sell-out. Members who reserve by July 18th can take advantage of a \$10 ticket price. If you're not familiar with them, just google them and you can access their videos via their

website. One particular favourite of mine is Season 2, Episode 3; it stars well-known actress Mayim Bialik, who is a big fan.

Looking ahead, on Tuesday, Sept. 17th, we will offer another of our semi-annual info sessions. "Secular Humanistic Judaism~ What, Why, How?" Spread the word over the summer to others whom you think may be interested in learning about Oraynu and how we "do Jewish."

The holidays are later this year, starting with Rosh Hashanah on Sept. 30th. Plan to join us with your family and friends to kick off New Year 5780.

Membership renewals will be coming soon; school families have already been notified to please register ASAP, so we can plan our staffing for the classes.

Also on these pages is the Annual General Meeting report, some tidbits of wisdom from this year's Bnai Mitzvah grads, the Six Words Humanistic Judaism Challenge, plus other bits and pieces.

Enjoy your summer, whatever you do!

*Sandi*

Sandi Horwitz, Editor

**Advance Notice:  
HIGH HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES**

**Rosh Hashanah: Sept. 30 at 10:30 am**  
**Erev Yom Kippur: Oct. 8, 8:00 pm**  
**Yom Kippur: Oct. 9 at 10:30 am**

This year, come experience our re-revised Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidrei) service, as well as Rosh Hashonah and YK Day.

**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



I'm going to get a little personal in this rabbi's message, practicing what I was preaching from the pulpit this past Rosh Hashanah when I spoke about vulnerability and bravery. The truth is, the past couple of months have been really hard for me. I have been sad, overwhelmed, and finding it difficult to do the things I normally enjoy doing.

I'm not telling you this so that you feel sorry for me. I'm telling you this because I think we live in a world in which everything has to be picture perfect, especially so it can be shared on social media to garner maximum "likes." But the reality is that there is nothing unique or particular about how I have been feeling. The majority of people struggle with periods when things are difficult. Sometimes it has to do with mental health and wellness, for depression and anxiety are very real and very pervasive. Sometimes it has to do with a change in life circumstance, such as grieving for a loved one, becoming a caregiver unexpectedly, health challenges, or losing a job. Sometimes we just don't know what is wrong — and that's ok too. Sometimes we can't name three logical reasons why we are not doing well and we are still allowed to honour our feelings and experiences. The fact that we still live in a world in which people do not share their personal struggles means that when any of us is struggling we can feel alone. So, if you've been struggling: you are not alone. I'm right there with you and there are lots of other folks with us too.

I have some very public jobs and, like lots of you, I am not able to call in "sad" to work. I have to show up and do my thing, whether it be teaching a class, running an Oraynu event, parenting, whatever it is. Usually I find that there is a positive momentum that comes from getting up and showing up, even when it is hard. I usually feel better after the class, the program, the outing with my kids. It is true that sometimes we can "fake it 'til we make it." Still, though, there is a cost to hiding how I am feeling — and I know it's something so many of you relate to: we have to wear many masks and it can get a little bit tiring.

Humanistic Jewish philosophy is grounded in the idea that we say what we believe and we believe what we say. Of course, the limitation is that none of us is going to tell "the whole

truth" at any given moment. Our challenge is to be authentic and still appropriate. So, yes, sometimes we will have to force ourselves into a smile. Or when someone asks "how are you?" We will manage to say "I'm fine. How are you?" Instead of sharing how we are really feeling. Although I'm a big proponent of authenticity, these are necessary acts (all meanings intended) and we all do them. The flip side is that we can't pretend all the time. We also need moments when we get to be real. We need to find people to whom we can say "I'm not fine." We need to sometimes share our struggles so that other people know they can share theirs.

So, in this rabbi's message, I'm telling you that I've had a hard time. I am getting support and I am still the person I have always been: someone who is able to balance and do a lot, someone who is generally pretty happy and (dare I say) fun to be around, someone who cares about and for others. Nothing is different between us as rabbi/congregant, as co-workers, or as friends. The sun has finally started to shine and things are looking up again for me. I hope that if you've had a hard time they start looking up again for you too.

In a recent Oraynu survey the majority of respondents said their number one reason for being part of our community is a "sense of belonging." That sense of belonging is rooted in the idea that we can be our whole selves. At Oraynu, you belong if you are intermarried, LGBTQ, a "bad" Jew (whatever that means). You also belong if you are sick or struggling. We are here to pull each other up. I'm glad I belong with you. And I'm glad you're the kind of community where I can bring my whole self too. So I hope to see you at the amazing events we have coming up. The summer is the time we kick back together (BBQ). This fall we will laugh together (on September 10th!). And then November 2nd we celebrate 50 years of being and doing something extraordinary: speaking our truths and living our lives authentically, meaningfully, and in a way that promotes and fosters belonging. In our world where people are "Pinterest perfect" on the outside, but often sad and suffering on the inside, being and doing who and what we are, as individuals and as a community, is no small thing.

