



UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF HOBOKEN

שוֹפָר The Shofar

RABBINIC REMARKS FROM RABBI ROBERT SCHEINBERG

“The Pursuit (and Capture) of Happiness”

This month, in my column, I will give you the secret of happiness.

(So perhaps I am exaggerating a bit.)

In various fields including psychology and economics, happiness is now an important area for study, and as a result, we may understand happiness better today than we have in the past.

One of the very significant bits of data about happiness about which there is a broad consensus is the relationship between material possessions and happiness. Put simply, if you are desperately poor, such that your basic life needs are not met, you are probably not going to be very happy. But once you reach a point at which your basic life needs are met, an increase in possessions, or wealth, is unlikely to add to one's happiness. In other words, rich people aren't happier on average than middle class people. Upper-middle-class people aren't happier on average than lower-middle-class people.

Our society is dramatically more prosperous than it was 50 years ago, even with the economic downturn we are sadly still experiencing. Yet surveys that measure people's happiness show that there is no increase in people's levels of happiness, despite all our increase in material well-being. The countries around the world that score the highest in the happiness of their residents include some wealthy countries, such as Switzerland and Denmark, but they also include some poorer countries, like Brazil, Chile, and South Korea.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*By James Weinstein
President, USH Board of Trustees*

Excerpted from his presentation at the annual meeting.

In reviewing the year, I can break down the responsibility of president into a number of areas, most of which I had no training for in business or in school, but at least I had some idea of the complexity of the job. The president has to stay on top of seven areas, some of which overlap:

- a. Finance
- b. Building
- c. Programming & Publications
- d. Construction & Capital Campaign
- e. Education
- f. Board Management
- g. Human Resources Management

What are our results in those seven categories?

a. Finance:

We under-budgeted for the recession; membership subsidies and bad debts were twice what we anticipated at around \$40,000; interest income was down \$26,000, which was \$10,000 under budget; and KPS had a budget differential of \$21,000 and the LC of \$5,000. Had some of these items been at budget, our loss for the year would not have occurred. We will budget tighter and control expenses better next year; we will have an equally hard job predicting the future so we hope next year to have some good luck and better fundraising to fill the gap.

b. Building

We will have major accomplishments signifying the end of

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UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF HOBOKEN

Address: 115 Park Avenue, Hoboken, NJ 07030

Rabbi: 201-653-6696

Preschool: preschool@HobokenSynagogue.org

Learning Center: lc@HobokenSynagogue.org

Web Site: www.HobokenSynagogue.org

Phone: 201-659-4000

Fax: 201-659-2614

Phone: 201-653-8666

Phone: 201-659-4000

E-mail: office@HobokenSynagogue.org

Schedule of Services

Friday night: 7:00 pm

Saturday morning: 9:30 am

Monday: 7:30 pm

RESTORATION UPDATE

*By Ken Schept
Restoration Chair*

We're on our way.

Phase 2 of the restoration of the Star of Israel began as scheduled at the end of May with plaster repair on the south side of the balcony.

During the same period, our restoration artist, Mary Ann Fernandez, prepared several test areas on the ark wall and the railings of the bimah to reveal the raw wood and experiment with various finishes. We discussed the finish options and the paint color pallet during several meetings with Mary, our architect, Alex Gorlin, and project manager, Raul Menares. The objective is a scheme that is simple and consistent with the warm and historic feeling of the sanctuary.

While work continued, a small group considered the possibility of reconfiguring the pews to achieve the following goals:

- Comfort: We want to eliminate the tight squeeze.
- Space optimization: We're running out of space for classes and meetings.
- Spiritual intimacy: Can we have people sit closer to the bimah?
- Historical integrity: We want to protect our link with the past.

The group considering options includes: Rabbi Scheinberg, Russell Kriegel (restoration), Louise Kurtz (ritual), Steve Sperber (building), and Rob Harari (past president).

By early June, we'd raised about \$80,000 from the April fund raising event organized by the Capital Campaign chairs Lauren Calmas, Heidi Learner and Talya Schaeffer, the

matching grant from the Mason family. Those funds, added to the balance in the Capital Campaign account and the contribution from the Kaplan Family Foundation, totaled about \$200,000.

