



Annual Report and Meeting

June 2017—May 2018



Annual Meeting June 3, 2018

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Heska Amuna Synagogue Annual Meeting

June 3, 2018

Agenda

1. Call to order 10:15 AM
2. Approval of minutes of 2017 Annual Meeting (2 minutes)
3. Rabbi's Report (5 minutes)
4. Chair's Report (10 minutes)
5. President's Report (5 minutes)
6. Vice Chair Reports
 - a. Programming (5 minutes)
 - b. Facilities and HR (5 minutes)
 - c. Finance (15 minutes)
 - d. Education (15 minutes)Amirim/HARS presentation
7. Women's League (5 minutes)
8. Election of Officers (5 minutes)
9. New Business
 - Lights & L'Chaim December 2, 2018 (1 minute)
 - Kallah (1 minute)
 - Men's Club (1 minute)
 - Timetable for Rabbi's contract (5 minutes)
10. Good and Welfare
11. Adjournment

There will be a 10 minute Board meeting in the Library immediately following the Annual Meeting.



**Heska Amuna Synagogue Annual Meeting
June 25, 2017**

Minutes taken by Adam Rowe

Roll call of members present

Quorum was met in order to proceed as a regular congregational meeting; see attached signature sheet.

Call to order

Annual congregational meeting called to order at 10:33 am.

Previous year's minutes approved with one change: Mary Linda Schwarzbart's suggestion was to not use Excel as a replacement for a synagogue management software system.

Committee and Officer Reports

See Annual Report for full reports.

Rabbi's Report

Chair's Report

President's Report

Education Vice-Chair's Report

Facilities and Human Resources Vice-Chair's Report

Finance Committee's Report

Women's League's Report

Fundraising Committee's Report

Cemetery Committee's Report

Nominating Committee's Report

Operations and Administration's Report

Fundraising Report

Suggestion from Harriet Glasman for Knoshville to be more of a synagogue event

Proposed Board Slate

See Appendix III for 2017 slate of officers and members of the Board of the Trustees.

Motion: Stephen Rosen	Second: Ted Besmann	Discussion	Vote
To accept proposed board slate: Assent by acclimation		Corrections to slate: Frank Floyd, not Jared Iroff-Bailey	Approved unanimously

Old Business

None

New Business

Corrections noted for Annual Report content for pages 9 and 10 (Dryzer and Goldberg).

Good and Welfare

Barb Levin will be leading the International Women's League team on "Health and Wellness."

Deborah Oleshansky announced several events to be held by the Knoxville Jewish Alliance at the AJCC, including the YJAK pool party on July 2, a food truck on July 7, and a Social Justice fair on July 23. There will also be a baby boomer margarita party and other events this summer.

Nancy Becker, on behalf of the Winick Library chairs, asked that we defer book donations until further notice.

Special thanks to Rabbi Ferency for his work on obtaining the Glazer grant

Motion: Scott Hahn	Second: Hal Manas	Discussion	Vote
To adjourn			Approved unanimously

General board meeting adjourned at 12:03pm.

2018 Membership Update

Lifecycle Events

- Births
 - Aaliyah Messing, daughter of Staci and Jason Messing
 - Margaret Weiss-Hilton, daughter of Lindsey Weiss-Hilton and Matthew Hilton
 - Leah Kessler, daughter of Virginia and Lawrence Kessler
 - Darcy Hedrick, daughter of Kimberly and Josh Hedrick
- B'nai Mitzvah
 - Jonah Mesa
 - Zachariah Scott
- Members of blessed memory, who have passed away in the previous year
 - Barry Wolf
 - Carol Harris

Membership

- Active Member Units (family units): 189 (295 adults)
- New Members
 - Richard & Elizabeth Jordan
 - Cassidy Levy
 - Paul Mareth
 - Shannon Martindale
 - Shain Raley
 - Stephen & Doris Raskin
 - Mark Saroff

Rabbi's Report 5778
Rabbi Alon Ferency

The old will be made new, and the new made holy.
Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935, land of Israel)

As Rav Kook reminds us, the work of any holy endeavor is both to renew and to come closer to God. It is also the work of a holy community, and I believe that this year we have been hard at work on this *mitzvah*. Old programs have been re-born, and new ideas have yielded sacred fruit.

I think it's been a phenomenal year for our community: active, busy, engaged, fruitful, and fun. The newest addition is *Amirim* (Treetops), a center of Jewish wisdom, learning, and culture that will invigorate our entire congregation. We're excited to bring Revital Ganzi and Martha Iroff on staff to lead us with these innovative customizable curricula in Jewish values, History, and Modern Hebrew proficiency.

Education is on fire at the Synagogue! Shabbat School moved from Saturday to Friday, and then Kids Kabbalat was introduced to complement Tot Shabbat: come; drum; sing. I'm having so much fun teaching Judaism 101 (For Everyone), 201 (Synagogue Skills), & 301 (Rabbinic Texts), and I hope you'll join us. As a copy-editor of *Pirke Avot: Lev Shalem*, I've been able to share and teach from the advance copy. Don't forget the great talks by Rabbi David Ellenson – thanks to Hadassah and the Robinson family.



In the past year, we opened a new Play Spot in our courtyard, and just opened a café in our education wing, expanding the facility uses for children, families, and adults. At the same time, we began hosting a 12-step group, and hope to make our home an open house for many community uses. Kimberly Ault joined us as our amazing new Kitchen Supervisor. Our kitchen has 3 new ovens – thanks, Women's League – and we're planning to make it all even more user-friendly. We wish the Allen, Cohen, Diftler, Feldman, Gurwitch, and Oleshansky families a fond, sad farewell, in addition to staff members Betty Golub, Nathan Light, and Gabe Spenser – good luck in all your future endeavors.