*Denise*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, July 16**  
1:00 pm

### Join Evelyn Goldstein for a daytime outing to view the exhibition **TAPESTRY OF SPIRIT: The Torah Stitch by Stitch Project**

**Textile Museum  
of Canada**  
55 Centre Ave.  
(Dundas St. W &  
University; St. Patrick  
subway stop)

*Tapestry of Spirit* presents the ambitious and inclusive social project to cross-stitch the first five books of the Bible as well as selections from the Scriptures and Qur'an, reflecting on the theme of creation. It is an immersive installation that has been collectively created by almost 1500 volunteers of many faiths, under the artistic leadership of Temma Gentles (Toronto). Visitors will journey through nearly 1000 panels in three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Arabic) including illuminations and embellishments by stitchers from 28 countries who have interpreted these ancient narratives into contemplative and personal expressions.



The award-winning short documentary *Stitchers: Tapestry of Spirit* accompanies the exhibition.

**Adults: \$15**  
**Seniors: \$10**  
Payable at museum

**Tuesday, July 23**  
6:30 pm



### **SUMMER BBQ & POTLUCK SOCIAL**

**Join your Oraynu friends at Sarah and Cary's home for a summer evening of food, socializing and fun!**

**Members' home**  
Allen Rd/Eglinton  
area

- 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*

**Tuesday, Aug. 20**  
7:30 pm

### **BOOK TALK led by Rabbi Denise: [Kaddish.com](http://Kaddish.com)**

**Nathan Englander, celebrated Pulitzer finalist and prize-winning author, delivers his best work yet—a streamlined comic masterpiece about a son's failure to say Kaddish for his father.**

Larry is an atheist in a family of Orthodox Jews. When his father dies, it's his responsibility to recite the Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, every day for eleven months. To the horror and dismay of his sister, Larry refuses—imperiling the fate of his father's soul. To appease her, Larry hatches an ingenious if cynical plan, hiring a stranger through a website called [kaddish.com](http://kaddish.com) to recite the prayer and shepherd his father's soul safely to rest.

Sharp, irreverent, hilarious, and wholly irresistible, Englander's tale ingeniously captures the tensions between the religious and secular worlds—a book to be devoured in a single sitting whose pleasures and provocations will be savored long after.

*Bring your friends, too — non-members welcome: \$15*

**Members' home**  
Leslie/Cummer area



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

## ORAYNU A.G.M. REPORT



The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 18th at the Borochoy 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** mentioned several highlights of the year: the meaningful High Holidays and other Jewish holiday programs; the public talk by CBC's Jesse Wentz, sponsored by Sue and Rod McLeod, continuing our focus on Indigenous/Jewish relations; Show Your Heart, which extended that theme with members educating members (Mark Brender, Larry Kline, Penny Parnes) on Indigenous issues and raising funds for clean water initiatives; Tikkun Olam Oraynu's "Period Purse" event; our Yom Ha'atzmaut discussion on Israel where people shared their feelings and concerns; and others. Denise cited the weekly Email Blast and thanked Roby, Sandi, Karen, Steve, and Eva for their hard work behind the scenes. Lastly, she reported on Rabbis Without Borders and what she had learned that will help Oraynu going forward.

In his Treasurer's Report, **Robert Horwitz** commented that Oraynu is in a strong financial position, with the General Fund having a surplus of \$130,000 (as at June 30, 2018) representing about 6 months of our operating expenses. Plus we have an additional \$41,000 in our Building Fund and \$177,000 in our Cemetery Fund for total member assets of \$444,000. Our membership numbers have been fairly steady for the past few years, currently at 139 family/single units and the School with 50 students. We are projecting a surplus of \$31,500 for this fiscal year (ending June 30, 2019), versus an initial projection of only \$2,000; this is due to a delayed donation coming from the US and a very successful School Fund drive. Robert closed with a presentation on the Investment Policy being developed by the Finance Committee to handle our surplus funds. (See below). Membership fees will remain the same for the coming year.

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

Prior to the **election of Officers**, each Board member on the slate was asked to present a brief backgrounder on themselves, to help acquaint members with those to whom we entrust our management. Then the election took place; the Board remains the same as last year with the addition of Shelly Maerov, who come on the Board a few months ago. See the complete listing of Officers on the back inside cover.