That amount will enable us to complete much—but not all—of our Phase 2 plan. We expect to restore the ark wall, plaster and paint the sanctuary and the tower rooms and refinish the floors. We continue fund raising so that we also can rewire the lights of the ark wall, refinish more woodwork and the pews, and complete other decorative finishes by the High Holidays. ☆



Repaired plaster and a first coat of paint in the balcony (June 25)



Early stages of stripping the ark wall (June 25)

Photos courtesy of Ken Schept

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WHAT'S GOING ON AT USH?

You can get regular updates about USH events and the community (including births, deaths and shiva information) through our ListServ.

Send an e-mail to Listserv@uscj.org.

Leave the subject line blank.

Write this for the message:

SUBSCRIBE HOBOKEN <FIRST-NAME> <LAST-NAME>

For example, if your name is Zachary Goodman, your message will read:

SUBSCRIBE HOBOKEN Zachary Goodman

VOLUNTEER

For more information, please contact Laurie Palumbo at 201-659-3728 or email volunteer@HobokenSynagogue.org

GREEN SPACE

Come picnic with us this summer!

Our programs for young adults in their 20's and 30's continue this summer with picnics and learning! Join us in Church Square Park for a dairy potluck lunch, and plenty of time to enjoy the summer sun on a Shabbat afternoon!

When: July 10 and August 14 at 1pm (we'll stay as long as we feel like it!)

Where: Church Square Park, near the intersection of 4th and Park

What: Potluck dairy meal, everyone bring something yummy to share!

We'll bring challah and grape juice and we'll do a short text study at each picnic. If you would like to lead a session, please let Becky know.

Please bring chairs, blankets, for whatever you would like!

Please RSVP to Becky at bdeitsch@gmail.com so we have an idea of how many people are coming. Hope to see you there!



A new fundraising and environmental program

@ USH:

GO GREEN WITH USH!

These days we are all conscious of trying to preserve our environment and searching for ways to go green in our lives and community. USH is excited to bring you the opportunity to take a step towards helping your home, your business, our synagogue and our community to go one shade greener by choosing to buy your electric power from Viridian Energy!

In 1999 the supply of energy was deregulated in New Jersey, allowing consumers to choose where they buy their energy. Until recently there were few third party suppliers offering residential customers energy, but recently that has changed. Under deregulation, **delivery and service** of the electricity is still provided by your local utility. Third party suppliers like Viridian are licensed by State agencies, to **supply** the electricity. The local utility, like PSEG, supports the NJ Choice Program allowing you to choose your energy supplier while the utility still provides safe delivery and service.

Viridian supplies greener electricity produced from renewable and clean sources. Viridian Energy offers two products, 1) 20% Renewable Energy product (wind and solar) and, 2) 100% E-Certified Renewable Energy product (100% wind). Both products are offered

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A LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Rabbi, Continued from Page 1

FROM KAREN LISA SHAIN

Karen Lisa Shain is a long-time member of the United Synagogue of Hoboken and teacher of the Bonim (kindergarten) Learning Center class.

May 12, 2010

Dear United Synagogue of Hoboken Community,

After ten years of living and working in this community, I am leaving to start a new journey. After many years of contemplating whether or not to make Israel my permanent residence, I have decided to make Aliyah (move to Israel) and become a citizen. I had wanted to move to Israel in 1989 after spending a year of college there, but my life flowed in another direction. Now I am at a point in my life where I have another opportunity to fulfill my dream of living in Israel.

One of the hardest factors about making this decision was that I would have to say goodbye to my synagogue family. In fact, being surrounded by such loving and strong families at the synagogue has inspired me to start my own Jewish family in Israel. I have been teaching at the Learning Center for the past six years and when I think about not starting the new school year with everyone next year, it just does not seem real. But as I tell the children, change is important and helps us to grow and learn. As challenging as an international move is, I am looking forward to this transformative time in my life. As most of my close family lives in Israel, I am excited to be with them.

I will never forget the strong relationships and bonds I have made with the children, families, staff and the Board members at the United Synagogue of Hoboken. I feel as if so many people in this community have touched my heart and helped me to learn things about life and teaching that have made a huge impact on who I am today. In turn, I trust that I have made a difference in your lives.

