



Associate Rabbi's Column
Looking Forward to Meaningful Encounters

Nathan Kamesar

I want to meet with you. I think that's about as bluntly as I can put it. And yes, by you, I mean literally everyone who is reading this. I can't think of anyone into whose hands the

Keshet might fall with whom I would not want to meet.

I say that I want to meet with you for several reasons. Let's start with the holy ones. Revered Jewish thinker Martin Buber writes, with respect to his now famous concept of I-Thou relationships, "All actual life is encounter." There is no point in being a rabbi, I don't think, if you're not out to make profound impacts, and be profoundly impacted, through one-on-one encounters. Being a rabbi isn't all about being up on the bimah (though I confess, it can be fun to be up there). It's about knowing people, truly. By that I mean taking the time to really understand where people have come from, where they are, and where they think they want to go, and sharing my own journey and trajectory with them. This encounter between two people, I believe, is part of the holy work of making Jewish community.

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Keshet

Rabbi Nathan Kamesar

Continued from cover

Second, I believe in Judaism. By that I mean, I believe that living a Jewish life, *very* broadly interpreted, can help transform you (and by you, I mean all of us) for the good. I believe that engaging with Jewish rituals, Jewish practices, and Jewish ideas can help attune us to the Divine hum reverberating throughout the universe, however you interpret that. This doesn't mean I agree with *all* Jewish rituals, practices, and ideas, nor do I believe that being Jewish is the *only* way to tune into, and act in concert with, that Divine hum. I'm sure there are multitudinous ways. But I believe that living a largely Jewish life is a pretty powerful, time-tested way of doing so. So I want to meet with you because I want to discuss, in an open-minded, nonjudgmental way, how you can make living Jewishly work for you.

We've all probably had various Jewish experiences in our lives that have, unfortunately, turned us off from Jewish community. I want to talk about those moments or experiences. And, conversely, I want to talk about the beautiful moments. Things that made you proud to be Jewish, or to be associated with the Jewish community, or that lit your lamp, so to speak. I want to meet with you because I want to talk about the challenges and opportunities of being Jewish, and to grow, together.

Additionally, I want to meet with you because I want to build this particular Jewish community at Society Hill Synagogue together. In an increasingly individualized world, where we find ourselves glued to our phones, stressed about the various needs of the day, wondering if we're doing enough, I want us to find this community to be something that rejuvenates us. I don't always agree with *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, but I want to share a couple of his thoughts from a recent, provocatively-titled column, "Five Lies Our Culture Tells Us." Lie number three, he says, is the one that says "life is an individual journey." He contrasts the notion of believing freedom is the absence of restraint, the ideal of always feeling like we can take off on some spontaneous adventure, with the idea that, "In reality, the people who live best tie themselves down. They don't ask: What cool thing can I do next? They ask: What is my responsibility here? They respond to some problem or get called out of themselves by a deep love. By planting themselves in one neighborhood, one organization or one mission, they earn trust."

He also discredits what he calls the lie that "You have find your own truth." Instead, he says, "values are created and passed down by strong, self-confident communities and institutions. People absorb their values by submitting to communities and institutions and taking part in the conversations that take place within them." In other words, while I'm sure we all need to do some individualized soul searching from time to time, there's something about being a part of the fabric of a community, both within one generation and across generations, that enhances the vibrancy and the holiness of life, lending meaning to it. It is similar to how Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso characterizes the difference between spirituality and religion:

Religion is the container of the life of the spirit. It is the gravity that anchors spirit to earth, translating the vision of the soul into the responsibility of the individual. In the best of all possible worlds, spirituality and religion are partners. The soul's most profound experiences with a presence greater than the self are given form and articulation through liturgy, ritual, and moral law. Religious forms, in turn, remain constantly open to the renewal of sacred moments. If spirituality at its best lifts us up, religion at its best keeps us rooted. Religion can test spiritual vision in the crucible of community and history. Spirituality can keep religion from forgetting the experience that formed the story. Religion keeps spirituality from selfishness; it reminds us of our obligations. Spirituality keeps religion from absolutism; it reminds us that the breath of God blows through each and every human soul.

I want to meet with you because I want to work with you to build this particular religious community here at SHS, a community in which I hope we'll all participate vigorously—in turn, I hope that our participation will deeply enrich us all.

So, please, call me (215.922.6590). Email me (rabbikamesar@societyhillsynagogue.org). Let's find a time to meet for an hour. Let's talk about your life, your dreams. My life, my dreams. Our dreams for this synagogue and for the future of the Jewish community in general. Let's do it together.



President's Column

My Final Message as President

Harry J. Oxman

This article represents my last as the president of Society Hill Synagogue. I am facing it with mixed emotions. Considering the fact that authoring the president's message to the congregation six times a year has been a difficult challenge for me, I am relieved that this is my last. However, the realization that my term as president is only weeks away from ending has created a more complicated set of feelings. I confess that I have felt great satisfaction, joy, and a sense of fulfillment in having had the opportunity to serve this special and beautiful community for the last three years. The opportunity to work and interact with my fellow members of the Board of Directors, all of whom have consistently demonstrated an outstanding skill set and, more important, a profound commitment to our community, has been a thrilling experience. The day-to-day interactions with our professional staff have strongly validated the personnel choices that have been made, as evidenced by the outstanding performance and commitment of these professional members of our family.

Whatever has been accomplished in the three years of my presidency is the direct by-product of the magnificent efforts of our voluntary leaders and professional staff.

Soon after I became president, I wrote my first *Kesher* article, entitled "The Next Fifty Years." In that article I attempted to address the qualities of this community that affected me to the extent that I wished to become one of its presidents. I wrote as follows:

First, I would point to the fact that collectively we strive to be a community.

Second, we think of our community goal as being the best that we can be in all of our endeavors.

Third, we define best "essentially as being a quality which requires that our actions be ethically and spiritually correct in keeping with our Jewish principles and traditions."

In discussing my goals and aspirations as a new president, I alluded to the fact that I viewed my role as being that of a "steward for our community." Further, I stated "that the guardian capacity of a stewardship requires that my role be to maintain the environment and atmosphere of this synagogue community which are responsible for having drawn me and my family so close to it." I then concluded this thought by stating, "My aspiration, therefore, is to maintain the status quo."

