



No.55 September 2016 Elul 5776

# NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

MARK SOKOLSKI



person in this role and I thank her for her time and effort.

The Board has again invited Rabbi Ehud Bandel from Israel to provide rabbinical and cantorial services during the forthcoming Yom Tovim. This year, we are fortunate that Rabbi Bandel will be serving as visiting rabbi from just prior to Rosh Hashanah until after Simchat Torah. During this time, he will be officiating at three b'nei mitzvot, as well as conducting regular shiurim. He will also be involved in promoting Masorti Judaism and interfaith dialogue.

Last year our Yom Tov family program was conducted at the Church of the Latter Day Saints, just 200 metres from our shul. The Church generously offered their space at no cost to Kehilat Nitzan, and our services were thoroughly enjoyed by children and parents alike. We are grateful to the Church for once again offering their premises for our services this year.

It is around four months since Rabbi Stein's departure and we are pleased that he is settling in to his new position at Beth Israel Synagogue in Vancouver, Canada.

The Board appointed a Rabbi Search committee chaired by John Rosenberg and comprising nine other members of our kehila. The committee prepared the necessary documentation for the Rabbinical Assembly (RA), the body with the responsibility of matching Conservative rabbis with communities. In considering the names suggested by the RA, the committee recommended that we bring Rabbi Alejandro Mlynski to Melbourne to meet our community. Rabbi Mlynski, his wife Myriam, and their older daughter Kalanit spent one week in Melbourne in June and the family quickly made a strong connection with our kehila. The Board wanted to engage him and we feel sure that he would have accepted. However, Rabbi Mlynski tragically passed away shortly after his return to South America. Our hearts go out to his family at this time, and we are saddened that the family will not become part of our community.

After the Yom Tovim, we will resume our search for a rabbi. Until we have made an appointment, we will continue to seek the services of visiting rabbis, particularly for the Passover period.

Our conversion program students graduated and had their first call up on 30 April, just prior to Rabbi Stein's departure. I would like to acknowledge the dedication of all the conversion students and especially thank Catherine Cashmore and Stacey Ford for their continued commitment to our kehila and to furthering their knowledge of Judaism, reciting special prayers, leyning, and joining our Ritual committee. I also congratulate Catherine on joining our Board.

Despite not currently having our own rabbi, our services have continued to run seamlessly and have been no less enjoyable. Sammy Pincus, our gabbai, has done an incredible job and his dedication to the role is outstanding. He is extremely well supported by John Rosenberg and Trevor Corran. We are also very fortunate to have lay leaders who not only have great knowledge but are also wonderful human beings.

More recently, the attendance at our Friday night services has increased considerably. It is our aim to have a minyan every Friday evening so that we can complete all elements of the services and we are able to recite Kaddish. We thank Daniela Donnenfeld for her commitment as she beautifully davens the Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv services every Friday night.

At the instigation of John Furstenberg, Wednesday morning Shacharit services having been running for several weeks and the numbers are steadily increasing. I would like to thank John and also Josh Artz for his davening of the Shacharit services. I hope more of our members will attend to make up a minyan.

Zvi Civins continues to run a successful b'nei mitzvah program and we have four b'nei mitzvot planned for the rest of this year. A number of students have told me how interesting and engaging they find the program, and I would like to thank Zvi for taking it on again after a short break earlier in the year.

On the recommendation of a committee headed by Allyson Bader, the Board recently engaged a company to develop a new website for Kehilat Nitzan to modernise our web presence and make it more interactive. We hope that this will improve our connection with our existing members and outreach to potential new members. The website

should be up and running before Yom Tov.

Our organisation could not operate in the way it does without the dedication of our Board. I would like to thank Howard Arber, Amy Auster, Miriam Faine, Andrew Freeman, and Mervyn Silverstein, Board members who retired at the recent Annual General Meeting, for their commitment and hard work.

After a somewhat difficult year, I feel very positive that we can continue to build on the great foundation established by previous Boards. In the coming year, I feel that it is important for our kehila to direct our energy to the following efforts:

- As the first priority, continuing our rabbi search and arranging for visiting rabbis until an appointment is made.
- Supporting our Ritual committee and lay leaders.
- Engaging someone to run our b'nei mitzvah program.
- Developing fundraising initiatives.
- Proactively connecting with our kehila and, in particular, with new members.
- Further developing our connection with our post-b'nei mitzvah youth. This is not an easy task and will require additional funding.
- Continuing to be engaged in intra-faith (not to be confused with interfaith) initiatives. For example, this newsletter includes photos of the very successful Tisha B'Av service and panel discussion held by Kehilat Nitzan in conjunction with Temple Beth Israel and Shira Hadashah.
- Reactivating the Seniors Club.
- Further raising the awareness of Masorti Judaism in the wider Jewish community.