Thank you so much for all of your love and support over the years. I am truly blessed to have been a part of the United Synagogue of Hoboken.

Love,

Karen Lisa

“Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord G-D; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.” ✨

All this stands to reason, because -- once you're not experiencing desperate poverty -- happiness isn't really about your life circumstances. It's about how you interpret your life circumstances.

There's a story in the Torah, at the end of the book of Numbers (*Parashat Matot-Mas'ei*, to be read this year on July 10) that drives home this point. The people of Israel are still wandering in the desert. Shortly before they are ready to cross the Jordan River and enter the Land of Israel, two and one-half of the tribes of Israel look around themselves and notice that the land where they are -- just east of the Jordan River -- looks like very fertile and healthy land, especially good for sheep to graze. They turn to Moses and say, "It would be a favor to us if this land were given to us as a holding. Do not require us to cross the Jordan....We will build **sheepfolds for our flocks** here, and **dwelling places for our children.**"

Moses considers the request. His response is rather angry. He challenges them: Do you really intend for your brothers to go to war, while you stay here in peace and quiet and prosperity?

The people from those tribes qualify their position. They say, certainly we will do our share in helping the people of Israel settle into the land, but afterwards, we would like to return here, opposite the Jordan River from the land of Israel.

Moses is relieved to hear their answer; they are not planning to shirk their responsibilities to the rest of the people of Israel. Moses gives them permission to settle there, east of the Jordan. But he makes an interesting comment to them: he says: "Build **dwelling places for your children**, and **folds for your sheep.**"

It's a very subtle point. It's clear that Moses was a great listener. If you look closely at the text of the Torah, you see that those tribes originally requested permission to build sheepfolds for the sheep, and dwelling places for the children, in that order. Moses switches the order, to make sure that the children come first, and THEN the sheep.

A Midrashic commentary to the Torah imagines Moses saying to these tribes, "I'll accede your request, but I have to tell you that your priorities are wrong. From the words you used, I can tell what's truly on your mind. You are far more interested in the welfare of your sheep than in the welfare of your families. Yes, you can live east of the Jordan River if you want to, but don't do it for the sake of your sheep. Do it for the sake of your families. They are far more important than your sheep."

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According to this interpretation, these ancient leaders of those tribes of Israel began to consider their material possessions to be key to their happiness. Moses says: Don't make that mistake. Moses redirects them and reminds them to think about their children.

Now obviously children are not the only way to be happy. (And actually happiness research is ambivalent on whether having children, on average, makes people happier.) But children DO embody various features that the happiness researchers tell us are good ways to achieve happiness. Happiness researchers tell us that happiness comes when we pursue activities that are a source of pleasure, but also of life meaning and purpose, and happiness is often found in the context of relationships with other people. Of course all these things are true (at least ideally!) of raising children.

One Midrashic collection called *Midrash Ha-Gadol* suggests that it's not that those two and one-half tribes had more sheep and cattle than everyone else. They actually had the same amount as everyone else. However, they just spent more time thinking about their sheep and cattle than everyone else. It was proportionally more important to them.

The word 'spirituality' is a vague word that means entirely different things to different people. But it seems to me that -at a minimum - a spiritual outlook on the world is an outlook that acknowledges that non-material things are often more important, and even more 'real', than material things. Moses wished that the Israelites of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Menashe would realize just how empty their lives would be if they continued to prioritize their sheep over their relationships with their families -- if they continued to be focused on the material and de-emphasize the non-material.