I am satisfied that, perhaps without any significant effort on my part, my aspiration to maintain the status quo has been achieved.

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Ann Spak Thal School

Ending the Year with a Taste for More Sahar Oz

A common Israeli expression speaks of an experience being so positive that it leaves a “taste for more” (ta’am shel od), and our celebration on the last day of classes aims for that on multiple levels. **Sunday School parents are invited to join us at 10:15 AM for our Sundaes Sunday Move-Up celebration on May 19**, as we wrap up the year on a sweet note with ice cream. Each student will receive a certificate recognizing his/her/their completion of a year of Jewish learning.

Later that same day, we invite Hebrew School and Hebrew High parents to come at 12 PM for our presentation of certificates to every student in grades 3–11 to mark another year of Jewish education and our distribution of Shabbat service attendance certificates to students in 3rd–7th grades who have met their goal for the year. Sundaes Sunday treats will follow the certificate ceremony.

There will be plenty more to celebrate before and after May 19, including six students who are becoming B’nai Mitzvah in May and June! Please join us for the B’nai Mitzvah services of **Esme Oxman** (May 4), **Ella Gutstadt** (May 11), **Eva Femia** (May 18), **Emma Chrismer** (May 25), **Sebastian Picht** (June 22), and **Samuel Hamilton** (June 29).

On Sunday, May 5, we will mark Yom Ha’atzma’ut (Israel Independence Day) and the State of Israel’s 71st birthday in Sunday School, Hebrew School, and Hebrew High with art projects, games, and delicious Middle Eastern treats. Our older students will precede their Yom Ha’atzma’ut celebration with a brief ceremony at 12 PM to mark Yom Hazikaron (Remembrance Day for Israel’s Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism).

There will be **no classes** on Mother’s Day, Sunday, May 12, to enable families to be together as they celebrate moms across generations. **Please join us for the Kabbalat Shabbat service on Friday, May 24, at 6:15 PM, as we honor our congregation’s high school seniors just days before their graduation.**

A week later, on Friday, May 31, at 6:15 PM, 10th graders Evyn Appel, Claire Golding, Lily Hayman, and Liron Prystowsky will address the congregation at the Confirmation Kabbalat Shabbat service. Our confirmands will share reflections, memories, lessons learned, and core values gleaned from their many years as students in our Sunday School, Hebrew School, and Hebrew High School. There will be dinner following the Confirmation service. RSVP to Leanne at office@societyhillssynagogue.org.

The packet of Sunday School, Hebrew School, and Hebrew High enrollment forms for 5780/2019–2020 will be available in early May. **Please submit the completed forms for each child with your tuition deposit by Friday, June 7.** Share your family’s experiences at our school and congregation with your friends and neighbors, and invite them to join our engaging, exciting, and inclusive Jewish learning community!

Our teachers, student aides, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Sunday, September 8. Have a wonderful summer!



Hazzan's Column

Count On This: (De-)Mystifying the Omer

Jessi Roemer

Three months after I birthed my first child, a friend said to me, “We mothers are always counting.”

I knew what she meant. Prior to getting pregnant, I had counted the days of each month, charting my basal temperatures onto a numbered grid with round marks that showed the ebb and flow of fertility. Once pregnant, I counted days, then weeks, trimesters, sugar levels in my blood, hours between taking calcium and iron. After each baby came, I counted minutes of nursing, hours and half hours of sleep, hours since the last nap, diaper changes, feedings, ounces of milk pumped, seconds to meltdown. And, of course, the number of minutes, then days, weeks, months, and years my babies had been living outside my body.

It's not only mothers, of course. From very young, we all spend most of our lives counting: fingers on our hands, Cheerios in a cup, years of human society, days until the weekend, game scores, months to vacation, bills, money earned, years since our birth, ever-increasing increments of time since a loved one has died. Counting put us on the moon and counting connects us to the earth; our cycles of planting and food cultivation depend on our calculations, as they have for thousands of years. Counting is bound up with growing.

The Torah describes the spring as a time of counting: Seven weeks after the first barley is cut (around Pesach) comes the harvest festival of Shavuot, when ancient Israelites would pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem to bring offerings of the first grain (Lev. 23:15-16). For those seven weeks of the Omer (named for the measure of grain offered in a sacrifice), we are instructed—individually or in community—to count each day out loud.

Counting grounds us. It lends weight to both counter and counted. “Make it count!” we say, because an action that counts is weighty enough to have effect beyond its initial moment. We tell each other, “I’m counting on you!,” hoping that the weight of our expectation or reliance will tether a person to the task at hand.

In our system of planetary gravity, lending weight—making something count—means pulling it closer to the earth. For plants, it means stretching more deeply into the earth. During the initial growing season, when crops are fragile and roots shallow, farmers need to be especially grounded—literally, tuned in to the ground. For our ancestors, counting the days of the harvest, lending weight to their intention, kept them connected to what was happening in the soil.

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TGISHabbat

Friday, May 10

Please join us on Friday, May 10, at 6:15 PM, for a TGISHabbat service featuring special musical guest Nitzan Haroz.

Nitzan Haroz, a native of Israel, joined the Philadelphia Orchestra as principal trombone in 1995. He served as assistant principal trombone of the New York Philharmonic and principal trombone of the Rishon-Le Zion Symphony and Opera Orchestra. He was also first trombone of the Israel Defense Forces Orchestra and performed with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Haroz has appeared as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Rishon-Le Zion Symphony, and the Sofia Radio Symphony, among others, and is an active chamber musician. He won first prize at the François Shapira Competition and received America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarships. He has commissioned and premiered several works for trombone and harp and has given recitals and master classes in Israel, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Mr. Haroz has also performed with the New York, Philadelphia, and Israel brass ensembles and the Rishon-Le Zion and Israel Defense Forces brass quintets.

Mr. Haroz joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in 1998. He also teaches at the Esther Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University.

President's Column

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I am confident that even in the face of significant change as the result of necessary transitioning, we will nevertheless continue to maintain that environment which defines us and motivates all the members of our community and those involved in leadership.