The meeting was quite interactive and prompted some good discussion. People were interested in how to participate in the board and other committees, and one "junior" member present even wanted to know the minimum age for participation on the board (it's 18!).

Much gratitude was expressed to Robert Horwitz for his long standing exemplary contributions. As President Mark said, there was no item too small for Robert to develop a spreadsheet to help us understand the implications!

**Louise Sherman** presented the **results of the survey** which was done earlier this year. This generated a lot of discussion about how well Oraynu was doing as indicated by the survey and also how we could improve. This will be the focus of upcoming meetings (Chew and Chat – the term is self-explanatory), held semi-annually between staff and board. Louise also stressed that if members were interested in more details they could contact her and we might consider having a member's forum for further discussion.

Mark reminded everyone about **Oraynu's upcoming 50th anniversary** and how the plans are progressing. Then, as always at Oraynu events, we noshed and schmoozed to end the evening.

(Prepared with notes from Penny Parnes, Secretary)

### ORAYNU'S INVESTMENT POLICY

As referred to above, our new policy was revealed at the AGM on June 18th. If you were unable to attend the meeting and are interested to know more about our goals and rationale, please email Treasurer Robert Horwitz at: [rhoewitz@rogers.com/](mailto:rhoewitz@rogers.com) and he will be happy to forward a copy to you. He welcomes any input members wish to provide.

*In celebration of our 50th anniversary and our Yiddishkeit roots*  
**Oraynu presents, in partnership with the Miles Nadal JCC,**  
**Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion, the “YidLife Crisis” guys, in**  
**YidLive**



Jamie (Chaimie) Eli (Leizer)

*An evening of comedy, music, video and thought-provoking shtick*  
**Tuesday, Sept. 10 @ 7:30 pm | Miles Nadal JCC (Bloor/Spadina)**

**Members: \$10 (until July 18 only; thereafter \$25)**

**Non-Members: \$25 (Bring your family and friends too)**

**Reserve now—YidLive shows usually sell out!**

**Presented with the generous support of Susan and Roderick McLeod**

*Note: This show is for everyone regardless of background in Yiddish; subtitles are provided on large screen with videos.*

## **Board President Mark Brender’s A.G.M. Report**

Opportunities like this don’t come around often in ‘The Six’, and we have to take them where we can. So, consider this the first Oraynu president’s report to start off with congratulations to the Toronto Raptors on a tremendous winning season.



And happily enough, just like the Raptors, in 2018-19 Oraynu kept our eye on the ball. While there is always much on which we can improve, a member survey earlier this spring told us that Oraynu is indeed delivering on much of what our community is seeking. We had a high level of engagement in the survey from members and non-members alike, and 92% of respondents said Oraynu was meeting or exceeding their expectations.

A sense of belonging, our High Holiday services, and the Oraynu Children’s School emerged as the top three reasons people why people join our community, and it goes without saying that the quality of our programming – and of our brilliant and dedicated staff – is embedded in those answers. We also know that for many members, our *tikkun olam* activities give a sense of purpose to what we do and help define who we are. For many of us, Oraynu exists both to accomplish positive change in the world as a reflection of our values, and to serve as a connection to the past and to tradition in a way that makes sense to us as individuals – also a reflection of what we value. This duality was central to much of the discussion we had as a board throughout the year as we continued to think about points of emphasis to prospective new members – **and** how to best serve our current community. The quest continues.

And the quest is always made enjoyable by our people. Lightning may strike down from the heavens for saying this – the lightning due only to an accumulation of

positively and negatively charged particles in the air, surely – but I’ll say it anyway: Our monthly Board meetings, more often than not, are actually *fun*. This is a good thing, because when you add up all the committees that Board and staff and volunteers serve on, e.g. investment, finance, School, *tikkun olam*, cemetery, 50th anniversary (I must be missing some!), it’s a lot of committees. A lot also gets done.

For that, without listing them all individually, I’d like to give a hearty shout-out to all our staff and Board for another year of exceptional service. The Board welcomed one new member this year. Shelly Maerov brings many years of Jewish leadership experience, now to a place where he can be his authentic Jewish self. And because of all that fun, all Board members from 2018-19 are coming back for more.

I don’t think any of those said Board members would be upset though if one other person received special mention here. That person would be Robert Horwitz. For Robert, there is no budget category too small to be pulled out in a new explanatory Excel tab, and no discussion about how Oraynu works where his institutional memory and active engagement don’t elevate the discussion. The times when the Board meetings are not fun often happen to be those when we consider all the changes we’ll have to make when Robert decides his time on the Board is at an end. Fortunately, he recently told us he’s halfway through his term, and we know he’s good to his word.