So many spectacular events have been going on with the Synagogue, it's hard to keep track. *New Moon News* celebrates our many successes. Our Kallah was amazing! We had such a homey environment in the Kentucky woods, and a great Shabbat together. Thanks to Mary Ann Merrell, Betty Golub, the late Rabbi Barb Moskow, and their enormous team for what seemed like decades of hard work. Recently, the Sam and Esther Rosen Enrichment Fund has sponsored community Shabbat dinners. Have you been to one? They're delicious. Marilyn Burnett and Pat Rosenberg also put together a great art gallery reception after the High Holidays. Thanks always to them and the consistently great work they do.

Lights & L'Chaim was a great success as well. Because of Anna Iroff and her team, and the Brown family and Dor L'Dor for their performance. Thanks to our many sponsors, including Mayor Burchett, we raised a great deal for the *shul*, and had a blast to boot. The Diane and Guilford Glazer Fund continues to support our work – don't forget to log your volunteer hours. Also, we've had successes at endowing new funds through the KJCFF.

Every year has its ups and downs, and I'm happy that we had *smachot* (joys) to balance our griefs. Aside from my cherished work visiting many of you, there were important life-cycle and ritual moments. There were funerals which each hit us all hard. Fortunately, there have also been a baby naming, a *bris*, a *channukat habayit* (house-warming to affix a *mezuzah*), two *B'nai Mitzvah*, and even some new-minted Jews. For worship and holiday, we continue to have great choices and options. The Chapel service is going strong as a great teaching service. Worship Lab wrapped up, and RRS is looking for new innovations in that time slot. I really enjoyed this year's Passover *seder* and *Simchat Torah* celebrations – I hope you did too, thanks to our sponsors and volunteers. We're targeting our family Shabbat dinners as outreach to the non-Synagogue community. If you haven't been to weekday *minyan* or Sunset *Minyan*, pray with us. Elhanan's been coming this year, and he loves it.

In case you didn't know, some members are working with Justice Knox, a community mobilization group, to increase access to mental-health care, education, and housing in our community. When you don't see me in *shul*, I'm often out and about in our larger community. I bid a fond farewell to Deborah Oleshansky and a warm installation to Rabbi Erin Buxt (he came to our services, too – thanks friend – as did Chip Rayman). I get to teach at KJDS, and I've been at the University, too, leading a housewarming *havdalah* for AEPi, teaching to a "Meditation and Mindfulness" club, and speaking at anti-Nazi demonstrations (something I never imagined doing). Furthermore, I was the rabbi at Camp Nadav in Illinois, building and deepening relationships with many children from our community. I've worked with the chaplain at the Knox County Jail, and been a guest to local churches, Johnson University, Episcopal School of Knoxville, The Change Center, and a book club. I'd like to close with a special thanks to Ken Brown and Mary Ann Merrell. Your leadership is a model of diligence, thoughtful debate, foresight, hard-choices, generosity, and devotion. You inspire me. I hope we can live up to the high bar you set in our community.

May God bless us – each and all – as this holy community continues to thrive and renew. Let God bring growth, healing, and love to us all. Let us continue to make the old new and the new holy.

Chair's Report

Ken Brown, Chair of Board of Trustees

Past and Present

This has been a good year for Heska Amuna Synagogue. There are many reasons for our success, which you will read about in the various Vice Chair Reports that make up most of this Annual Report. But I want to start off by taking note of—and giving appropriate credit to—two of the people whose work underlies many of the things we have been able to do well. Jeff Jacobson is our Financial Vice Chair and Marty Iroff is our Treasurer. The Financial Vice Chair and the Treasurer are not the most visible positions on the Board of Trustees, but the countless hours and diligent work expended by Jeff and Marty behind the scenes have brought much needed order and transparency to our financial picture. The details are contained in their report, but I want to mention a few highlights. We ended 2016 with a budget deficit of over \$30,000, whereas we ended 2017 with a small surplus. At last year's Annual Meeting, we owed our Building Assessment Fund over \$48,000; as of today, we've reduced that debt by more than \$10,000. We expect a bigger budget surplus by the end of this year, and we expect to have paid off all of the debt to the Building Assessment Fund by 2020. Perhaps most surprising, these things were accomplished without a dues increase for 2018.

As impressive as these accomplishments are, I am just as delighted by the work that Jeff, Marty, and Beverly (and the Ways & Means Committee) have done to improve our financial management and get our economic house in order. Plenty of work remains, but at this time we have more accurate membership data, we are more timely and consistent in our assessment of dues, we have reduced the amounts in arrears, and we are making much better strategic and tactical use of the various funds at our disposal. Why are these things so important? To be successful, a non-profit institution has to be able to show its members that it is a careful steward of their dollars. You can't ask for a dues increase or a major donation if you don't have the credibility with the people who you're approaching that you can manage and make the best use of their money. I can say with confidence that we have made enormous strides this year in establishing that credibility.