Our congregation is well aware at this time that Jeremey Newberg has agreed to serve as my successor if he is elected at the Annual Congregation Meeting on May 22. Having been privileged to work with him during the entirety of my presidency and prior thereto, I know that our community will be well served by him in the role of president. He has the capacity and qualities of leadership, intellect, and ethical and spiritual commitment to our Jewish principles and tradition. Our community would be fortunate to have him as its next leader.

As I was moving toward the end of my presidency, several members of the congregation (some of whom had significant prior leadership experience), as well as some personal friends not associated with Society Hill Synagogue, commented that I should become aware of the three most cherished words to be recited by an individual leaving a significant leadership role in a synagogue. Those words were "immediate past president," the emphasis being on "immediate" and "past." I have accepted that statement with the humor that was intended, but, in responding, I have uniformly said to all that I am not certain that this phrase necessarily defines my personal feelings.

I hope that my three-year journey as president of Society Hill Synagogue has been beneficial to this community. I know that having had the opportunity to serve in that capacity has been overwhelmingly beneficial to me. I have received more than I have given. I leave the presidency with a stronger sense of enthusiasm and support for this congregation than when I began. The feeling is wonderful and will always be with me. I thank each and every one of you for permitting me to serve in the capacity of your president for the last three years. You may be assured that in the future I will continue to be actively engaged in my Society Hill Synagogue community.



Playschool

A Communal Graduation Celebration & Exciting New Camp Features

Sahar Oz

As we head toward our Move-Up/Graduation Day, and the start of summer camp approaches, there is a lot of excitement in Playschool! One of the highlights of our school is the sense of community here, and the strong bonds that are formed among our children and parents. Continuing to enhance these supportive and welcoming experiences is very important to me, both as the school's director and as a Playschool parent.

In pursuit of that goal, we are giving our Move-Up/Graduation ceremony a new look that will bring all three of our classes and all of our families together at the same time for a more communal celebration.

On Friday, May 24, there will be regular classes from 8:30 until 11 AM, and then our Move-Up/Graduation ceremony will begin at 11 AM upstairs in the Sanctuary. Our Sun and Moon classes will start off the celebration with a song that they have been preparing, and each child will receive a certificate and gift from the school to mark their advancement.

Our Stars class will then enter the Sanctuary in graduation caps to the sound of "Pomp and Circumstance" and perform their own special song for all to enjoy. They, too, will receive their graduation certificates and a gift from the school.

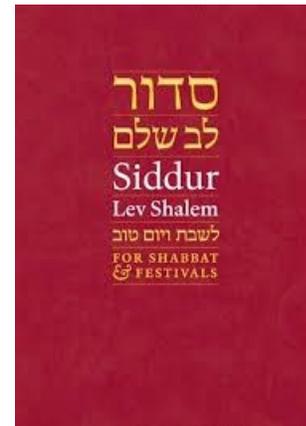
Around 11:45 AM, we will head to the Social Hall for a catered lunch. Our faculty and I are excited to implement this new approach to the Move-Up/Graduation celebration that will bring everyone together!

Following the Memorial Day break and the cleaning and transitioning of our classrooms from the school year to camp spaces, our **summer camp will begin on Monday, June 3.** We are delighted to have so many campers – new and returning – for the eight weeks of camp and one or both of our specialty camps later in the summer: *Fun With Photography* and *Theatre Thrills*.

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Would You Like to Dedicate a Siddur?

Dedication opportunities are still available (\$36) for members who wish to purchase copies of the Rabbinical Assembly Shabbat and Festival Siddur Lev Shalem. For further information, contact the office by calling 215.922.6590 or email office@societyhillssynagogue.org.



If you would like to dedicate a book, please email office@societyhillssynagogue.org with the following information:

Your name:

Name for whom the book is dedicated (exactly as you would like it to appear on the bookplate on the inside cover):

In Memory of or In Honor of (indicate which):

Please send a check for \$36 per dedication, made out to Society Hill Synagogue, to 418 Spruce Street, Philadelphia PA 19106, or call the office to charge the fee on your credit card (3% credit card processing fee will be applied).



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SHS Players Provide a Night of Laughter

Debra Stewart

Produced and directed by Judy Lalli, and dedicated to the blessed memory of playwright Murray Raphel, the Society Hill Player's Production of *Community Synagogue Holds a Board Meeting* was a true hit! Who knew we had such talent? Judy recruited an amazing cast of characters: Noah Chrismer, David Ladov, Harry Oxman, Sahar Oz, Jessica Salvatore, Barry Slosberg, Mark Steinberger, Len Weinberg, and Jonathan Weiss—who worked together for many months to achieve perfection!

Thanks to Bob Blacksberg, our production photographer, whose pictures beautifully captured to the expressiveness of the actors and cohesiveness of the cast. He also graciously filmed the show so you can check it out at: <https://youtu.be/-ZKOJUfjiYo>

Special thanks to Eleanor Oxman, Nancy Morgenstern, Staci Schwartz, Betty van de Rijn—along with our excellent maintenance staff, Rob, Dave and Henry—for helping us with the production as well as preparations for the event.

Bill and I laughed out loud for an hour and we were not alone. We had a standing-room- only crowd, great food, drinks of choice, and an atmosphere filled with warmth and a strong sense of community.

Mazel Tov to Judy and the Society Hill Players! Did I hear talk of a future production? See photos on page 23.

God's Unfinished Business

Bikur Holim (Visiting or Helping the Sick) Is a Mitzvah

Julie Wilson

God's Unfinished Business (GUB) consists of an active group of SHS members whose purpose is to help and care for our congregants and their families. GUB volunteers cook and deliver meals to SHS members who are ill and provide other members with rides to services, doctor's appointments, and medical procedures. They also visit or make phone calls to members who are hospitalized, under the weather, or are dealing with some type of hardship or loss.

If you know of a congregant who would benefit from the services that GUB provides, please contact me at juliewilson@yahoo.com. GUB is always looking for more volunteers—whether you can volunteer to help a congregant in need once a week, or even if you only have the time to perform one of these mitzvot, please contact me.

Playschool

Continued from page 7

It is exciting to have Miss Vanda expand her role at our school with her new weekly music class at camp, which will continue into the new school year. In addition, ZoomDance will meet every week at camp for all ages and continue for our two- and three-year olds throughout the school year, now weekly instead of every other week.