We close the fiscal year looking ahead to our 50th anniversary coming up in November. Like the Raptors, we have plenty to celebrate and are excited to make some “hoop-la” of our own.

## “SIX WORDS” HUMANISTIC JUDAISM CHALLENGE

Prior to the recent SHJ@50 Celebration and Summit at the Birmingham Temple in April, SHJ's Executive Director Paul Golin sent out a challenge to attendees to come up with a six-word statement on:



### “What makes you passionate about Humanistic Judaism?”

Paul got it going with his comment “Honesty about my beliefs ... plus kreplach!” Here are selected others:

Joining secular roots with Jewish traditions	Judaism: my way and my beliefs
Humanistic Judaism takes courage and integrity	Everything I believe; nothing I don't
A Jewish life without supernatural authority	Authentic expression of who I am
Cultural, spiritual Jewish identity with integrity	Jewish identity and practice that's meaningful
Judaism can evolve. I can too.	No longer hiding what I believe
Celebrate and honor my heritage authentically	Preserving Judaism for the next generation
Tradition, comfort and community, without hypocrisy.	Authentic Judaism without having to compromise.

### So here's a challenge to Oraynu members:

**How would YOU describe it? Send your suggestions to me at: [horwitz@rogers.com](mailto:horwitz@rogers.com)**

(For more background on the “six word memoir” format, go to: <https://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/about/>)

### ***Come celebrate with us!***



**Oraynu Congregation marks its 50th anniversary**

**Saturday, November 2nd**

**Havergal College (Avenue Rd/Lawrence)**

Join us for fabulous munchies, music and memories — \$25 pp  
(includes light hors d'oeuvres & dessert reception and beverages; cash bar)

**Mark it on your calendars now! Official invites coming in September**

**Mark your calendars: Sept. 17 @7:30 pm**

### **SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM: WHAT, WHY, HOW?**

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

Learn about how we “do Jewish” in a secular/cultural way and find out if this approach resonates with you. This is also a chance to meet our staff, find out about our programs, and eat yummy cookies. Members are our best PR tools, so spread the word and bring a friend or relative, too!

*Led by Rabbi Denise Handlarski & Music Leader Sandi Horwitz*

**Borochoy Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. (Wilson Hts/ Sheppard)**

**Everyone welcome | No charge to attend | RSVP requested**



## Would you like to be more involved in Oraynu? Here's how...

Rabbi Denise is seeking support on the following committees:

- **Sunshine Committee** helps out when Oraynunik's need a little help — a ride, a food drop off, a chat.
- **Programming Committee** is a new initiative designed to help support the many programs we offer. Want to advise on programs that would interest Oraynu? Want to help run programs? This committee is for you.
- **Tikkun Olam Oraynu (TOO) Committee** plans our social justice initiatives like Indigenous advocacy, helping out in soup kitchens, etc. We're always happy to include new folks on this team!



To help out with any of the above, please email [rabbidenise@oraynu.org](mailto:rabbidenise@oraynu.org) to express your interest.



We will soon be moving to a new software platform, called **ShulCloud**, which will change but also improve our constituents' online and web-based experiences, such as when registering for school and other congregational events, renewing memberships, and receiving email blasts.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Louise Sherman at: [louisejay@hotmail.com](mailto:louisejay@hotmail.com)/ Stay tuned!!



### 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](http://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.



**Sisterhood of  
Salaam Shalom**

**Jewish and Muslim Women Waging Peace**

Member **Asi Orbach** brought this groundbreaking organization to my attention as she has recently become involved with the group. We thought it was worth a mention in our newsletter.

The mission of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is to build trust, respect, and relationships between North American Muslim and Jewish women and teenage girls. Through these relationships, the women/girls commit to work together to limit acts of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment, stand up to hate against one another and engage in social action work.

Monthly meetings begin with both a Jewish and an Islamic prayer, and then a free-flowing discussion follows, on a topic such as religious experiences, family or childhood. The goal according to Sabreena Ghaffar-Siddiqui, a co-founder of the Toronto chapter, is that "the individual women who are part of the group may learn a little bit more about the other side, and if they hold any assumptions or misunderstandings, it might help them see the other side in a different light."

Currently, more than 3500 women are involved with chapters across the US, Canada and Britain. The Toronto Circle is the first Canadian group. To learn more about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom—Toronto Circle, visit them on Facebook, or email: [SOSSToronto@gmail.com](mailto:SOSSToronto@gmail.com)

## THE BOOK CORNER

Book Corner is a place to suggest books Oraynuniks may enjoy. Send your suggestions to Rabbi Denise for inclusion in the next Shofar: [rabbidenise@oraynu.org/](mailto:rabbidenise@oraynu.org/)



### **This month Rabbi Denise has offered a suggestion: Amos Oz' book "A Tale of Love and Darkness"**

Oz, who passed away last year, was regarded as Israel's foremost novelist. He will be the subject of one of our Stories of Transformation on Yom Kippur Day, so Rabbi Denise is suggesting you get to know more about him in advance by reading his epic autobiography over the summer.