I have just completed my three-year term and now hand over the presidency to Zvi Civins. Zvi has great passion, energy, and commitment to our shul and will be serving in his second term as president. I very much look forward to working with Zvi and the rest of the Board. My time as president has been enjoyable and fulfilling and I thank the community for the opportunity to serve.

I look forward to seeing you in shul and wish you and your families a Shanah Tovah tikateivu.



# MEET THE NEW KEHILAT NITZAN BOARD

The 17th Annual General Meeting of Kehilat Nitzan took place on 7 August. The main items on the agenda were the consideration of the Annual Report and the Statement of Accounts, and the election of office bearers and members of the Board.

We are pleased to introduce our new Board members for the coming year:

## Executive

Zvi Civins	President
John Rosenberg	Vice President
Mark Sokolski	Immediate Past President
John Cohen	Honorary Treasurer
John Furstenberg	Honorary Secretary

## Board of Honorary Officers

Catherine Cashmore  
Gabriela Ladowsky  
Julie Leder  
Irving Miller  
Rhona Rosenberg  
Rohan Shaw

# A MESSAGE FROM MYRIAM MLYNSKI AND HER DAUGHTERS KALANIT AND DANIELLA

*As mentioned in the president's message in this newsletter, Rabbi Alejandro Mlynski visited our community in June this year with a view to taking up the position of rabbi of Kehilat Nitzan. Tragically, Rabbi Mlynski passed away shortly after his return to South America. His wife Myriam sent the following message which was read at the minyan held at Kehilat Nitzan for her husband.*

not usually feel. Every one of you made him feel like he was your rabbi and Alejandro immediately felt a wonderful connection with each and every one of you. Alejandro's D'var Torah was about keeping the flame burning – the flame of our tradition, the flame of being together and being part of a community, the flame of education and commitment, the flame of being responsible for one another, the flame of Judaism and continually being a Jew in this era.

We would like to thank you all for coming tonight to pray together to honour Alejandro, our soul mate and father. Alejandro loved to be a rabbi. In each and every step, he devoted himself with dedication, inspiring messages and smiles, and in every encounter, Alejandro left his footprint. When Alejandro had the privilege of visiting Kehilat Nitzan, he felt immensely happy. He felt as if he was arriving home, and that is something you do

Today a new flame is added, and it is the flame of keeping his work, his passion and his devotion alive. 'Ve shinanta levada' – you should teach these words to your children. There was no greater joy for Alejandro than being invited to meet you and to get to know you all, and that joy was shared between the three of us. Thank you. All the beautiful moments we spent together will live again, forever in our hearts.



## GABRIELA LADOWSKY

I have been happily married to Luis for 31 years and have a daughter, Sharon, and a son, Bryan. Sharon is married to Tal and they have a beautiful 20-month-old baby called Eviatar, who is adored by all. Bryan is studying Science-Law at Monash University. We came from Argentina 27 years ago to make our home in this wonderful country.

I work as a Senior Manager at Jetstar and am responsible for time and attendance for airport and head office personnel. My work involves travelling around Australia and meeting interesting people, which I love.

Before joining Kehilat Nitzan eight years ago, I was a member of Temple Beth Israel, where I served as vice-president and board member for a number of years.

I am passionate about our community, particularly in working towards further engaging our membership. I believe we have amazing people among our members and their contribution is paramount if we want our kehila to flourish.

I am hoping to bring my experience in both the community and professional worlds to contribute to the growth of Kehilat Nitzan, and look forward to meeting as many members as possible, and to listen to your ideas on how we can make our kehila the best we possibly can.

## JULIE LEDER

I began my working career as a high school instrumental music teacher. After seven years I left the Education Department to become a full-time member of the Victoria Police Band, a position I held for 26 years until the band was forced to close down in 2014. I am now happily retired from paid employment.

While at university in the late 1970s I joined the Australian Army Band in a part-time capacity and was a soldier for 33 years. I was deployed overseas three times and attended both military and musical promotion courses.