When we are faced with a choice between something valuable that can be quantified, and something valuable which cannot be quantified, may we know which to choose. ☆

President's Message, Continued from Page 1

the reconstruction of the Star of Israel building by the High Holidays. We will rededicate at Hanukah. Our 7-year project will be at an end. A huge accomplishment, and thanks not only to Ken Schept, but also to Carol Losos and so many others who had a vision, built momentum, and got the job done.

c. Programming and Publications

With the return of the building from the first stage, there were more book programs, more adult programs, more education programs, plus babysitting on Shabbat, a better organized HH program for our kids, much more organized Purim (thanks Grace Gurman-Chan and Rabbi Scheinberg), hugely successful My Jewish Neighborhood, the re-started USY/Kadimah group working under the auspices of parent coordinator Mark Glass and Sara Beth Roth, our youth advisor, and too many other events to mention.

d. Construction and Capital Campaign

Thanks to Heidi, Lauren, Talya, Ken, Raul, Harold, the Masons, the Kaplans, Norman Cantor and so many others who are getting Phase 2 done this summer, and closing out the campaign with the stained glass windows which will appear gradually, thanks to Marty and to Suzie. Our synagogue is (or will be) transformed.

e. Education

KPS was filled to capacity, even in the afternoon. Revenue topped \$1,000,000 as did expenses. There are well over 100 kids getting a wonderful start in their Jewish education, and thanks to devoted teachers and director, Rachelle Grossman for another excellent year. The Learning Center is larger than ever, with more and more programming, which Grace Gurman-Chan will detail further. The board spent more time on education issues than it has in many years, and enjoyed discussing goals, objectives, needs, and plans with Rachelle Grossman and Grace Gurman-Chan. We appreciate as well the push into youth programming that has started at the LC and the 7 wonderful Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

f. Board Management

We have a very active Building Committee which is working on Green Initiatives, Building Maintenance and upkeep. We have new programming and building use policies put into place by our Programming Chair. We are trying to strengthen our financial controls by adding Board

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Members to assist in this area. Not only Myrna Kasser, who is indefatigable, but also Lauren Maas and now, Seth Brown. We will need more Board Members to focus on fundraising. For the last couple of years the Yom Kippur appeal has been bringing in upwards of \$30,000. Impressive as this is we need to get it back over \$50,000 as this money is sorely needed for our operating expenses. I believe we can do this now that the Capital Campaign has reached a close, but it will take all of us to make this happen.

g. Human Resources Management

I can't say enough about the devotion of Grace and Rachelle to our kids; the extra work that both do to not only educate our kids, but to make them poised, smart, well behaved, and menshes in every way. The extra activities that they do to enhance the lives of their staff, and their devotion to their calling is truly impressive.

I have worked closely with Rabbi Scheinberg since days after Simchat Torah on a new contract so that he will stay for another seven years, and we are very close to executing it and keeping him for as long as he wants to stay. I believe that the two great accomplishments of this year are the completion of the Restoration of the Star of Israel building, for which all credit goes to Ken Schept and others, not to me, and keeping the Rabbi here, for which our entire community, board, and I can share credit, as well as thank the Rabbi and Naomi for committing to stay.

Conclusion:

Looking forward, we are going to have a very tight budget for next year; we are going to need to raise contributions by a significant magnitude in order to make up for the downturn

which continues in the economy. There will be pressure on both schools to do more with less and continue to keep up their quality and standards. We are adding the responsibility to fund three new efforts: My Jewish Neighborhood, about \$12,000 next year; PJ Library, about \$8,000, and new Machzorim for the 2011 High Holidays, about \$11,000. My thanks to Amanda Grant, not only for sponsoring PJ Library next year, but also for spearheading our major fundraising efforts next year.

After the burst of new programs over the recent past (USY/Kadimah, additional Adult Ed and night time programming, Shabbat Babysitting, significantly enhanced HH programming, and of course, My Jewish Neighborhood), I don't see significant new programming without funds to sponsor the new effort. All of the new programs listed earlier were done at the initiative of our professionals or the board, and with the exception of MJN did not have outside funding or sponsorship. Adding these programs, paying our Rabbi an appropriate amount in order to enable him and his family to stay in Hoboken, paying our staff wages commensurate with their skill and experience, bringing our building into the 21st century, and so many other responsibilities have taken their financial toll, and next year will therefore be harder than the past year, because we can't lose money two years in a row or else we will have significant changes in budgets a year from now.