We've had many successes in programming this year, the most high profile being our first **Kallah** under our grant from the Kallah Project in November and our first-time **Lights & L'Chaim** Hanukkah fundraiser for the religious school. These two programs were not only runaway successes in their own right, but will be templates for future programs to achieve even greater success both economically and as community-building activities. And while I'm on the subject of community-building activities, it has been a delight to see the success of the new traditional Shabbat Dinner program thought up by Marilyn Burnett and Pat Rosenberg. Mary Ann gives further detail in her Report, but I want to comment on how wonderful it is to see a great idea made even better. Marilyn and Pat wanted to bring the community together for an intimate Shabbat dinner once a month, and Stephen Rosen thought this would be a good opportunity to try enlarging our community by inviting those

who are unaffiliated to these dinners free of charge, so the Sam & Esther Rosen Community Enrichment Fund now underwrites these dinners.

We are making greater use of our building, the most visible examples so far being converting the courtyard into a child-friendly Play Spot, and instituting a café/lounge area at the beginning of the school wing. Less obvious, we have made space for a 12-step group to meet every Wednesday and we are open to other ideas that will help us increase the ways in which the building can be used.

We're also making greater use of our kitchen than we have in quite some time. Part of the reason, I'm sure, is the new ovens purchased by Women's League because, well, who wouldn't want to use a kitchen that had brand new commercial-grade ovens installed in November? Thank you, thank you Women's League. But I suspect another big part of the reason is our brand new Kitchen Supervisor, Kimberly Ault. Kimberly started her position this February, which by coincidence was the beginning of the longest run of seemingly back-to-back sponsored *kiddushim* and other food-related events at Heska Amuna (such as our community Seder) that I can recall. It seemed that every week somebody was celebrating a birthday, or an anniversary, or a something or other, and people rightly wanted more than challah, cookies, and a few sundries to mark the occasion. So Kimberly was called on again and again to create something special and different from week to week. She has handled it with hard work and good humor, and those of us who have been enjoying her creations since she took over have been delighted by the tasty options she gives us, by her elegant presentation of a wide variety of dishes, and by how wonderfully she gets along with everyone.

After years of declining enrollment in our religious school, it became clear that we could not continue doing what we had been doing if we wanted Heska Amuna to have a viable school in the future. We therefore brought in Martha Iroff as Religious School Director and Revital Ganzi as Director of Education Programs. They are taking a fresh look at everything, from curriculum to the use of building space. In addition, we have improved and brought to closure lingering issues that had concerned both the Board and many of the Religious School parents. We now have visible security when school is in session, we now have report cards and progress summaries, and we now have a comprehensive Handbook that sets out the roles, responsibilities, and timelines for parents in order to help them through the maze of preparing their child for their B'nai Mitzvah. Special thanks are due to Barbara Mintz, who has given generously of her time and her considerable energy in order to deal with the many difficult problems that arose this year. Few positions on the Board involve interacting with—and trying to placate—as many different constituencies as is required of the Education Vice Chair. Barbara has done an admirable job negotiating a path through this thicket and taking a lot of flak in the process. But she stuck with it, and our school's future looks bright as a result.

Future

While revitalizing the religious school is the first priority for Martha and Revital, we can expect changes and improvements in Adult Education as well. Heska Amuna has always had extraordinary talent among our own members when it comes to teaching a variety of courses. With Revital, we can also look forward to new and innovative classes as well as an approach that will more deliberately integrate adult education with other aspects of synagogue life.

I'm very pleased to announce the formation of two new committees: Membership and Bikkur Cholim. Membership is a critical area for us that has long deserved its own committee and greater resources. It's important both to recruit new members and to serve the members we already have. It's hard to imagine a better committee for this work than Marilyn Burnett, Pat Rosenberg, and Shannon Martindale, and it's hard to imagine a more appropriate activity for such a committee than the traditional Shabbat dinners that were begun just three months ago. Of all the decisions I've made since becoming Chair, choosing these three people for this work is one of the decisions I'm most pleased with. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the beautifully conceived and wonderfully executed brochure that this committee and Virginia Kessler have produced as part of a new members' packet. Be sure to look over one of the brochures: it achieves the remarkable goal of capturing the essence of Heska Amuna as it is, but also suggesting what we can become.

Bikkur Cholim means "visiting the sick," and is a mitzvah of very long standing in our tradition. It is said that God personally came to comfort Abraham when he was recuperating after being circumcised. The Talmud teaches us: "As God visited the sick, so shall you visit the sick." Bikkur Cholim groups continue to exist today, in all parts of the world, with people making the commitment to care for one another and to bring the strength of community to those who are sick, infirm, or otherwise isolated. Some of this work can be—and in most congregations is—performed by the rabbi, and this is a role in which Rabbi Ferency has been particularly effective. But a Bikkur Cholim Committee will have many additional opportunities to serve and to fulfill needs that should be addressed by the entire community. We will need people who can visit, who can cook, and who can drive people to shul for services or to other community events. Peggy Littmann and Rick Brown have agreed to co-chair this important committee doing this sacred work.

One area where I intend to devote more of my attention this coming year is fundraising. Or, as our "fundraising guy" Marty Iroff prefers we call it more accurately, "development." As Marty explained in his report at the last Annual Meeting, we should be bringing in a much higher percentage of our funds from development initiatives as compared to what we receive from dues. We have been fortunate this year as we finally sold the property to Eddie Mannis, which brought in \$15,000 so far, will bring in \$16,666 this year, \$16,666 in 2019, and \$16,666 in 2020. We are also fortunate in that we are still benefiting from Rabbi Ferency's success in securing the Glazer grant for Heska Amuna that has provided \$25,000

each year for the last two years, and will provide the same amount this coming year. And we benefited from the Kallah Project grant, which underwrote a portion of the Kallah.