SYNOPSIS: This is the story of Amos Oz, a boy growing up in the war-torn Jerusalem of the 40s and 50s in a small apartment crowded with books in twelve languages and relatives speaking nearly as many. His mother and father, both wonderful people, were ill-suited to each other. When Oz was twelve years old, his mother committed suicide, a tragedy that was to change his life. He leaves the constraints of his family and community to join a kibbutz, changes his name, marries, has children, and finally becomes a writer as well as an active participant in Israel's political life. Its moving passage on the declaration of Israel as a state is a powerful testament to his storytelling skills. It is a story of clashing cultures and lives, of suffering and perseverance, of love and darkness.

## Judaism Unbound Podcasts

[www.judaismunbound.com/](http://www.judaismunbound.com/)

**Judaism Unbound**, a project of the Institute for the Next Jewish Future, produces a once-a-week podcast, runs an active facebook page, and features blog posts by fellows of the Institute and guests. According to their website, Judaism Unbound "values the ways that you choose to connect to Judaism, whether through rituals steeped in millennia-old traditions or through entirely new paradigms that ancient Jewish texts never dreamed of; whether your Judaism includes participation in Jewish communal organizations or not; whether you live and breathe Jewishly 24/7 or you just want to connect once or twice a year; whether you think of yourself as Jewish, half-Jewish, Jewish-and-X, partly-Jewish, not-Jewish, or Jew-ish."

**JU moderated a terrific panel discussion at the recent SHJ@50 celebration, with five of the younger/newer rabbis including Rabbi Denise speaking on the future of Humanistic Judaism. Here is the link to this enlightening podcast: <https://www.judaismunbound.com/podcast/bonus-episode-humanistic-judaism-at-50>**



## Medina Theatre Ensemble — AUDITION NOTICE

Oraynu member **Reva Lawry** is artistic director of the **Medina Theatre Ensemble** — a play-reading group that does public performances. **The group will present two one-act stage plays at Borochov Cultural Centre on Thursday Sept. 5**, with performances elsewhere on Sept. 8 and 10.

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The two 40-minute plays are:

**"RUMOUR HAS IT"** which takes place in the kitchen of a synagogue and asks is gossip necessarily bad? When Rachel Stern and her women's group hear an outrageous rumour about her ex-husband's fiancée they argue about the virtue of gossip, until the fiancée herself arrives.

**"ZIMMERMAN'S NEIGHBOURHOOD"** takes place in Toronto's Jewish area. A Jewish store owner is reminiscing about the history of Spadina Avenue to his nephew Sid who tries to convince him to sell his "schmatte" store for a high real estate value. Various customers come in and Uncle Benny deals with them in a most unprofessional manner while his nephew Sid looks on.

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The company is holding **auditions for stage readings on Sunday, July 21 and Monday July 22nd**. Memorization is not necessary. Maximum of 3 rehearsals per week beginning in late July. **To book an audition, please contact Reva at [stagework7@gmail.com](mailto:stagework7@gmail.com) or (416) 445-8718.**

## JOIN OUR ORAYNU HIGH HOLIDAY CHOIR THIS YEAR!

We invite you to be part of our music-making for Rosh Hashanah (Monday, Sept. 30th, 10:30am), Kol Nidrei (Tuesday, Oct. 8th, 8pm) and Yom Kippur (Wednesday, Oct. 9, 10:30am).

**Sopranos, altos, tenors and basses are all welcome.** The ability to read music is helpful, but not essential. Our choir leader helps make us all sound great. Rehearsals start a few weeks prior to the holidays and are always lots of fun. And ... our CD, *Oraynu Sings*, can help you learn many of the songs!

**Sandi Horwitz, our Music Leader, is prepared to meet with you over the summer and start reviewing the music to prepare you for the fall rehearsals.**

Rehearsals are held in the **Bayview/Cummer** area.