Our summer camp from June 3 to August 9 blends hands-on learning and scientific exploration, art projects, Monday Music with Miss Vanda, ZoomDance every Wednesday, outdoor play and visits to Three Bears Park, water thrills in our splash zone, and a musical Shabbat celebration every Friday morning!

If you or your friends have yet to sign up your children for camp, don't miss out – do it now! Our camp registration form makes it easy to plan children's months, weeks, and/or days, and camp is open to Playschoolers as well as children who go to other schools.

Please note that camp will be closed on Monday, June 10, in observance of Shavuot, and on Thursday and Friday, July 4 and 5, for the Independence Day holiday.

Our faculty and I look forward to a marvelous May and a spectacular summer with our Playschoolers!

Religion Committee

"Quiet Toy" Donations are Welcome!

Marc Schwartz & Terry Novick

We hope that everyone had a sweet Pesach and enjoyed time spent with family and friends.

Pesach and the beginning of spring are often times during which people clean, reorganize, purge, refinish, refurbish, and replenish. The staff at SHS does the same work to keep our beautiful synagogue home in the best shape possible.

If, during your own regrouping process, you come across gently used, clean, quiet toys (i.e., stuffed animals, dolls, children's books, plastic animals or action figures) that our youngest members can play with during services, please bring them to shul and put them in the designated bin in the second floor lobby outside of the Sanctuary.

Of course, we also remind our families that they are welcome to visit the "Wiggle Room" (the rear Playschool classroom located on the first floor behind the Lawrence Court Lobby) if little children need to exercise their bodies or vocal cords during any of our regular, holiday, or B'nai Mitzvah services.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Noah Chrismer
 Rachel Nelson
 Barbara Einhorn
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 Renee Edelman
 Alexander Harrison
 Steven Datlof
 Lynn Gottlieb
 Liz Abrams-Morley
 Etta Krauss
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 Leo Isanuk
 Allison Kirshner Oz
 Larry Spector
 Eva Femia
 Sandra Lazovitz
 Carol Dranoff
 Linda Glass
 Jared Winikor
 Dr. Carolyn Saligman
 Harrison Gentile
 Wayne Spilove
 Merrily Williams
 Jillian Borow
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 Lincoln Copans
 Theodore Copans
 Cindy Farlino
 Randi Kamine
 Joan Roller
 Kinney Zalesne
 Rian Berger
 Yelena Michaels-Koenig
 Rona Buchalter
 Elizabeth Heit
 Ella Roe
 Lindsay Gorsen
 Rosemarie Weinberg
 Jayne Bird
 Mia Cohen
 Jonathan Appel
 Sahar Oz
 Alan Zuckerman
 Charlie Brookstein
 David Makuen
 David Rosenberg
 Julie Wilson

Jay Meadway

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Maxwell Harrison
 Joyce Norden
 Eli Oz
 Suzanne Sztul
 Suzanne Sztul
 Carol Weil
 Henry Weil
 Herbert Cohn
 Bonnie Weiner
 David Rosenbloom
 Lara Goldwert
 Rebecca Hafter
 Roger Korman
 Stephen Silberstein
 Nathaniel Stover-Steerman
 Joan Lear
 Jack Aaron
 Jud Aaron
 Daniel Rottenberg
 Robin Feinberg
 Eliana Gilbert-Trachtman
 Zoe Nussbaum
 Michael Coran
 Andrew Hohns
 Rita Roy
 Fred Lovitch
 Adam Oglensky
 Deena Friedland
 Adina Goldstein
 Mayah Salzman
 Jasmin Schoenhaus
 Elizabeth Heller-Mesznik
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 Charles Schaeffer
 Nicholas Schaeffer
 Lois Rosenberg
 Don Kaufman
 William Love
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 Geoffrey Michaels
 Tal Pipano
 Michael Davidson
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 Eve Friedman
 Asa Schneeberg

David Serlin
 Ezra Goldenberg
 Ramin Mohajer
 Todd Borrow
 Gabriel Cohen
 Samuel Hamilton
 Olivia Grode
 Marlene Lachman
 Libby Cone
 Joseph Oglensky
 Stephen Shiekman

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

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 Geoffrey & Beverly Michaels
 Matthew & Brooke Salzman
 Holman & Gail Massey
 Justin Lilien & Amy Fisher
 Dan & Dana Feinberg
 Steven & Ruth Greenberg
 Irv & Sharon Shapiro
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What is a Kiddush or Oneg?

Customarily at the end of Shabbat morning and holiday services, the SHS community joins together to bless the wine (make "Kiddush") and the bread (make "Motzi"), and enjoy good food and company! This is what we call "the Kiddush."

Similarly, following the Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat service, we gather for an Oneg or a Shabbat dinner, where we bless the wine & bread and share light refreshments or dinner. Sponsoring this weekly community event is a wonderful way to celebrate a *simha* or joy, mark a special moment in one's life, honor someone, or commemorate a Yahrzeit. Sponsoring a *Kiddush*, *Oneg*, or *Shabbat dinner* helps the community to get to know you and share important moments in your life. It is also a way to say thank you to your community. Please contact us at 215.922.6590 or by email at office@societyhillsynagogue.org for more information.

General Fund

In Appreciation of
SHS and Rabbi Winokur
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In Honor of
Rabbi Nathan Kamesar, Named the SHS Rabbi in 2020
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 Bob Blacksberg & Terry Novick
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 Sol Katz & Pauline Candaux
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 Rick & Nancy Morgenstern

Bernard Cohen, Father of Robin Feinberg
 Neil Cohen & Debra Weissbach

Herb Cohen, Husband of Beverly Sherman
 Harry Gratz

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 Arthur Shapiro

Milton Bass, Father of Robert Bass
 Robert & Wilma Bass

David Ewens, Father of Wilma Bass
 Robert & Wilma Bass

Susan Dictor, Wife of Joel Chernock
 Joel Chernock

Susan Dictor, Mother of Sarina & Elyssa Chernock
 Joel Chernock

Sarah Paller, Mother of Robert Paller
 Robert Paller

Edward Roller, Father of Jerry Roller
 Jerry & Joan Roller

Samuel Goldner, Father of Linda Joy Goldner
 Linda Joy Goldner

Annual Giving Fund

Thank you for your support!