I began volunteering with the Victorian Association of Jewish Ex & Servicemen & Women Australia (VAJEX Australia), in 2011. I am currently the vice president and master of ceremonies for all events.

I am a member of the GLBT Reference Group of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV). This purpose of this group is to investigate issues relating to vilification and discrimination against GLBT people within the Jewish community, and to recommend strategies to combat vilification and discrimination. I am the sole lesbian representative on this reference group and attend functions when a Jewish lesbian 'of faith' is needed.

While my parents were alive I attended the Moorabbin Hebrew Congregation, an Orthodox synagogue. Since their passing I have become a member of Kehilat Nitzan and feel a connection with the Masorti ideals of tradition and change. I particularly enjoy the equal opportunities for men and women to lead services, to receive an aliyah and to count in a minyan. My partner Stacey and I have felt both accepted and appreciated.

## RHONA ROSENBERG

I was born and raised in Melbourne. After attending the local primary school and Mt Scopus College, I completed a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma in Education at Monash University. I worked as a secondary school teacher of humanities subjects and for the last 13 years of my teaching career I taught history, business management and legal studies in the VCE section of the Distance Education Centre Victoria.

When I was first married, we spent five years in Sydney and five years in Melbourne before moving to Canberra. I lived in Canberra for over sixteen years. I was very active in the small but vibrant Jewish community. I was head teacher of the cheder, staffed entirely – myself included - by volunteers. I was the honorary secretary of the ACT Jewish Community Inc. for many years, and was active in the local National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) group.

I have been happily divorced for a very long time. I have one daughter and two sons, all married, and four grandchildren, with another one due on Rosh Hashanah.

## ROHAN SHAW

I am 35 years old and have been strongly involved in community groups since my youth. My wife and I are looking forward to the birth of our first child at the beginning of October. I run my own company installing cable TV systems and hotel TV solutions.

I plan to bring new social activities to the community to encourage all age groups to participate in the Kehilat Nitzan family.

If you see me at the shul or out and about, please stop and say hello. I would love to hear feedback from the community about the type of activities you would like to see.

# THE KOTEL: A SOURCE OF UNITY FOR OUR PEOPLE

RABBI EHUD BANDEL



Rabbi Ehud Bandel with Kari Boymal of Kehilat Nitzan celebrating her bat mitzvah at the Masorti Kotel

If there is one thing I am proud of in my tenure as President and CEO of the Masorti Movement in Israel, it is the agreement I reached with the Israeli Government regarding the egalitarian prayers plaza at the southern end of the Western Wall – the site known as Robinson's Arch or the Masorti Kotel, that today is usually referred to as 'Azarat Yisrael'.

I began my term of office shortly after Tisha B'Av 1997. On that Tisha B'Av, Masorti worshippers who gathered at the back of the main plaza of the Kotel for the evening service were attacked, yet again, by Haredim, as they had been attacked two months earlier on Shavuot. Unfortunately, the Jerusalem police not only did not protect our people from the attackers but they actually pushed us outside the plaza and even outside the walls of the old city across Dung Gate.

One year later, as we were preparing for our annual Tisha B'Av evening prayer at the Kotel, I received a telephone call from Yitzhak 'Bougie' Herzog, who

was then the Cabinet Secretary and is now the head of the Labour Party and Leader of the Opposition.

Herzog suggested that we will hold our services at Robinson's Arch and that the government would prepare the area, provide us with a Sefer Torah, and formally allocate that site to the Masorti Movement as an egalitarian prayer area.

It was a real dilemma. Some in the Masorti Movement opposed this compromise, arguing that we should not yield to accepting second-class status and must instead insist on our right to have our services at the main plaza. Others, including me, thought that the idea was worth considering. Although we would not relinquish our right to pray according to our custom at the main plaza, out of the desire to avoid conflict and to persevere peace, we believed that we should give it a try.

In the year 2000, the first agreement with the government was signed for a trial period of 12

months. In the press release we issued, I stated: 'This is a great day in promoting the struggle for religious pluralism in Israel, a day in which the Israeli Government formally accepts the principle that all Jews have a right to pray at the holiest site for the Jewish people according to their custom.'

In the 16 years that have passed since then, the original agreement has been significantly extended. Hundreds of bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies have been held at the site; thousands of people have already benefited from the opportunity to have girls called up to the Torah at the Kotel; and mothers have been able to stand next to their sons as they celebrating their bar mitzvah.