So while our financial position has improved dramatically, that improvement has come in part because of funds that we cannot rely on indefinitely. On the other hand, at least with the Glazer grant and Kallah, these are gifts specifically designed to provide “seed money” so that communities like ours can begin to build models that will support Jewish philanthropic and community-building endeavors. Put another way, I see Glazer and Kallah as having thrown down a gauntlet, daring us to continue that sacred work. I intend to pick up that gauntlet this year. We need a long-term development strategy that reflects what we want our synagogue to be in the future.

I want to conclude by expanding on something I said at the beginning of this Report. We’ve had many successes this year, and we’ve had our share of challenges too. But what is most exciting is that it is clear that Heska Amuna is on an upward trajectory. We’ve shown that we can put on highly successful, big programs without much practice: look at the community success of Kallah right out of the gate, and of the financial and community success of Lights & L’Chaim the first time we tried it. We’ve also shown we can put on smaller, intimate, community-focused events such as our traditional Shabbat dinners. And remember, these three programs are all repeatable, will likely get better as we refine them, and have a good chance of becoming embedded in Heska Amuna’s social and community traditions. We’ve shown that we can bring greater order and transparency to our budget and finances, essential first steps before going to community members to ask for a deeper financial commitment. We have taken our religious school that was on the brink of collapse and are in the process of re-imagining and re-invigorating it.

Success breeds success. We have shown our membership and ourselves that we can deliver the goods even under difficult circumstances. That’s why I can say with confidence that we have re-established our credibility, and that’s why I think this last year was a good year, and the coming year is going to be amazing.

The Rabbi and Religious Services Committee

Mary Ann Merrell, Heska Amuna Synagogue President and committee chair

Our committee is responsible for advising the Rabbi and also is responsible for overseeing our religious services and rituals.



2017-2018 Highlights: Balancing Tradition and Innovation

We strive to maintain our Heska Amuna heritage and traditions while exploring opportunities for creativity and inventiveness that will truly provide services and rituals that resonate for all congregants.

This year, we dipped our toes in the waters of change with some delightful results:

- At ***Simchat Torah***, religious school students and adult congregants read Torah for the first time – and we literally and spontaneously applauded their achievements. Add to that, recognition of Ernie Gross and Jared & Anna Iroff-Bailey as our honored “groom and bride” and it all combined for an evening of true community.
- At ***S’lichot***, we wove our service with Gilya Schmidt’s beautiful davening with excerpts from a documentary on Holocaust survivors in Cuba; Trudy Dreyer shared her remembrances of her experiences of that time with us. The evening set a contemplative stage and thoughtful entre to the High Holidays that was widely appreciated.
- At ***Shavuot***, Rabbi delved into hosting a late-night talk shows. Last year’s amazing discussion on revelation included Heather Hirschfeld, Terry Lee, Mitch Goldman, Mark Littmann, and Erin Darby. This year’s focus on the law included Wendy Bach, Bernie Bernstein, Josh Hedrick, and David Wolitz. Raphe Panitz continued the tradition of hosting the trivia contest of Jewish Crooks, Mobsters, and Gangsters. And Women’s League created a fun entertainment, “Iron Chef: Cheesecake Edition” where we all greatly benefited from contest entries.
- Although the waters of change appeared in the form of rain from time to time, our first ***Havdalah by the River*** with music by Lev Comstock-Gross was much enjoyed.

Building Community

Sharing Life Cycle Events Celebrated at Heska Amuna

- We welcomed the children of Lindsay Weiss-Hilton & Matthew Hilton; and Meredith and Brad Holtz (with a *Mazel Tov* to grandparents Margy & Mitch Goldman).
- We celebrated the bar mitzvah of Jonah Mesa, son of Gabriel & Shuli and brother of Noah, Evyn, and Elijah; and the bar mitzvah of Zachariah Scott, son of Jeff & Serina and brother of Thomas and Joshua.

Sharing Shabbat with thanks to those who sponsored kiddushim this year....

- to celebrate special birthdays or anniversaries: Nancy & Jeff Becker, Anne and Bernard Bendriem, Wendy and Ted Besmann, Jeannie Bobroff, Judy and Abraham

Brietstein in honor of daughter Raina's 10th anniversary, Michael Burnett, Manny Herz, Marilyn Presser, Rabbi Ferency, and Gilya Schmidt.

- as organizations sharing Shabbat with us: Hadassah Knoxville, the Knoxville Jewish Alliance, and our very own Women's League.
- and, with bittersweet thanks, to those saying farewell as they moved from Knoxville: Heidi and Barry Allen, Joyce and Harold Diftler, and Janet Gurwitch.
- and... to Gabe Spenser and Kimberly Ault, past and current Kitchen Supervisors, as we enjoyed many a lovely kiddush celebrating Shabbat as a community.

In Appreciation

With great appreciation of and thanks to *Hal Manas* and *Scott Hahn*, morning minyanim were offered every Sunday, Monday and Thursday this past year. Shabbat services were held every week, not a Holiday was overlooked, and once a month, *Jack Love* led a delightful Kabbalat Shabbat service Friday evenings. Our lay leadership continued to offer impressive talents and commitments and through the year, more than 50 congregants chose an active role to lead services, chant torah or a haftorah, or offer a d'var torah.

Of course, we appreciate everyone's efforts in equal measure but I offer these highlights that stand out in my mind that reflect our amazing diversity and richness of talents.