*Non-members are welcome to sing with us, so bring your friends too. Come and be part of Oraynu's wonderful holiday music.*

**Contact Sandi Horwitz at: [horwitz@rogers.com](mailto:horwitz@rogers.com) or 416-229-9313.**



*Thank You  
from*



**(With notes from Maxine Katz and Rabbi Karen Levy)**

On April 28th, the Tikkun Olam Oraynu Committee, hosted a "Packing and Pizza Party" for The Period Purse, one of its 2018-19 mini-projects. 24 Oraynuniks got together to prepare bags for homeless women, filled with menstrual supplies. Together they packed 65 "purses" and donated bundles of other needed items to The Period Purse for distribution. The participants felt they were doing something very worthwhile, and had fun too. In addition, many others who could not attend dropped off needed products at the School or at Borochov prior to the event. Thanks to everyone who helped make this project a success! We received the following note of thanks:

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION, THE PERIOD PURSE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE OUR MOST SINCEREST THANKS. BECAUSE OF YOUR GOOD DEED, TIME AND EFFORT, THE MENSTRUATORS WE SERVE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE CHOICE OF A HEALTHY PERIOD, FREE FROM SHAME AND STIGMA. KEEP BEING AMAZING! SINCERELY—THE TPP TEAM

**Here's how it all got started ... (A perfect example of how one person can change the world!):**

While driving to work at the beginning of 2017, Jana Girdauskas of Toronto encountered a person experiencing homelessness and began thinking about what this individual would do during menstruation. Jana was compelled to fill one purse with menstrual products and other wellness items and planned to keep the pack in her car for a person in need. With everything to fill the purse at home, Jana was just missing the physical bag. So, she asked a local Facebook group if anyone had a spare "period purse" to share. Within a month, Jana received 350 purses filled with donated product and in February 2017, The Period Purse was launched. Today, The Period Purse is Canada's first registered charity dedicated to menstrual equity and has given over 22,000 healthy periods to marginalized menstruators across Canada. **Please visit [www.theperiodpurse.com](http://www.theperiodpurse.com) to learn more about The Period Purse's pillars of Outreach, Education and Advocacy.**



For more Oraynu news and conversation, log onto our FB page. It's a great place to connect with fellow members, share ideas, and stay up-to-date on events. We'll be posting frequently and hope you chime in with opinions and relevant links of your own. Please 'like' the page, share it with friends and keep it lively.

**WISDOM  
FROM  
OUR 2019  
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:

**Jayden Breslow-Bardell spoke on Natalie Portman, actress and humanitarian:**

As an actress and activist, Natalie is aware that people will listen to her. By contributing her money, time or voice, Natalie has supported animal rights, environmentalism, political activism, women and children's rights, and more. She supported Operation Human Warmth, an Israeli effort to collecting winter clothing for Syrian refugees displaced by the civil war in their country. She has always been an advocate for peace between Israel and Palestine, and says: "Until we accept the fact that we are constituents of the same family, we will blunder in believing that a loss for one "side" is not a loss for all humankind."

Natalie Portman inspires me to reach for the stars but to still remember that some people are stuck on earth and can't afford to do the things that I can. I really want girls and women to be treated with the same amount of respect as boys and men everywhere in the world. Natalie is fearless in speaking out for things she believes in, even if her opinion is not the most popular one. She inspires me to walk the talk in my life and to take a stand for equality—and to make sure that everyone is treated the same, especially women and girls.

**Kyle Brozovsky spoke on Stephen Lewis, widely-respected humanitarian:**

Following stints as leader of the Ontario NDP and as Canada's UN Ambassador, Stephen became the UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa in 1990. Stephen's activism goes beyond bringing awareness to causes. His strength as a politician and charisma as a speaker have helped change the world. As co-chair of J-RAN, the Jewish Refugee Action Network he advocated for refugee rights. In 2003, he created the Stephen Lewis Foundation to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa, which has funded over 1600 projects and disbursed over \$80 million.

I look up to Stephen Lewis because he likes to take action. His involvement in politics, J-RAN, and his foundation teaches me to do the same. Learning about him has helped me connect to Humanistic Judaism and being a good person, responsible for making the world around me a better place. It reminds me that when I see a problem, I should do something about it. As he explains, "What responsibility means is being your own guru . . . Any healing, any progress, any hope, and any despair is going to come from you." He shows me that we can all make change in the world.

**Colin Gordon spoke on William Epstein:**

William Epstein, a Canadian Jew, dedicated his life to the cause of nuclear disarmament. When war broke out in 1939, Epstein joined the Canadian Army. During the war, he frequently spoke to non-Jewish groups about anti-Semitism, the Nazi threat and the solutions offered by Zionism. In 1950, Epstein was made the chief of the Disarmament Group at the UN. It would be the beginning of a lifelong campaign. As a senior advisor at the UN, he devoted himself to world peace through nuclear disarmament. He drafted some of the most complex papers on the issue laying the groundwork for a safer future free of all nuclear weapons.