In addition, the site is much quieter and more dignified than the main plaza, and the magnitude of history can be sensed there as we look down to the original Herodian Street and the pile of huge stones left there untouched from Tisha B'Av in the year 70

CE, the day of the destruction of the Second Temple.

For me, to see so many groups gathered there every Monday and Thursday is an uplifting experience. There are Israelis from every community, Ashkenazi and Sfardi, Americans, Canadians, and yes, even many Aussies who choose to celebrate their bar or bat mitzvah there.

This successful experience has led to a much larger plan to remodel, upgrade and enlarge the site and formally allocate it as a third prayer plaza of the Kotel in which the Progressive movements and Women of the Wall (WOW) will hold their services.

For three years, the leaders of the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel with WOW negotiated the plan with the Cabinet Secretary. On 31 January this year, the plan was passed by Cabinet by a vote of 15-5. The government decided to allocate NIS 35 million for the construction of the new area which was to be governed by a committee headed by the chairman of the Jewish Agency, and to include representatives from Women of the Wall, the Masorti Movement, the Reform Movement, the Jewish Federations of North America, and the Israeli government.

The government's decision was hailed as a historic landmark for religious pluralism in Israel despite the fact that it left the upper plaza to the sole authority of the Orthodox establishment.

Today, however, seven month after its approval, it appears that the plan is almost dead. Pressure from the Ultra-Orthodox parties put on hold the implementation of the plan and there is no indication that there will be any change under the current Coalition government.

And that is where we, members of Kehilat Nitzan, together with Masorti, Progressive, and Modern Orthodox Jews throughout the world, come into the picture. We must make our voices heard and demand that the state of Israel not betray its Zionist vision to be a home for all Jews.

Last November, addressing the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: 'As Prime Minister of Israel, I will always ensure that all Jews can feel at home in Israel – Reform Jews, Conservative Jews, Orthodox Jews – all Jews... I am also hopeful that we will soon conclude a long overdue understanding that will ensure that the Kotel is a source of unity for our people, not a point of division.'

So far, this promise is yet to be fulfilled. I shall continue to lead egalitarian bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies at the Masorti Kotel, but the full scale of the plan for the Kotel must be implemented so that it will be indeed be 'a source of unity for our people, not a point of division.'

## KEHILAT NITZAN GETS A NEW WEBSITE

The Kehilat Nitzan website ([www.kehilatnitzan.org.au](http://www.kehilatnitzan.org.au)) makeover combines a professional and attractive updated look with lots of new features for both visitors and members. Highlights include an interactive calendar, a section for upcoming events, more comprehensive information about our committees and activities, information about observing and celebrating specific lifecycle events, easily accessed information about how to volunteer, the ability to donate online, and a members-only section that includes committee rosters and commonly used forms.

Our website was established in the 1990s by our dedicated (and still sorely missed) gabbai Kingsley

Winikoff, who eventually turned it over to Janice Gelb, who has regularly updated its content. Visitors commonly found us through the website and it provided resources and news updates for our members.

With the growth of our kehila and the higher public profile of Masorti Judaism in Melbourne, however, Kehilat Nitzan needed a professional and attractive design to attract new members and to provide a more comprehensive, informative and interactive experience for visitors and members.

A committee led by Allyson Bader with members John Rosenberg and Janice Gelb (and initially Amy

Bachrach) did a structure and content analysis to determine the information that we wanted to include and the best way to organise it. Once the structure and requirements were determined, the committee evaluated vendors, finally settling on YC (Your Creative). We went through several design iterations and reviews, and had an initial training session for those interested in learning how to maintain and update the site.

We hope you enjoy our new Internet presence!

If you are interested in helping to update and maintain the website, please email [info@kehilatnitzan.org.au](mailto:info@kehilatnitzan.org.au).

[www.kehilatnitzan.org.au](http://www.kehilatnitzan.org.au)

## BIKKUR CHOLIM: VISITING THE SICK

Kehilat Nitzan has a dedicated group of trained volunteers who are there to visit shul members, or members of their families, who are ill in hospital or who are recuperating at home.

If you know of anyone who would welcome a visit from one of our volunteers, please contact Lianne Franco at the Kehilat Nitzan office on (03) 9500 0906 or email [info@kehilatnitzan.org.au](mailto:info@kehilatnitzan.org.au).

(Please note that we are unable to offer pastoral visits until a rabbi has been appointed.)