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 Barbara Spector

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Rabbi Winokur's Discretionary Fund

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Rose Kaplan, Mother of Edward Kaplan
 Edward & Susanne Kaplan

Rabbi Kamesar's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of
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Yahrzeit Remembrance
Louis & Helen Gallun, Parents of Fran Gallun
 Len Weinberg & Fran Gallun

Charles Gallun, Brother of Fran Gallun
 Len Weinberg & Fran Gallun

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 Brian & Jessica Mono
 Marlene Lachman
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 Jay Wussow & Emily Zimmerman
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In Honor of

Judy Gelles and her 4th Grade Project
 Stanley & Judith Woloff

In Appreciation of

January TGISHabbat Dinner
 Stanley & Judith Woloff

February TGISHabbat Dinner

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In Honor of

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 Jared Susco

Debra Stewart and her Interfaith Leadership

Jared Susco

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Stanley & Judith Woloff

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Prayerbook Fund

In Memory of

Paula & Larry Ninerell's Daughter-in-Law, Dolores
 Stanley & Judith Woloff

Hilda Steinberger, Mother of Mark Steinberger

Betty van de Rijn

Dr. Effy Oz Hebrew School Fund

In Honor of

Brian Englander

Michael Rochester & Carole LeFaivre- Rochester

God's Unfinished Business

Capital Campaign Fund

In Honor of

Rabbi Nathan Kamesar, the next SHS Rabbi

Barbara Spector

In Memory of

Hilda Steinberger, Mother of Mark Steinberger

Jeremey & Fran Newberg

Barbara Spector

Adult Education Fund

In Honor of

Rabbi Marjorie Berman, for her teaching

Joseph Freedman

Playschool Fund

In Memory of

Hilda Steinberg, Mother of Mark Steinberger

Steve & Lisa Eizen

Jay R. Baer Fund

Yahrzeit of

Jay Robert Baer, Husband of Carol Baer Mott

Carol Baer Mott

Interfaith Inclusion Leadership Initiative

An Article By Committee Member Jared Susco

(reprinted from ejewishphilanthropy.com/)

Seeing with New Eyes: One Synagogue's Interfaith Inclusion Journey

I remember the first time I brought my husband (who grew up with Methodism) to our synagogue's community seder that he was far more confused than I had expected. He first couldn't understand that the start time was approximate, having been accustomed to the martial precision of New England Christian services. In the early years of these seders, people brought their own seder plates, and he wanted to know why a lady had pulled a shank bone out of her purse. I was surprised by his confusion, as I hadn't thought to prepare him adequately, and unfortunately, I turned him off from synagogue activities for a while.

When we had our daughter's baby naming, I tried to explain to him that he should discourage his friends from entering the sanctuary when, for example, someone was reading from the Torah. He asked how they might know, and I explained that if they hear someone chanting unintelligible words from a scroll while wearing something that looks like a cape and using something that looks like a wand, they would know. He replied, "So I tell them to look out for a scene from Harry Potter, then?" I was caught off guard by this apt description, and it hadn't occurred to me until then how foreign a synagogue environment can feel to the uninitiated.

I can't overstate the irony of that realization, for I grew up an Italian Catholic! While I won't go into my conversion journey here, I can state that my conversion has always felt more like a correction than anything else, and it remains one of the very best choices I ever made. Since participating in an adult *bar mitzvah* ceremony at Society Hill Synagogue (SHS), where I am an active member and leader, I continued leyning (i.e. chanting) Torah at our synagogue at least once a month. One time after a service, a member complimented me on my leyning, saying that I put the Jews by birth to shame. I know she was trying to say something nice, but her comment actually sapped my joy. I never learned to leyn Torah to shame anyone but rather to contribute to the worship, and I am proud of what I have learned and contributed. That same day another member of the synagogue asked me how we're raising our daughter, and I could tell from her tone that there was only one correct response...

What do these three random stories have in common? They highlight the diversity of experiences and stories we all bring when we walk through the synagogue doors – or more importantly, when we even think about walking through those doors newly or again. And they highlight what synagogues need to be aware of in order to be inclusive and welcoming even when they believe they are already doing so. My husband and I are gay men, our daughter is a biracial adoptee, I converted to Judaism as an adult, and we're raising our daughter in the Jewish faith – but we still welcome Santa Claus and Easter Bunny into our home. We are part of the tapestry that is modern American Jewry! As a staff member of SHS proclaimed, interfaith families are not the future of Judaism; rather they are its present.

About a year ago, I was invited to join SHS's cohort of the [Interfaith Inclusion Leadership Initiative \(IILI\)](#), and before that point, I thought the idea of my interfaith-ness was something that I had to avoid in my Jewish practice. I knew that I had to "come out" as a gay man, but in the same way that one can never stop coming out as a gay man, I learned that I had to "come out" as a convert and as a father in an interfaith household over and over too. . I dreaded each time, wondering if the other person would consider my conversion and my family as kosher. I have had a mixture of responses, ranging from cruel exclusion to graceful disdain to welcoming enthusiasm.

Continued on page 15

Interfaith Inclusion Leadership Initiative

Continued from page 14

What I have found in IILI is the opportunity to engage interfaith-ness as a leadership activity. IILI has given me the courage and the language to serve as a voice for inclusion in my community. Run by InterfaithFamily, IILI is a year-long program designed to help Jewish institutions and organizations to more fully embrace interfaith couples and families and expand their supportive policies and practices. We covered topics like language, optics, and effective and sensitive communication, and we delved into the education, governance, and ritual aspects of our religious community, often inviting members of those committees to participate in our didactic sessions, followed by lively discussions.

I have found our discussions with our InterfaithFamily coach and among our team so illuminating: each of us brings a different lens to the idea of being interfaith, and we bring so many different stories with us and entry points for Judaism. One member of the committee was surprised to realize that our membership application asked if a congregant was a Kohen, Levite, or Israelite; she reflected on how exclusive this would have felt if she saw the application her husband completed. What IILI has done is give us new eyes and ears through which to see and hear our interactions and messages.