William Epstein believed in peace and prosperity and would do anything to avoid war. He knew what nuclear war would do to the planet. He cared for humanity and the environment. He believed that the Zionist movement could help keep the Jewish community safe. William inspires me to help those around me and the greater global community by saving the environment, supporting those in need, and learning ways to stop conflicts that lead to war.

**Daniel Hammer spoke on Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, who was killed on the space shuttle Columbia:**

After serving in the Israeli Air Force, Colonel Ramon was selected for space flight in 1997 and trained at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. As an astronaut, he became a Payload Specialist on the space shuttle Columbia. His work in space contributed to the advancement of science, with two of the experiments were in collaboration with a Hebrew University study.

Ramon's father had fled Nazi persecution in the 1930s, and his mother and grandmother had survived Auschwitz. He was asked by the American Society for Yad Vashem to take an item aboard the shuttle and chose a pencil sketch entitled "Moon Landscape", by 16-year-old Peter Ginz, who died in Auschwitz. Looking down on planet Earth from space, Ramon said, "The world looks marvellous from up here, so peaceful, so wonderful and so fragile. Everybody, all of us down there, not only in Israel, have to keep it clean and good."

Ilan Ramon shows me that if you really believe in something, you should do everything in your power to accomplish it. Even though he was not a religious Jew, he tried to honour and remember the Jews of the past. He has inspired me to think about my Jewish heritage. Even if his life did not have the happiest ending, his actions supported humanistic Jewish values.

**Isabelle Romalis spoke on children’s advocate, anti-bullying educator and author Lorna Blumen:**

Many years ago, while serving on the Board of the Parent Education Network. Lorna recognized that there was a need to teach young children conflict resolution strategies. From her bullying prevention work, Lorna had learned that respect for the self and others is the key to preventing bullying. She wanted to help kids stay connected and learn more about respect. That’s how her Girls’ Respect Groups Program got started; it is now used in every middle school in the Toronto District School Board and over 130 countries around the world.

Lorna believes that when young people develop self-respect, resilience and empathy, they can contribute more as individuals and globally. Lorna holds hope for young people to create a world with respect and safety for all and believes that from this standpoint of strength, we can solve many problems together. Her sense of Judaism is a driving force behind everything she does. When you want the world to be a better place, that is drawing on the essential qualities of being Jewish. That’s the notion of Tikkun Olam. Lorna – through her work – is actively seeking to make the world a better place for all of us. She is also the author of 5 books.

**Note: Lorna and her husband Peter Fraser are long-time members of Oraynu.**

**Hannah Steeves spoke on U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg:**

Known as the notorious RBG, Ginsburg strongly believed in the humanistic value that an individual should be judged on their ability rather than race, religion and gender. She practices humanistic and Jewish values in her role as a judge. She models caution, moderation, and restraint. She is a strong voice on the Supreme Court in favour of gender equality, the rights of workers, and the separation of religious beliefs from governance. Ginsburg has worked tirelessly to make change and her quiet determination enables her to get her message across in a way that creates solutions and leads to laws that are shaped to her way of thinking. Ginsburg once said “Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you”

Ginsburg has spoken about the concept of tikkun olam as an important part of her Jewish heritage. She is quoted as saying “The struggle to repair the world never ceases.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg inspires me to be a better person. Her story has increased my awareness of the discrimination that still exists in the world today. She motivates me to stand up for what I believe in, even if it’s not the popular opinion. She encourages me to make change by listening and trying to understand the other side, while still expressing my views.

**Jailyn Waese spoke on nurse and public health activist Lillian Wald:**

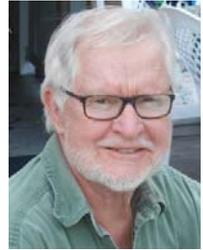
In 1894, Lillian founded the Henry Street Settlement on the lower east side of Manhattan. It provided community services and health care. She insisted that the social services and arts programs at the Henry Street Settlement be accessible to everyone. She believed that people are responsible for solving their own problems and sought solutions that respected the freedom, dignity, and self-esteem of everyone in her community, which was largely, but not exclusively Jewish. Founding the Settlement was Lillian Wald’s version of contributing to tikkun olam.

She also believed in having a nurse in every school which led the New York Board of Health to organize the first public nursing system in the world. She also campaigned for housing reform, women’s suffrage and racial integration. Lillian Wald believed in respecting the freedom, dignity, and self-esteem of every human being. To her, “Nursing is love in action and there is no finer manifestation than the care of the poor and disabled in their own homes.” This inspires me to talk to people who are not well. Like Lillian, I will support human rights. I won’t say that some people are more important because of their gender or age. Like her, I believe that everyone should have access to health care. Lillian Wald believed that everyone is important. I believe that everyone is important.