# THE LIVES OF JEWISH WOMEN PARTISANS DURING THE SHOAH

FREDA HODGE



intelligence between ghettos and partisans. There were armed uprisings in extermination camps, ghettos and forced labour camps. Despite the enormous power of the Nazis, many Jews refused to succumb without inflicting at least some damage on the murderous foe.

There were many obstacles that prevented women from becoming partisans. They were responsible for the care of children and other family members, and physically they were vulnerable to sexual assaults, even from fellow partisans. However, feminine wiles could be used to good effect. For example, Niuta Teitelbaum, an Underground courier in the Warsaw ghetto, was assigned to assassinate a high-ranking SS officer. Slim and blonde and with beautiful blue eyes, she approached the Gestapo headquarters, telling the guards outside with lowered eyes that she had an appointment to see the Kommandant about a personal matter. They allowed her into the building where she entered the Kommandant's office, took out a revolver, and shot him. She left the building smiling coyly at the guards, and escaped.

Although the Resistance was largely male dominated, at least ten percent of Jewish partisans were women. Some of the women took on supportive roles such as camp duties, nursing, and acting as couriers, but others took up arms. They took part in destroying supply trains, power plants, and communication lines; they raided Nazi arsenals and helped to supply arms for their partisan otriad (detachment); and they went on missions to obtain

In the period immediately after the end of the Second World War, little was known about the extent of Jewish Resistance in the ghettos, camps, forests, and hills of German-occupied Europe. An estimated 30,000 Jews fought as partisans, hiding out in the vast forests of Eastern Europe, and in France, Greece, Russia, and the Balkan States. Resistance took many forms both within the ghettos and outside, while Jewish culture and traditions were maintained through prayers, clandestine schools and artistic endeavours.

In the factories and workshops established by the Nazis in the ghettos, many of the slave labourers sabotaged the goods that were being made for the German war effort. Children were smuggled out of the ghettos to safety, and couriers carried military

food from Christian villages, often resorting to force.

Hannah Senesch is one of the best-known Jewish women heroes of the Second World War. She had emigrated to Palestine in 1939, but in 1943 she enlisted in the British army. She was trained as a paratrooper and was dropped into occupied Yugoslavia to help coordinate resistance activities. She fought alongside Tito's partisans, but was captured by the Nazis. Although horribly tortured, she did not reveal any information. She was hanged by the Germans and is still regarded as a great heroine.

Faye Schulman learned photography from her brother who had a photographic business in Lenin, Poland. This skill would save her life when the Germans spared her after killing almost all of the Jews in the Lenin Ghetto. They gave her the task of photographing various subjects for their records, but little did they know that she also made copies for herself. Faye fled to the forest where she joined a partisan group known as the Molotova Brigade. She served as a nurse in the group from 1942 to 1944, and took many rare photographs of the group's activities. She had to use considerable ingenuity to develop and print her photographs under the primitive conditions of life in the forest.

These women are just a few of the remarkably courageous and dedicated females who would not let their gender stand in the way of their fight against the Nazi regime. They endured hunger, thirst, cold, and hardship in order to fulfil their life's mission.

This article is based on a talk Freda Hodge gave to the Kehilat Nitzan Rosh Hodesh group in September.

*Photo: Partisan Faye Schulman, courtesy Jewish Partisan Education Foundation and Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) Melbourne. The photo is currently on display at the JHC as part of the 'Pictures of Resistance' exhibition.*

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WISH THEIR RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND THE COMMUNITY A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR AND WELL OVER THE FAST

ARBER  
Howard, Ruth & family

BASSER/MARKS  
Lee Ann, Claire, Alistair & Nicholas

CIVINS  
Marian, Zvi & family

COLLINS  
Ros & family

CORRAN  
Trevor

DAVIDOFF  
Sid, Elaine & family

FAINE  
Solly & Eva

FELDMAN  
Fran & family

FELDMAN  
Vivian, Pam & family

FURSTENBERG  
John, Dalia & family

CEBON-GLASS/GLASS  
Ann & Reuben

HABERFELD  
Luisa & family

HALL  
Sonia, Fred & family

KORMAN  
Braham, Debra & family

LANDAU  
Jim, Georgie, Kara, Anna & Ben

LEVY-STOKES  
Carmella, Nick and Gabi

MUSHIN  
Yvonne & family

PERL  
Sharon, Moshe, Michelle,  
David & Judith  
REDNER  
Harry, Jill & Joachim