- Jeannie Bobroff relearning and chanting her bat mitzvah haftorah (but, alas, not opting to give her thank you speech again)
- Josh Gettinger offering an outstanding workshop for those interested in reading Torah that reminded us why many of us strive to master grammar and chant
- Tisha B'Av with clarinetist David Floyd beautifully playing kinot and attendance exceeding our seating
- Virginia Kessler's eye for design that transformed our High Holiday brochures into beautiful works of art and communication
- And, with appreciation to everyone who gave honor to our services all year, with particular thanks for those that participated in all of our High Holiday services

And a final acknowledgement to the more than 100+ years of service that the current members of the Rabbi and Religious Services Committee collectively represent. Pictured here (from left) is Markus Eisenbach, Miriam Weinstein, Rabbi Ferency, Mary Linda Schwarzbart, Jeannie Bobroff, Michael Burnett, and Gilya Schmidt. Not present but equally loved and appreciated: Bernard



Bendriem, Raphe Panitz, and Pat Rosenberg.

A Reminder: If you would like to add someone’s name to be recited during the misheberach on Shabbat, there is a form you can fill out on our website now, or you can continue to call the office, too.

Looking Ahead

On our horizon: increased engagement with the religious school to explore opportunities for greater participation in services and holiday programs by students of all ages, a few English readings sprinkled in, a few shortened-version Shabbat services to explore, mixing traditions of other cultures in our liturgy from time to time, and a few ideas to integrate more music and more ruach, and ... Stay tuned!

A Traditional Shabbat Dinner

A Monthly Dinner that Celebrates Shabbat as a Community



With endless gratitude and appreciation for **Marilyn Burnett, Pat Rosenberg, and Kim & Stephen Rosen**, our community has a new program of engagement that has been a wonderful (and tasty) success – and an example of how congregants with a vision can make lasting change for Heska Amuna.

Beginning in March, Marilyn and Pat have catered Shabbat dinner on the first Friday of the month; this coincides with Jack Love’s monthly Kabbalat Shabbat service. Sunset Minyan begins at 6:30 and dinner follows at 7:15. The idea of a “traditional” Shabbat dinner was designed to bring congregants together in a small setting where there would be a true family feeling – but the design, also inspired by the Rosens and supported through the Sam and Esther Rosen Community Enrichment Fund, includes outreach. The idea? To invite those who are new to our community or are not affiliated with Heska Amuna to share and experience our family around a Shabbat dinner.

Each month, Marilyn and Pat have created an innovative menu – even during Passover! – that has been a wonderful dinner that touches on our history as well as delights our palates. The first months, they highlighted treasured recipes from many of our most talented members including cakes and desserts from Marilyn as well as **Addie Shersky, Madelyn Millen, and Marion Goodstein**. Their attention to detail is clearly evident in the variety of beautiful table settings they create as well as their unique menus. Plan to enjoy our next Shabbat dinner. Dates are announced on our website and in Nu New. Reservations are required and can be made at the office or online at our website at www.heskaamuna.org. If you are a first-year member, enjoy your first Shabbat dinner on the b'yit (on the house!)



The Heska Amuna Congregational Kallah
November 10-12, 2017 at Cumberland Falls State Park, Corbin KY
Tentative date for next Kallah: Spring 2019

The purpose of our kallah was to create a meaningful Shabbat weekend of study and activities – wrapped in a relaxing, get-away in a beautiful setting. As a community, the weekend exceeded our expectations including the number in attendance, the overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who attended – and even the weather. Thank you to the 90+ people that attended to create our Kallah community.

The weekend was filled with a great variety of Shabbat services and programs including a wonderful morning hike to the falls, a late-night campfire, our famous “build the synagogue of the future” competition, study sessions on mindfulness, Jews and booze, and Jews and the law; and, an afternoon break for a scavenger hunt and mahj, of course.



Recognition is very much due to the organizing committee: Nancy Becker, Bernard Bendriem, Jeannie Bobroff, Rabbi Ferency, Betty Golub, Janet Gurwitch, Kim & Josh Hedrick, Barb Levin, Marilyn Liberman, Jenifer Ohriner, and Bella & David Wolitz; and to those who led activities: Bernie Bernstein, Frank Floyd, Josh Gettinger, Marian Jay, Barb Levin, Bryan Merrell, and Deborah Oleshansky.

For financial support: Women's League for child care and hospitality gift bags; Melissa Sturm and the Bradley Sturm Memorial Fund for covering the costs of all children to attend; Wendy & Ted Besmann for funding items for Zach Scott's tikkun olam project; and the Kallah Project, a nonprofit that provided funds for us to create a program for retreats.

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of our Kallah mentor, Rabbi Barb Moskow, z'l. How fortunate we were to have her energy, passion, and guidance through her work with the Kallah Project. *May her memory be a blessing.*

Programming / Membership

Frank Floyd, Vice-Chair

As your Programming Chair I was initially tasked with mounting a major fundraiser for HARS in 2017 which we all now know as Lights & L'Chaim. It was a fabulous success by any measure but only a first step in what I hope will be many successful fundraisers in the future. In addition to Lights & L'Chaim in 2018 I plan to facilitate some smaller scale events such as community picnics at local parks, some events designed to reach out to nonaffiliated members of the Jewish community, and functions to engage our religious school families.