(See next page for a group photo of our graduates)

**SHJ President Richard Logan on the recent SHJ@50 celebration**

If you were unable to attend the exceptional *SHJ@50* event of April 26-28th, I hope you will be thoroughly briefed by others of your communities or networks of members who could attend. I am sure they will convey both the enthusiasm, admiration, and gratitude I feel toward all of the presenters, the planners, contributors, and the staff who pulled off something really special. Everyone who participated in any way—from keynotes, to presenting a session, to asking smart questions or making helpful comments—added real value for all of us to who we are in SHJ, to what we do, and to what we can do beyond what we do now, and to what we **will** do in the future thanks to new knowledge, new insights, and renewed commitment -- and energy!



I and others will be communicating more about all of this in more detail in coming days and weeks, and there is a lot to communicate! But for now let me try to convey something of its import and impact by saying just this: I find it very hard to find words to express my awe at the high quality of the presentations, the sessions and their discussions, and of the rich informal conversations so many had with so many others over meals and between sessions. I also find it very hard to find words that would do justice to the gratitude I feel to Mary Raskin and the committee that so intelligently and thoroughly planned all of this, to Executive Director Paul Golin who worked very hard to make so many of the committee's ideas become real, to Rabbi Miriam Jerris who was present at every moment with all she knows about what needs to be done and how to do it, and to our incredible office staff of Jennifer Grodsky and Kathy Tschirhart who were tireless in support.

Welcome to the *Beginning of the Second 50!* We are off to a great start!

*Richard*

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**Note from Rabbi Adam Chalom**, Dean — International Institute for Humanistic Judaism:

I agree with everything Richard wrote. **The even better news is that he didn't have to make those who missed the conference feel bad - just about all of the sessions were video recorded! That means you'll be able to see what you missed, even if you WERE there but couldn't be in two places at once. And hopefully these quality presentations will be useful for community programming, discussions and growth.**

I have no idea of the timeline for making the video available, but quality video production/editing does take some time so we should be patient. Just wanted to make sure you knew that SHJ@50 will be the conference that keeps on giving!

**Meet our 2019 Bnai Mitzvah Grads and their Proud Support Staff**



(Front) Daniel Hammer, Kyle Brozovsky, Jayden Breslow-Bardell, Jailyn Waese (Back) Isabelle Romalis, Hannah Mendoza Steeves, Colin Gordon



Teacher/Director Etti Stubbs, Parent Co-ordinator Esther Shron, Office Manager Roby Sadler, Principal Steve Shabes

## ORAYNU CONGREGATION FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

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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) - Contact either Mark Brender or Steve Shabes: mbrender11@gmail.com/stevenshabes@yahoo.ca
- Tikkun Olam Oraynu - Rabbi Denise: rabbidenise@oraynu.org
- New Member Welcome – Rabbi Denise: as above
- School Committee - Chair, Erin Winocur: ewinocur@rogers.com

## **THE SHOFAR is a bi-monthly publication of Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism. EDITOR: SANDI HORWITZ**

Oraynu Congregation is part of a worldwide movement, affiliated with Society for Humanistic Judaism and the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism.

Oraynu Children's School gratefully acknowledges funding support from:



Check website  
for updates:

oraynu.org

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, July 16 at 1 pm** (More info: p. 3)

**VIEWING OF "TAPESTRY OF SPIRIT: THE TORAH STITCH-BY-STITCH PROJECT"**

**Location:** Textile Museum of Canada, 55 Centre Ave. (Dundas W/University)

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**Tuesday, July 23 at 6:30 pm** (p. 3)

**SUMMER BBQ & POTLUCK SOCIAL**

**Location:** Members' home, Allen Rd/Eglinton area

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**Tuesday, Aug. 20 at 7:30 pm** (p. 3)

**BOOK TALK w/ RABBI DENISE: "Kaddish.com"**

**Location:** Members' home, Leslie/Cummer area

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**Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 7:30 pm** (p. 5)

**YID-LIVE with the Yidlife Crisis Guys, Chaimie and Leizer**

**Location:** Miles Nadal JCC (Bloor and Spadina)

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**Tuesday, Sept. 17 at 7:30 pm** (p. 6)

**SECULAR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM~WHAT, WHY, HOW?**

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

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**Mark your calendars for the HIGH HOLIDAYS:**

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

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

**Wednesday, Oct. 9 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: 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**

You've heard of Tu B'shvat but did you know that in the summer we celebrate a holiday called Tu B'av? It's all about love! It was originally a fertility festival and became the Jewish Valentine's Day. This year it is Thursday, August 15 (evening) through Friday August 16. A perfect day for a date or family outing!

**Find out more at: [www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tu-bav/](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tu-bav/) then discuss!!**