ROSENBERG  
Bev & John

SCHWARTZBORD  
Mort, Vera & family

SHALIT/FAINE  
Greg, Miriam & Anna

SILVER  
Jo, Steve, James & Aidan

SOKOLSKI  
Mark & Lauren

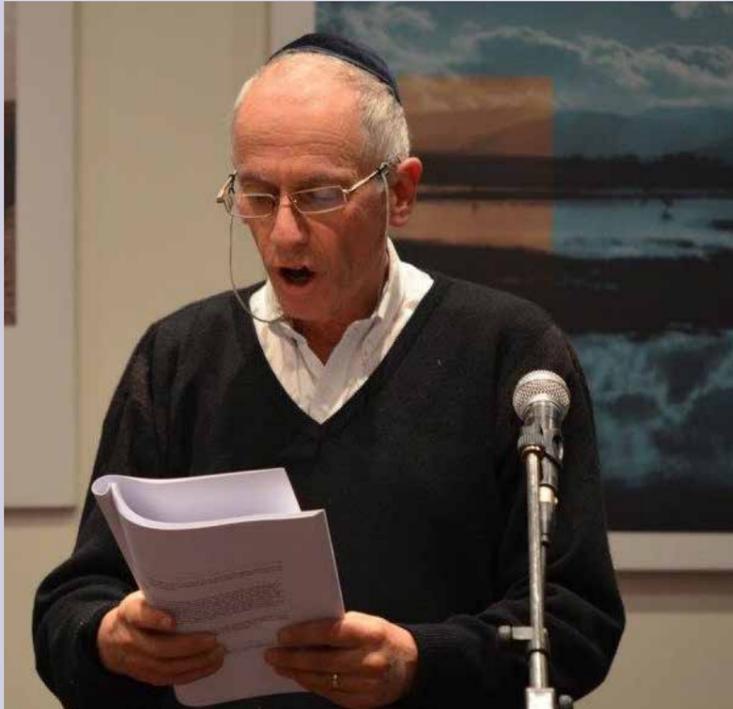
TRICHTER  
Lina & family

WEISS  
Helen, Norman & family

WYSE/WOLKENBERG  
Linda and Tom

## A JOINT MASORTI, TBI AND SHIRA TISHA B'AV

Photos: Ari Perlow, Shira Hadasha



הסתדרות הציונית העולמית  
World Zionist Organization



Newsletter  
edited by Ruth Mushin

# TIKKUN OLAM

## RHONA ROSENBERG

Kehilat Nitzan's Tikkun Olam Committee manages a range of community projects involving volunteers, the largest of which is the food van.

### Food Van

Every Tuesday evening, Kehilat Nitzan (KN) supports the Father Bob Foundation (FBF) in Port Melbourne by providing food and volunteers to serve disadvantaged people in the area. This involves 70 volunteers and runs every week of the year.

Deb Korman is the driving force, supported by Allyson Bader and an extremely competent and efficient team of volunteers. Sue Zinger and Ros Gold do the shopping each week and prepare the bins of supplies at the Father Bob warehouse. Five volunteer drivers – Rohan Shaw, Gary Pincus, Steve Curtis, Harold Benporath and Maurice Efron – share the driving of the van.

This project could not function without the generous donations of funds and contributions from members of KN, and food from businesses including Solomon Butchers and Bake My Day. Rostered volunteers also provide meals prepared in their homes. Pam Gelfand organises regular 'cook-ups' in the KN kitchen where volunteers cook kosher meals that are then frozen and supplied to the food van. These meals are also made available to KN members when needed.

When the FBF could no longer afford to pay for the Social Outreach Worker who was on hand to deal with clients' needs every Tuesday night, the Tikkun Olam Committee decided to provide the \$600 per month needed to fund this position. We were fortunate to receive a substantial anonymous donation that will cover most of this cost until the end of 2016, when the issue will be reviewed.

As the number of clients is increasing, we would really appreciate more donors to cover our costs.

### Bikkur Cholim

In the absence of a rabbi, our trained volunteers are unable to provide pastoral care, but we have continued to accept referrals and visit members or their families at home or in hospital. We are currently in discussion with KN member Lauren Sokolski, a trained social worker, to plan how to continue this service.

### Delivering Food to Mourners

When KN is informed of a bereavement to a member, the Tikkun Olam Committee organises for food to be delivered to the mourners. This has now become easier as frozen meals cooked in the KN kitchen are available.