I feel optimistic for our community's future, but recognize that we are in a different state of growing pains – these are the pains of maturity, of capacity, of learning to live within our means, and not just rely on unbridled membership and school growth to enable us to meet our budget needs. Now, we will have to turn inward, establish priorities, and manage accordingly. Once we establish this foundation this year, we will have the ability to again use surpluses which occur from growth to further build our community. ✨

The Shofar, the newsletter of the United Synagogue of Hoboken, is published monthly in Hoboken, NJ. United Synagogue of Hoboken, 115 Park Avenue, Hoboken, NJ 07030, 201-659-4000; www.hobokensynagogue.org

- President: James Weinstein: president@hobokensynagogue.org
- Rabbi: Robert Scheinberg: rabbi@hobokensynagogue.org
- Preschool Director: Rachelle Grossman: 201-653-8666 or preschool@hobokensynagogue.org
- Learning Center Director: Grace Gurman-Chan: 201-659-4000, x4 or lc@hobokensynagogue.org
- Shofar Editor: David Swirnoff: shofar@hobokensynagogue.org
- Proofreading provided by Ruth Charnes, Jane Klueger, Louise Kurtz, Allen Reuben and Rabbi Scheinberg
- USH Office administrator: Laura Forino: 201-659-4000 or office@hobokensynagogue.org
- Shofar Advertising Managers: Sharon Cohen and Cathy Cruz-Levine: advertise@hobokensynagogue.org

Deadlines for all issues of the Shofar: 5th of the preceding month



THANKS FOR SPONSORING KIDDUSH

June 5, Seth and Heather Brown in honor of Dov's 1st birthday.

June 12, USY Kadimah.

June 19, Jorge Fernandez and Alice Jurish in honor of the bar mitzvah of Harry Fernandez.

June 26, James and Alicia Weinstein in honor of Grace and Mimi's birthdays. ☆

IN THE CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY

Welcome to New Members

Douglas and Erica Gavin

Michael Schreiber and Kim Huang

Congratulations

Mazal Tov to Harry Fernandez, son of Alice Jurish and Jorge Fernandez, on his Bar Mitzvah.

Mazal Tov to Jorge Fernandez on his conversion to Judaism

Mazal Tov to all of the Kaplan Preschool Graduates

Mazal Tov to Evan Katz and Ruth Weintraub on their wedding.

Mazal Tov to Monica Rodriguez and Ethan Kuniyoshi on their wedding.

Mazal Tov to Alyssa Rosen and Leon Sangster on their wedding.

Mazal Tov to Merry Firschein and David Swirnoff on their wedding.

Mazal Tov to David and Valerie Rubenstein on the birth of their daughter, Olivia Rose

Mazal Tov to Becky Katzman and Adam Barth on the birth of their twins, Caleb and Katherine

Condolences

We extend condolences to Dave Levin on the loss of his mother, Gerry Berger

Mi Sheberach

Because of privacy concerns, we are no longer including the Mi sheberach list of people who are ill in the Shofar newsletter. The list will continue to be sent out each Friday in the weekly Shabbat announcements email. To receive USH announcements by email, contact the synagogue office at office@hobokensynagogue.org.

We continue to offer prayers for healing of body and spirit to all the loved ones of our community who are in need of healing.

We think of all those serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and of Israel, praying for safety and well-being for them and all others, and speedy return to their homes and families.

Go Green with USH, continued from p 3:

at a price per kilowatt that is less than what you are currently paying your local utility. Did you know that **only 7% of the energy supplied by PSEG comes from renewable sources?** Choosing to have an electricity supplier like Viridian allows you to save money and help to save the environment, supporting currently available renewable resources as well as aiding in the development of new renewable resources in the US.

USH will become both a Customer and an Associate of Viridian Energy, which benefits our synagogue and in turn our members who choose to sign up with Viridian. By signing up as a Fundraising Entity, USH is able to help members save money by switching their energy supplier to Viridian. For each member that switches to Viridian, USH earns money via a residual check each month for each active customer we refer. The energy savings are passed on to each subscribing USH member customer! You save money, USH earns money and we all help save the environment.

How does it work? Once USH completes the Association subscription, members will be invited to make the change in their own homes or businesses through the USH Viridian website. Making the switch is free of charge, there are no credit checks and no deposits. Once your application to switch is approved, you will receive a letter from your current utility confirming that you have chosen Viridian as your third party supplier.