I've learned that even those raised in Judaism come with a diversity of understanding, and our real opportunity is to create an environment that is inclusive for all. I have been amazed by the power of inclusivity when it happens. SHS hosted a class on challah making recently, and my husband said he wanted to join. We had a blast with our daughter (and I was inspired to make hamentashen with her later) and we enjoyed ourselves as a family, with other families, engaged in a long-standing Jewish tradition. I left feeling welcomed and inspired, as did my husband, and I look forward to promoting more accessible events like this in the future to find 'new ways in' for people with all manner of interest.

We're nearing the end of our year with IILI and the development of our action plan, and I am so delighted that I accepted the invitation to join our cohort with InterfaithFamily. Our coach, Caroline Kamesar, has provided support, expertise, and insight that we have used to understand our own needs and to propose what our community might need as a whole. Our goal is to present the action plan at SHS's annual meeting at the end of May. Will everyone agree with where we are headed? Maybe not, but that's true for just about any synagogue initiative! Research shows that interfaith families are more likely to share in Jewish practice when they feel included, so we intend to apply that research courageously. I look forward to building on what we've learned and continuing the conversation to strengthen the vibrancy of our community – for all.

If you would like to start your own journey, InterfaithFamily is now accepting applications for Cohort Three of the [Interfaith Inclusion Leadership Initiative \(IILI\)](#).

Jared Susco is currently the Chief Finance & People Officer of Benefits Data Trust, a not-for-profit organization that helps people live healthier, more independent lives by creating smarter ways to access essential benefits and services. He is also a lay leader at Society Hill Synagogue. A native of Syracuse, he fell in love with Philly while at the University of Pennsylvania and now lives in its Society Hill neighborhood with his husband and daughter.

The Interfaith Inclusion Leadership Initiative is funded in part by a grant from the Covenant Foundation.

Arts & Culture Group

Betta Kolansky, Eleanor Oxman, Ellen Fennick, & Libby Kaiser

Society Hill Synagogue hosted its fifth annual Second Night Community Seder on April 20. Rabbi Nathan Kamesar, who involved and motivated all 70 attendees, led an engaging and meaningful service. The evening was joyous and everyone commented on the wonderful time they had!

Then, on **Wednesday, July 3, come join other SHS members for Betta's annual Pre-Pops cocktail party, from 4–6 PM.** Following the party, we will walk two short blocks to see the Pops on Independence during the Wawa Welcome America concert on Independence Mall. Bring a picnic dinner, if you choose, and a portable chair for comfort.

Please **RSVP** to Betta via email at bkolansky@comcast.net, or send her a text at 215.582.7704, or call her home at 215.925.6610 so that she will know how much delicious food to prepare. Make sure you get Betta's address when you RSVP.

Social Action

Looking for Volunteers to Help at Philabundance

Phyllis Denbo

Philabundance—As you know, the Social Action Committee has always supported the volunteer opportunities coordinated by Rob Einhorn at the Philabundance warehouse, located at 3616 S Galloway Street. Members from SHS meet at the warehouse on the first Tuesday of every month, 6:15 PM–8:30 PM (the next date to volunteer is Tuesday, May 7). Volunteers will pack and sort donated food items and prepare it for distribution to neighbors in need. If congregants have questions, they can call Diane Harrison at 215.351.7877.

Vare Washington School Shoe Drive—Society Hill Synagogue has long supported Vare Washington Elementary School (VW), located at 5th and Federal Streets. School volunteers and administrators are currently developing a plan to improve the schoolyard, and they are asking SHS members to support this effort by donating old shoes. The condition of the shoes should be at least 'wearable.' Friends of VW will get paid for the donated shoes and will use the collected funds for the schoolyard.

These donated shoes will be sent to micro-entrepreneurs in developing nations who clean the shoes, make them like new, and sell them in their communities for a profit. The micro-enterprise industry represents an effective way to lift families out of poverty in devastated economies.

Not only will these donated shoes get good use, but they will also escape their fate of being dumped in a landfill.

Please place all shoe donations in the designated box in the Spruce Street Lobby—weekly collection will continue until May 16.



Get Connected with a New Group at SHS: Triple Chai

SHS is one busy place! While we already have many programs and activities for children of all ages, engaging classes in Adult Education, and wonderful opportunities to participate in Arts & Culture events in and around the city, some of our members have recently expressed interest in forming a social group, which will be called Triple Chai, for individuals aged 54 and above.

What will this group do? That's what we're going to continue to discuss. Future Triple Chai events and programming could include ball games, movies, salons, card games, lunches, or whatever we want!

If you'd like to RSVP for the brunch or have your name added to the Triple Chai email list so that you can communicate with other members in the group, please contact Rabbi Kamesar at rabbikamesar@societyhillssynagogue.org.

Hazzan's Column

Continued from page 6

After the Temple was destroyed and many Israelites were exiled from the land, the initial purpose for counting the Omer had vanished. But rather than abandon the practice, the Diaspora rabbis decided to give it a more portable purpose: counting down to Matan Torah, the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Diaspora Jews began to count the seven weeks of the Omer from the second night of Pesach, and on Shavuot, they would celebrate Matan Torah.

Jewish tradition went further to create a link between the land-based and the Diasporic practices of spring counting. The Zohar draws a mystical connection between the words *Omer* (עמר), the initial period of harvest, and *omer* (אמר), speech that comes from the heart (*Zohar* I, 234b). When God gave the Torah at Mount Sinai, goes the reasoning, God spoke to the people from God's heart; thus, the almost identical spellings of *Omer* and *omer* are no coincidence. With new, spiritual meanings layered on top of the old, agricultural tradition, the ancient practice of counting through this period continued.

Today, in our culture, only some of us are intimately connected to the planting cycle; the rest rely on that cycle for our food but don't organize our daily practice around it. For Jews who are not farmers, counting the Omer has become a meta-practice, as it did for the first Diaspora Jews. Like blessing, counting the Omer is a daily activity that we elevate to a spiritual act simply by drawing our attention to it and doing it with deliberateness. When we bless our food, we make special the act of eating; this makes us more aware that every time we eat, it is a holy act. Likewise, intentionally counting the Omer during the spring season elevates all the counting we do throughout the year—to connect to the soil, to celebrate circles around the sun, to mark our connections to others.