A register of volunteers able to perform this mitzvah has been established and is coordinated by

Paula Rosin. Families who receive these meals have been very appreciative and although this initiative is working well, we can always use more volunteers. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact the Kehilat Nitzan office on (03) 9500 0906 or email [info@kehilatnitzan.org.au](mailto:info@kehilatnitzan.org.au).

### Blood Drive

In the past, Barie Forbes coordinated four blood drives every year, and Harold Benporath coordinated a blood drive in April this year. However, as many KN members donate blood regularly, the Tikkun Olam Committee decided to focus on the annual Mitzvah Day blood drive in November. In the meantime, regular reminders that members can donate blood through the Red Cross will appear in the weekly email.

### Nitzanim Singers

Under the leadership of Moishe Pearl and Judy Feiglin, the Nitzanim Singers perform regularly at aged care facilities, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The residents, their families and the staff thoroughly enjoy the concerts and very much look forward to them.

### Mitzvah Day

Last year KN organised three separate projects for Mitzvah Day – the Food Van, Nitzanim singers and the blood drive. Members also helped the Knit One Give One (KOGO) project which consisted of packing Christmas presents at KN. There was great response from our members and, even though this project will take place in a different venue this year, we hope that many more KN members will participate.

### Volunteer's Shabbat

The Tikkun Olam Committee organises this event annually in July to honour all our members who volunteer their time and energy in the myriad of activities that make Kehilat Nitzan the vibrant community that it is. The different groups of volunteers were honoured with a call up, a kiddish and iyun, and we were addressed by Rebecca Forgasz, Director and CEO of the Jewish Museum of Australia (JMA) who spoke about volunteering at the JMA.

Next year we plan to organise a thank you to the KN volunteers during National Volunteers Week in May.

### Kosher Meals on Wheels

Kehilat Nitzan makes two donations to Kosher Meals on Wheels at Pesach and Rosh Hashanah. This pays for some of the food that is included in the parcels made for the chagim for recipients of meals on wheels.

### Purim

This year we collected matanot levayonim, charity for the needy, from families celebrating Purim in the shul. The money raised was given to Jewish Care for their accommodation program.

### Finances

The Tikkun Olam Benevolent Fund was established a number of years ago to raise funds 'to provide assistance to recipients in the way of delivering goods and services in the following categories:



1. Homeless (food and basic needs)
2. Elderly companionship, transportation, general assistance)
3. Refugees and new immigrants (basic needs)
4. Disabled (transportation)
5. Individual suffering from ill-health (companionship and basic needs)
6. Bereaved (companionship, basic needs)'

All donations to the benevolent fund are tax deductible, and we hope that you will consider directing your donations to the fund so that we can continue our much-needed projects.

### Tikkun Olam Committee

Our committee members Allyson Bader, Barie

Forbes, Paula Rosin, Stephen Joshua, Ruth Arber, Elfie Weiss, Kathie Tinner and Harold Benporath, have worked tirelessly to plan and implement our projects. Rabbi Stein was also a very important member of the committee and we thank him for his hard work over his five years in Melbourne.

If you would further information about any of these projects, please email Rhona Rosenberg at [rosenberg.rhona@gmail.com](mailto:rosenberg.rhona@gmail.com).

Rhona Rosenberg is the chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee. This is an edited version of her report to the Kehilat Nitzan Annual General Meeting in August.

**MAZEL TOV!  
TO EVERYONE WHO CELEBRATED  
A BAR OR BAT MITZVAH SINCE  
PESACH 5776**

Mitch Cowen  
Luisa David  
Jamie Grushka  
Charlotte & Alexandra Cowen

**MAZEL TOV!  
TO EVERYONE WHO  
CELEBRATED WEDDINGS AND  
AUFRUFS/CALLUPS SINCE  
PESACH 5776**

Mark Rosenberg & Jade Moore  
Ariella Leski & Joshua Lipschitz

**WE WELCOME EVERYONE WHO  
HAS JOINED OUR COMMUNITY  
SINCE PESACH 5776**

Jonathan Epstein & Jennifer Black  
Jonathan Rosenbloom & Kathryn Earp  
Peter Jarney & Susie Goldberg  
Elliot Lebransky & Deborah Carroll  
Kalman Pollak  
Judy Kolt  
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# 'KEEP THE CHANGE': REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW YEAR

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Jewish News about some expert or another's predictions for the next year that we will rarely bother to fact-check a year later.