In the coming weeks you will receive additional communication about this opportunity and USH will host a sign-up event for those of you who prefer to make the switch in person and have your questions answered. Members should encourage their friends, colleagues, babysitters, relatives to make the switch under the USH Viridian website as well.

What changes? Our impact on the environment will be positively impacted by each member who chooses to join USH in this energy provider change. And you have the chance to save money each month on the energy you consume in your home or business.

What stays the same? Your local utility will continue to deliver your power from the same grid directly to your home, as well as the service you have always counted on. You will receive one bill from your local utility. Viridian will be listed as the supplier on that bill and you make payments as you always have to your current utility. It's that simple!

Special thanks go to Lynn Danzker and Joe Epstein for introducing this opportunity to USH and our entire congregation! Lynn and Joe have volunteered to coordinate USH's participation and to provide assistance to members who are interested in this program. Please look for additional information in the coming weeks as you consider this important decision. ☆

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**Siddurim**

Rosemary and Wally Littman in memory of Paul Brothman

Kaplan Family Learning Center

UJA Young Leadership Division

Lauren Kuhn

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Myrna and Norman Kasser in honor of Grace Gurman-Chan and the LC staff

Sarah Condiotti Chesed Fund

Russell and Marni Kriegel in honor of Larry Gutterman

Kaplan Cooperative Pre-School

David and Susan Goldberg

Penny Metsch in memory of Rebecca Rosenblum

Myrna and Norman Kasser in honor of Rachelle Grossman and the KPS staff

General Fund

Estelle Glasgow in memory of Bessie Auster

Martin and Sheryl Erman in memory of Paul Brothman

Rebecca Krimsins

Michael and Paula Heiman in honor of Emma Goldman's bat mitzvah

Richard and Amelia Katz in honor of Sophie's naming ceremony

Janice Springer

Jason and Cindy Altberger to commemorate the yahrtzeit of Harriet Polansky

Alix Biel

Myrna and Norman Kasser in memory of Harry Glass, father of Mark Glass

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Robert and Pamela Strell in memory of Russell Kriegel's father, Roland Kriegel

David and Emily Severe in honor of Charlie's brit millah

Don Rifkin and Melissa Schaffer in memory of Russell Kriegel's father, Roland Kriegel

Russell and Marni Kriegel in memory of Roland Kriegel
Ken and Susan Schept in honor of Harry Isaac Grant, a new member of the Jewish people

Lillian Kriegel in memory of Roland Kriegel

Selma Silver

Amanda Grant

Star of Israel Capital Campaign

Steve Sperber

Norma DeRuggiero

Adam Miller and Alison Slone

Andrew Heiden and Rebecca Teichman

Martin and Tracy Schnabel

Zehava Rosenberg

Heidi Learner

Ruth Charnes

Lawrence and Laurie Katz in memory of Aaron and Pauline Katz

Amanda Grant

Mitchell Baruchin and Heather Gibbons

Steven and Lauren Calmas

Valdi and Lauren Sapira

Andrew Lee and Shoshana Goldberg-Lee

Louise Kurtz

Jane Porges

Daniel Dunn and Amy Gordon

Gordy and Monique Haas

Jane Klueger

Matt Meistrich

Monica Rodriguez

James and Alicia Weinstein

Sharon Stern

Norman Cantor

Hugh and Susan Moore in honor of the Wednesday morning Torah study class

Selma Silver in memory of her husband Stanley Silver ✨

Remember a loved one... celebrate a happy occasion... honor someone you admire!

I wish to contribute \$_____ to the United Synagogue of Hoboken

In honor of / in memory of _____

Your name & address _____

Please use this donation for

General operating expenses	Restoration of the Star of Israel	Kaplan Family Learning Center
Purchase a siddur (\$36 each)	Purchase a chumash (\$60 each)	Sarah Condiotti Chesed Fund
Rabbi's Discretionary Fund	Kaplan Cooperative Preschool	Adult education
Other (please be explicit)		

Please make your check payable to United Synagogue of Hoboken, and mail it, with this form, to 115 Park Ave., Hoboken, NJ 07030.

If you wish to donate stock, please contact the treasurer, Myrna Kasser, at 201-792-4055 or treasurer@hobokensynagogue.org.



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