We are in the Omer until Shavuot begins on the evening of June 8. Sometime before then, I highly recommend counting the Omer as a practice, even if it's not for the whole period. You can google to find out which day you're on, say the blessing (or not), and say the number of the day out loud. Use it as a mini-meditation or a moment to stop and locate yourself in time. Notice if the practice has an effect. For Omer Counting 2.0, there are several apps that offer an intention, or list a pair of Kabbalistic attributes to think about for each day. Regardless of your practice, this is a good season to ask: What am I counting on? What do I need to make count?



Exceptional Service at SHS

Debra Stewart

In keeping with our tradition, we have chosen another SHS member to be honored for his exceptional service to our synagogue. Candidates must be members in good standing who are not current Board members (at the time of nomination) or past Hatan Torah or Kallat B'reshit honorees. They must have provided exceptional service to SHS that has had a significant impact on our community, or they must have demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment over time.

This year, we are proud to report that our committee voted to give this award to Rob Einhorn.

Rob and his family have been active SHS congregants since 1972. Rob joined independently in 2004. Back in the early days, Rob recalls that he helped to paint our Social Hall and refinish the floors in the first and second-floor lobbies. He also remembers volunteering at the SHS Midi Fairs and making latkes for our Hanukkah celebrations—when he, along with his father and other pioneer chefs, established the original Latke Brigade. Rob became involved in Philabundance about seven years ago and has been running SHS's monthly engagements there for the past five years.

Under our Social Action Committee's umbrella, and in his low-keyed manner, Rob has continued to solicit volunteers to pack food boxes at Philabundance and make deliveries to individuals and families in need on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:15 PM. If you have ever seen Rob in the warehouse, you would think he works there. He knows everyone and even knows how to handle the heavy lift!

Rob has always enjoyed volunteering and making a difference; he has also held leadership positions at Habitat for Humanity and at Smith Playground in Fairmount Park.

We are delighted to recognize Rob for his exceptional service to SHS.

Annual Congregation Meeting

Wednesday, May 22

Please plan to attend the SHS Annual Congregation Meeting in the Social Hall on Wednesday, May 22. A lite dinner will be served at 6:30 PM, and the meeting will begin promptly at 7 PM. President Harry Oxman will deliver his last "State of the Synagogue" address, with additional reports from Treasurer Brian Mono and other members of the Executive Committee. We will hold elections for new and returning Board Members and we will honor Rob Einhorn for his exceptional service to our congregation.





2019 Specialty Camps at SHS! July 29 to August 9

Are you looking for new and exciting summer camp programs during the month of August?

Society Hill Synagogue is offering two Specialty Camps for children aged 3– 7 years old, following our regular camp season.

Each of the two-week sessions will focus on projects based on a creative theme. During the week of July 29-August 2, the program will focus on Fun with Photography and during the week of August 5-9, the program will focus on Theatre Thrills.

Snacks will be provided each day. Children must bring packed dairy lunches from home. Campers may be enrolled for one or both sessions. Reserve your spot now, space is limited!



Membership Renewal Forms

You will receive your annual Membership Renewal/ High Holy Day information packet in the mail by June 30 or earlier. Please fill out all forms and return them in the enclosed envelope provided, including the required membership dues and holiday related payments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at bettyv@societyhillssynagogue.org or 215.922.6590. Remember, membership renewal fees and previous balances must be paid in order for you to receive your High Holy Day tickets. The deadline for entries to be included in this year's Yizkor Book is August 15, 2019.





5779/2018–2019 B'nai Mitzvah

May 4

Esme Oxman

Child of Joseph Oxman & Christi Rosengart

May 11

Ella Gutstadt

Child of David & Julia Gutstadt

May 18

Eva Femia

Child of Dave & Rebecca Femia

May 25

Emma Chrismer

Child of Noah & Sara Chrismer

June 22

Sebastian Picht

Child of Aaron & Elina Picht

June 29

Samuel Hamilton

Child of Roy Hamilton & Dawn Mechanic-Hamilton



SAVE THE DATE:

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2019, 7:45 PM to SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 7 AM

JEWISH NIGHT OF LEARNING—TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT
 BY CENTER CITY KEHILLAH

LOCATION:

University of the Arts—Gershman Hall
 401 S. Broad Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19147

To purchase tickets, go to the below link—

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jewish-night-of-learning-tikkun-leil-shavuot-tickets-60827672205>



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PHOTO GALLERY



Manny (Holocaust survivor) and Annabel Lindenbaum with their granddaughter, Nina Lindenbaum-Grosbard, who teaches in our Hebrew School.



Going bananas with fun at the Purim Carnival!



Purim Carnival fun at the Candy Bowl Toss booth!

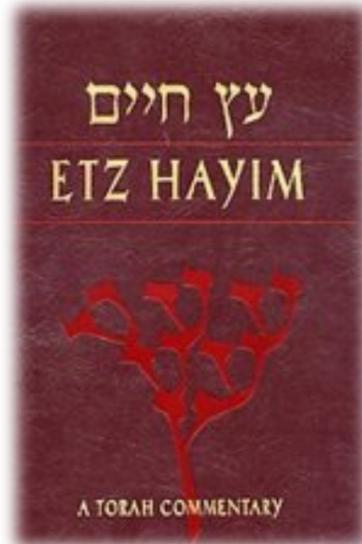


Photos from the April Dinner Theater



Hebrew School at JRA





Religion Committee

Would You Like to Dedicate a Humash?

Marc Schwartz & Terry Novick

As you may have noticed, new volumes of the Etz Hayim Humashim have been purchased to replace damaged copies.

We would like to offer our members the opportunity to purchase and dedicate replacement books in memory/honor of loved ones.

If you would like to dedicate a book, please send the following information to office@societyhillssynagogue.org:

Your name:

Name for whom the book is dedicated (exactly as you would like it to appear on the bookplate on the inside cover):

In Memory of or In Honor of (indicate which)

Please send a check for \$54 per dedication, made out to Society Hill Synagogue, to 418 Spruce Street, Philadelphia PA 19106, or call the office to charge the fee on your credit card (a 3% processing fee will be applied).