As Membership Chair my duties are supervisory in nature. Our board chair Ken Brown felt that Programming and Membership should be handled by 2 separate individuals and I agree. Marilyn Burnett has taken the lead on Membership and has done a great job but more on that to follow.

In the summer of 2017 we began planning Lights & L'Chaim. One of the things we realized early on is that you need 8 months to plan an event of that scale, not 5 to 6 like we gave ourselves, but we all persevered and overcame. It was challenging for me personally because I had never taken a lead role in something of that scale so there was a very steep learning curve for me. I am eternally grateful to Anna Iroff Bailey, Mary Ann Merrell and Ken Brown for having my back at every turn. There was so much I did not know but this year I am ready and excited to bring you Lights & L'Chaim 2018.

We also must talk about the great success of Kallah 2017. What a wonderful weekend of friendship, spirituality, fun and fellowship. I must confess, however, that as program chair my duties at Kallah consisted of building a fire and little more. Again thanks to Mary Ann Merrell, Betty Golub, and a host of volunteers for putting that great event together.

Moving forward through the remainder of 2018, we have plans in the works for community picnics at some of our local parks. Jeannie Bobroff is taking the lead on this and will be forming a planning committee soon. The basic idea is for a Sunday afternoon filled with games, swimming, biking, hikes, water sports, sunburns, skinned knees and of course great food. It's a can't fail, gotta be there event. We're thinking perhaps mid-July and we'll be publishing a date and location soon so stay tuned.

We are planning for Kallah in the spring of 2019. Cumberland Falls was a great location and we may certainly return there but we are also looking at some other possible sites just to see what new and different attractions might be available. A probable time frame would be in March. Regardless of the location or date I'm confident it will be a great success and a fulfilling weekend.

Some of you may have attended the Shabbat Dinners that Marilyn Burnett has put together as a way of reaching out to unaffiliated members of the community. They have by all accounts been just delightful. An ice cream social is being planned for July and then

they will begin dinners again in the fall. Our sincere thanks to the Rosen Family for supporting this program for us.

Lights & L'Chaim returns on Sunday, December 2, 2018, which is conveniently the first night of Hanukkah. This year's event will have all the great fun and excitement of 2017's event. The fabulous music of Dor L' Dor, beautiful decorations, great food and a VERY SPECIAL SURPRISE GUEST. One more thing: I give you my word that we won't run out of latkes.

It has been a pleasure to be your Programming / Membership Chair this past year and it is my wish to stay in this position for as long as I'm needed. It's one of the most rewarding things I've done here at Heska Amuna.

**Facilities & Human Resources,
Harriet Cooper, Vice-Chair**

I. Personnel Changes

- We hired Shannon Martindale as a part-time clerical assistant in the summer of 2017. She had to cut back her hours to a minimum this past winter. Because we still needed assistance in the office, in April we hired Jeannie Bobroff for this position. Jeannie works full time during the school year at a UT sorority, but is able to devote more time to the Synagogue during the summer. Thank you, Jeannie.
- Gabe Spenser resigned as Kitchen Supervisor in February 2018. His assistant, Kimberly Ault, was named Interim Kitchen Supervisor, and subsequently became Kitchen Supervisor. She has three decades of experience as a chef and we are glad to have her.

II. Security Matters

- The security officer on duty during Shabbat morning and some holiday services, special events and Religious School cost the Synagogue \$9,157 this past year.

III. Major Purchases, Maintenance and Repair

- The Sukkah was repaired at a cost of \$ 1,893. The Jacobs fund paid for this repair.
- Two Yahrzeit tablets were rewired, at a cost of \$537. A donation from the Jacobs fund also paid for this.
- Thanks to Women's League which paid for new gas appliances in the kitchen, including a double convection oven and a commercial grade stove with six burners, a griddle, and two ovens.
- Thanks to Marilyn Burnett, Pat Rosenberg and Rabbi Ferency, who developed the Play Spot in the courtyard to make it more child-friendly. Marilyn donated the large purple caterpillar in honor of her grandson.
- We are grateful to Jeremy Headrick, who is donating his labor to upgrade our internet system.
- There were a number of routine maintenance and repair projects performed for the building and rabbinate, including repairing the sinks in the children's bathrooms. Many thanks to Frank Floyd, Marty Iroff and others who have helped do this work.

Report on the Financial Condition of Heska Amuna Synagogue
Jeffrey Jacobson - Financial Vice-Chair
Marty Iroff - Treasurer

Heska Amuna's financial condition improved over the past year, notwithstanding the demographic and other societal changes affecting organized religion generally and Heska Amuna specifically. These changes create long-term challenges for maintaining--let alone increasing--membership, active engagement, and financial commitments. The Board and others are attentive to these and other long-term challenges and various presentations today will touch on some actions to address them. Even with these and other challenges, we were able to improve Heska Amuna's short-term financial condition over the past year by making serious and conscientious improvements to our financial management practices.

Let us first summarize our current financial condition and how it favorably compares to our recent past. We ended 2016 with a budget deficit over \$30,000. By contrast, we ended 2017 with a tiny budget surplus and expect that surplus to increase in 2018. As of the annual meeting in 2017, our General Fund owed our Building Assessment Fund over \$48,000 due to a transaction many years ago. By contrast, we have reduced the "debt" to under \$38,000, will reduce it further later this year, and expect to have it fully paid by 2020. As of the 2017 annual meeting, the restricted or dedicated funds available to support our religious school was perilously low and risked exhaustion within a couple of years. By contrast, we have more than doubled the balances in those funds. And we improved our financial condition with NO DUES INCREASE IN 2017.