We will consider upgrading our computer/phone/tablet to the newest model that is already on its way to obsolescence as newer models are developed.

We will make resolutions to get into shape, lose weight, learn a musical instrument, or go to shul more often. We will be moved for a few moments, at least, by the prayers in our mahzor to look at our own deeds over the past year and think about what we will do differently this year.

We will pray for an end to hunger, war, and racism, and for peace in Israel and everywhere else in the world, without many of us expecting much change.

We will welcome the new year by hearing the shofar, having our family over for a meal, and dipping our apples into honey. And then, a few weeks later, after Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simhat Torah, it will be back to life as usual.

Does this sound familiar?

Is 'change' what Rosh Hashanah is all about? After all, despite all our prayers, does anything really change from year to year, apart from our age, weight and waistline (for the worse)? Is the world any cleaner, more peaceful, less warm? This once-a-year half-hearted attempt to right all the wrongs in ourselves and the world sometimes seems futile.

I am often amused and then frustrated after being

inundated by the number of self-improvement websites and articles that excitedly share all sorts of wonderful advice: ten ways to be happier; seven ways to improve your push-ups; how to hard boil an egg the right way... (Seriously, I made none of these up!) The message is that we can do better if we only try, and that if you are not on a path to self-improvement of any kind then you really are failing at life.

Not much seems to change. But then how much change do we really want, much less need? Perhaps instead of the emphasis on personal, mostly superficial change, we should consider something else.

Other Jewish holy days and festivals commemorate an agricultural season or historical event: the war against the Greek-Syrians of Chanukah; the Exodus, Revelation and harvests of Pesach and Shavuot; the joy of Purim as Esther and Mordecai saved our people in Shushan and beyond. Unlike these festivals, Rosh Hashanah has no specific historical anchor or event. Instead, we link this day to the birth of the world, HaYom harat ha'olam. And linked to this is of course the creation not only of the Jews, but of all of humanity. True, it is an 'event', but not for anyone in particular.

Maybe instead of looking to change ourselves, it is a chance to look at our world, this incredible miracle of our existence, and to consider the question: Are we living in a way that fulfils the blessing of creation, of our world, of our all-too-brief lives? Are we fully aware of just how good this world is, as well as what we need to do to make it, and not only ourselves, better?

We will add the words 'shana tova tikatayvu' – a good year – and a year to be inscribed in the Book of Life, to our holiday greetings. The 'Book of Life' is a powerful metaphor. What does it offer us? It is the idea that life itself is the greatest miracle of all; that our lives are a brief blink of cosmic time; that if we turn inwards and examine ourselves, not just to lose weight, run faster, or make more money, but simply to be as good as we can be as human

beings, then we can make a change for ourselves as a community and for our world, and deserve entry into the book.

In words from our mahzor, Lev Shalem (page 3):

Dear God, help us to turn from callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith... and turn us toward each other, God, for in isolation there is no life.

We can and should change our individual selves so that we are healthier, kinder, and more considerate, but we can also commit ourselves to change as a community. I hope that we can turn towards each other as a kehila, a congregation that comes together not only one or two days a year but throughout the year. Judaism is about being with others, whether on a Wednesday morning minyan in the dark or in the crowded services of Rosh HaShanah, Kol Nidrei, and Neilah. Being together is a wonderful gift, and being a member of Kehilat Nitzan is a way to experience the togetherness of community throughout the year.

Again, our mahzor puts it best (Lev Shalem, page 23):

May it be your will, God, that the year 5777 be one of balanced and mindful growth for us as individuals, for our families and our communities. May we return next year in good health and in appreciation of a year of greater peace, a year in which we deepened our lives through learning and the performance of mitzvot, a year in which we were conscious of the Divine Presence, a year in which we strengthened our shared commitment to tikkun olam, the betterment of the world.

Now this is a change for the better.

Shanah tova.

Welcome to the beginning of the Yamim HaNoraim, the High Holidays, and another Rosh Hashanah, another New Year. Soon we will begin to greet each other and wish each other L'shanah tova u'metukah, a good and sweet year. But sometimes I wonder: is it really 'new'? Will it really be sweet? What will be 'new' about 5777?

We will reminisce about the tragedies and triumphs of the past year, read in the Australian

## Mitzvah Day Australia

Sunday 27 November 2016

**Kehilat Nitzan will be  
organising various  
projects**



## What Mitzvah can we do?

Join 40,000 people internationally to volunteer for the community around us