If you have questions, please contact Betty at bettyv@societyhillssynagogue.org or 215.922.6590, ext. #123.

Young Families Group

Join Us for the Last *Friday Nights With Young Families* Event on June 14!

Joanna Hart

We are a strong, friendly, and diverse group of families who want to support you and your family as you develop your own traditions and sense of community. Our programs are geared to kids from birth to Pre-K, but children of all ages are welcomed with open arms. In addition to our monthly *Friday Nights with Young Families* events (during which we share songs, prayers, and a potluck meal—all at a bedtime-friendly hour), we maintain a children’s book collection outside of the Sanctuary for use during services, and we help to spread the word about kid-friendly Jewish events across Philadelphia.

Join us for the final *Friday Nights with Young Families* program until the fall on **Friday, June 14**. We will gather in the Social Hall at 5:30 PM and begin the program at 5:45 PM. A Jewish Education professional with years of experience will lead our short, kid-friendly Shabbat services as we celebrate the joys of community and prayer. Participants will also learn to build family traditions in their own homes. No prior Jewish knowledge or experience is necessary. Following the song-based “service” we will share a vegetarian potluck dinner. Please RSVP to me at joanna.lee.hart@gmail.com.

Families of all sizes and backgrounds are welcome! Parents and prospective members with young children, expectant parents, and any caretakers are invited to join our email list by contacting me at the address above!



**SAVE THE DATE:
Havdalah Down the Shore
AUGUST 3, 2019**

SHS members are invited to the home of Stephen and Marsha Silberstein
Please RSVP to Judy Lalli at judele@aol.com or call 215.872.0233 with any
questions you might have.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			Yom Hashoah 6:30 PM Yom Hashoah Service	6 PM PS Parent's Night Out	6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat service	Aharei Mot 9 AM Torah Study 9:30 AM Bat Mitzvah of Esme Oxman
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9 AM SS 9:15 AM Nuts & Bolts 11 AM HS Arts & Culture Architectural Walking Tour	6 PM Hebrew with Marc Schwartz 7 PM ECM	7:15 AM Minyan 4:15 PM HS 6 PM SHS at Philabundance	6:30 PM Religion Committee Mtg. 7 PM Hebrew with Bruce Hirsch 7 PM Interfaith Committee Mtg.		Yom Ha'atsmaut 6:15 PM TGIS Shabbat with Nitzan Haroz	K'doshim 9 AM Torah Study 10 AM Services 10:15 AM Shabbat Study 4 PM B'nai Mitzvah of Ella Gutstadt
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Mother's Day Building Closed	6:30 PM Hebrew with Marc Schwartz	7:15 AM Minyan 4:15 PM HS-Last 6:30 PM PS Committee Mtg.	7 PM Hebrew with Bruce Hirsch 7:30 PM Ed Committee Mtg.		6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service & Memorial Plaque service	Emor 9 AM Torah Study 9:30 AM Bat Mitzvah of Eva Femia
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Last Day 9 AM SS 9:15 AM Nuts & Bolts 11 AM HS 11 AM Bagels in Babylonia 1 PM HS Faculty Meeting	6 PM Hebrew with Marc Schwartz 7 PM BDM	7:15 AM Minyan	6:30 PM Dinner 7 PM Annual Congregation Meeting		Last Day PS 6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service Honoring Senior Graduating Class	B'har 9 AM Torah Study 9:30 AM Bat Mitzvah of Emma Chrismer 10:15 AM Shabbat Study
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Building Closed	Memorial Day Building Closed	7:15 AM Minyan			6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service Honoring Confirmation Class	

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
						B'hukkotai 9 AM Torah Study 10 AM Services Huggett & Isanuk Baby Namings
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Yom Yerushalim Building Closed	1 st Day of Camp 7 PM ECM	7:15 AM Minyan 6 PM SHS at Philabundance			6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service	Erev Shavuot B'midbar 9 AM Torah Study 10 AM Services 7:30 PM Tikkun Olam Shavuot Community Prg.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Shavuot I 9:30 AM Service with Yizkor	Shavuot II Building Closed	7:15 AM Minyan 6:30 PM PS Com- mittee Mtg.			5:30 PM Young Families Shabbat 6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service	Naso 9 AM Torah Study 10 AM Services Lesser Segall Baby Naming
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Father's Day Building Closed		7:15 AM Minyan			6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service	B'ha alot'kha 9 AM Torah Study 9:30 AM Bar Mitzvah of Sebastian Picht
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Building Closed Goldstein and Charnock Wedding	7 PM BDM	7:15 AM Minyan			6:15 PM Kabbalat Shabbat Service Last Friday service until after Labor Day	Sh'lah L'kha 9 AM Torah Study 9:30 AM Bar Mitzvah of Samuel Hamilton
30						
Building Closed						

Kesher

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 Jessi Roemer, **Hazzan**
 Harry Oxman, **President**
 Betty van de Rijn, **Executive Director & Kesher Publisher**
 Sahar Oz, **Director of Education**
 Staci Schwartz, **Kesher Editor**

TIME-DATED MATERIAL

Dear SHS Community,

We mourn the tragic loss of life at a fellow Jewish community in Poway, California, that occurred during Shabbat/Pesach services—services similar to the ones we held in our own community on Saturday, April 27, further reinforcing the ties that bind us together.

Lori Gilbert-Kaye (Z"l), may her memory be a blessing, was 60 years old. She is survived by a husband and 22-year-old daughter. Her life, a friend says, was marked by her performance of mitzvot (acting according to sacred obligations) and her giving of tzedakah (sacred giving).

We remain resilient in the face of hate. Three times in recent months now, there have been targeted killings of those engaged in peaceful worship. May we work together to bring about a world where this happens no longer. May we unite in action, in determination, and in love to fight the forces that bring this about.

And may we remember those we've lost. Last week, before this event had even taken place, we chanted the *yizkor* prayer, as is customary on the last day of a festival, remembering, with love and honor, our community members who have passed, working to keep their memories alive.

In the face of anti-Semitism, we carry out one of the most holy acts we can: remembering. We remember our loved ones and we remember our community.

In blessing and peace,

Rabbi Nathan S. Kamesar