Let us next summarize the most significant actions contributing to our improved condition. First, we completed the property sale that the congregation authorized at the 2017 annual meeting. We received a payment earlier this year, will receive another in the near future, and will receive additional payments in 2019 and 2020. Those payments will more than pay off the previously mentioned loans from the Building Assessment Fund to the General Fund. Second, we had an extremely successful fund raiser - Lights & L'Chaim - for the religious school in December 2017. This was in large measure the source of replenishing our funds supporting the religious school. We are planning a similar achievement in 2018. In addition to these singular events, we significantly improved our financial management practices. Over the past year, we have very significantly improved the accuracy of our membership rolls, assessed dues in the proper amounts on a timely basis, and reduced both the number and dollar amount of accounts in arrears. These problems in the past cost us revenues and distorted the accuracy and usefulness of the financial reports. Notwithstanding the difficulty it potentially could have created, there was no dues increase in 2017 because we concluded we needed to get our financial management house in better order to accurately assess our financial condition and justify going to the membership for increased dues. Improving financial management practices is a painstaking, long term process, and we have not completed the journey. But we already have made improvements and seen results, which significantly contributed to our improved financial condition over the past year.

We would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of our membership. Some members and their families established restricted funds to help support various aspects of the synagogue, its infrastructure, or its operations. Some of those funds, many of which are identified in the Funds Report Section of the financial statements in the annual report, continue to receive additional support from members. We are committed to better managing and utilizing those funds, and the steps we took over the last year helped finance some very important additions to the synagogue. Also, we want to thank the cooperation and understanding of the many members we contacted as we worked to improve our financial management records and practices. It is never a fun experience to discuss addressing delinquent accounts, regardless of the source or reason for the delinquency. Almost without exception, the communications were friendly and cooperative and led to a result that was beneficial to the synagogue.

Finally, a word about the future. While we had no dues increase in 2017, we expect to have one in 2018. Rest assured, any such increase will not be a "catch-up" increase, but a modest one to reflect and help address future needs and increasing costs. But this is only a small part of the effort to improve the financing of our budget. Over the past year and increasingly so in the future, we are focusing on other ways to finance Heska Amuna through the support members can provide. As you will hear at the annual meeting, we are increasing the programs and activities available to members and, in some cases, the Jewish community generally. Attending those programs and activities and contributing time and effort to make them successful will not only make those programs and activities more successful, and in many cases financially so, but will contribute to a more interesting and fulfilling Heska Amuna. That can only lead to making Heska Amuna more attractive to members and non-members alike and, in the long term, hopefully increased membership and member involvement to the benefit of us all.

Religious School

Barbara Mintz, Education Vice-Chair

Before the start of the school year, I held a parent meeting requesting parents to join the Education Committee. The response was quite good, and the committee has played a critical role in informing me and the Board of areas where parents are satisfied as well as areas where we need to improve. Parents who participated include Laura Floyd, Shuli Mesa, Serena Scott, and Bella Wolitz. Mary Ann Merrell attended many of the meetings as a representative from the Rabbi & Religious Services Committee. Nora Messing was part of the committee for several months, and Jenny Parker Wood has become active beginning in March. Karen Ferency has served as an additional consultant and resource on a variety of topics.

One of the first orders of business this year was to bring to closure our concern about beefing up security. I reviewed the Knoxville Police Department report that had been completed, gained data and input from the Education Committee, brought the issue to the Board for discussion, and the Board voted to cover the costs for a police officer to be present when school is in session.

The Education Committee also raised the issue of report cards and progress summaries. With Betty's help and Education Committee feedback, we now have a tool that will better help parents monitor their children's progress in Hebrew, in learning prayers, and in other elements of the curriculum.

A third area of concern for the Education Committee was to develop clearer definition of roles and responsibilities during the process of planning B'nai Mitzvot, which includes both student preparation as well as the extensive planning responsibilities required of the parents. Mary Ann had taken the lead several years ago to produce a draft. Betty and I pitched in, and after many corrections and modifications, the three of us presented this Bar and Bat Mitzvah Handbook to a group of parents, who made additional suggestions. While there will no doubt be further revisions, we now have a thorough, working version to help students and parents with the sometimes overwhelming task of preparing for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The religious school has participated all year in a variety of cultural and recreational activities, including a joint pool party with Temple Beth El, Jewish Learning at Home (JLAH) programs, attending holiday events such as Hanukkah, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, and Passover, PJ Library, as well as taking part in Mitzvah Day, and Knoshville, to name a few.

Two major fund-raising projects were completed this year. Betty took the lead for the Mishloach Manot bags, which included a great deal of cooking by Betty along with parent volunteers. Delivery of Mishloach Manot was also time and labor intensive. In the future, we will need more parent participation for this effort. We raised approximately \$1,250. Candy was again sold for Passover with a profit of \$200.

The school also supported the Lights & L'Chaim concert event featuring Dor L'Dor, which raised funds specifically for our school. I served on the core planning committee, focusing particularly on assembling the cadre of volunteers for the many tasks required prior to the program and those needed on the day and evening of the concert. Several parents, Betty, and I also spent considerable time in the kitchen helping Frank Floyd prepare food. Other parents signed up to assist with selling items, guiding people through the building, and more.

As most of you know, our religious school has been experiencing declining enrollment for a number of years. Alarmed that we were approaching a threshold below which it would not be possible to sustain the school if enrollment declined any further, we decided to re-boot. The urgency of making this change means that we are still working through several issues, but I can give you an update on where we are now.

Martha Iroff has the role of Religious School Director (education@heskaamuna.org) and Revital Ganzi has the role of Director of Education Programs (edprograms@heskaamuna.org). They will be working collaboratively to create exciting and vibrant programs for children of all ages. Programs and classes are under consideration for adults as well. *Amirim* is the new name for the religious school. *Amirim* means the 'summit of a tree' and it is used often in Israel in relation to the 'summit of learning'. Here are the initial critical elements:

- Innovative curriculum
- Jewish values, history, and modern Hebrew
- Adapting learning to the needs of each student
- Proficiency approach and authentic materials

Revital brings with her a treasure chest of resources, materials, training, and enthusiasm. She will be implementing innovative teaching practices through the use of technology. Technology will be integrated into whole group instruction and individualized programs. She will also be implementing new approaches for the teaching of Modern Hebrew. The team will be assessing the program needs and goals for children of all ages and aligning new curriculum across all grade levels. They have already connected with every family that attended religious school this year and they are eager to hear suggestions and feedback.

Martha and Revital will be very active in the next few months planning and building the curriculum for the coming year. Do not hesitate to contact them with questions or suggestions. They have already been cleaning out many rooms in the building and you will see not just cleaner rooms but a much more inviting learning environment. Tours will be available as well as a presentation of their goals and program plans for the school and the congregation on Sunday, June 10 at 10:00 AM. Please join us. They are currently working on the school calendar, registration forms, and exciting new materials for classroom use.

Annual Report for 5778

In summary, it has been a year of learning, a year full of exciting improvements with the support of an active Education Committee, a year filled with challenges, and a time filled with hope for a vibrant and expanding religious school at Heska Amuna.

Women's League

Barb Levin, President

Heska Amuna Women's League (HAWL) is ending a year of transition and reevaluation in a positive position to face its future. During the past two years, the group has worked hard to determine its role and impact within the Heska Amuna community. In an egalitarian congregation with multiple roles for women leaders, the focus of a women's-only group requires reassessment and redefinition. HAWL leadership is in the process of that rebranding effort.

The three restated goals of Women's League clarify this endeavor:

- 1) Support for individual members in their Jewish education;
- 2) Support of synagogue programs and their development;
- 3) Involvement in the broader Knoxville community and regional activities through targeted programs focusing on women, families and their needs.

The objectives and programming related to these goals were further developed in a workshop session with the Alliance for Better Non-Profits in August of 2017. The group discussed strategies for achieving success while recognizing the multiple loyalties and time requirements of HAWL members. Collaboration, strategic fundraising, and targeted program objectives have become the *modi operandi* of the group.

HAWL has worked closely with: the Heska Amuna Board of Directors, HARS (Heska Amuna Religious School), KJA (Knoxville Jewish Alliance), other Sisterhoods in the Knoxville area, Hadassah, the Cemetery Committee, the Facility Committee, and Rabbi and Religious Services Committee (R & RS) to plan programs and meet specific community needs. The group has also been involved with several local charitable organizations, including the Pond Gap School project and Support the Girls.

HAWL has continued to produce high quality programs like Rosh Chodesh, Jewish Learning at Home (JLAH), and International Women's League Torah Fund. Rosh Chodesh, which involves the Sisterhoods at the Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge (JCOR) and Temple Beth El, was held at Heska Amuna five times this year emphasizing our work in the broader community. Topics have been diverse, reaching to the concerns of our city, exploring the process to write and publish a book, and the solar eclipse.

JLAH, the creative inspiration of Anna Iroff-Bailey, succeeded in bringing members of the congregation together for a morning of shared learning related to the Jewish holiday cycle. Sessions this year focused on Yom Kippur, Tu B'shevat, and Yom HaAtzmaut; each garnering increased enthusiasm and participation. This project will continue next year.

Torah Fund is an annual fundraising campaign by International Women's League to raise monies to support rabbinic and Judaic lay leadership education. The effort raises about \$2 million per year. Heska Amuna raises their share of those funds. Each year as part of the Women's League Shabbat in January, a program of weekend study highlights the

importance of such Jewish education. This year HAWL hosted historian Rachel Gordon, a professor at the University of Florida for a well-received Women's League Shabbat weekend. She presented on mid-twentieth century history of the changes in Jewish life in the United States.

Strategic financial planning has been key to Women's League operation. Under the guidance of our treasurer, Lisa Jacobson, the group developed an objective-based budget. Each fundraising effort has been tied to a specific program; the parking place raffle supports the JLAH project, and the monies earned on the Yizkor book publication (about \$2500) have been donated to the Cemetery Committee to improve the cemetery. Working with Joshua Hedrick, Rabbi Ferency, and the Chevra Kadisha, a three-part program on death and burial traditions is planned for this summer to continue this collaboration.

A major accomplishment of the past year has been the replacement of the ovens in the kitchen. Lisa Jacobson and Jeannie Bobroff spearheaded this project which had the new ovens in place for the preparation for the congregation's Hanukkah celebration. The WL team planned with Harriet Cooper and the Facilities Committee to pay for this upgrade, about a \$10,000 expense.

Many of the HAWL accomplishments are so much part of the organization that no one thinks what it would be without someone's special contribution. Melissa Sturm is the engine behind the ongoing Judaic shop development. Not only does she keep the project together and available to meet individual congregant's needs, but she also makes it look beautiful as you enter the synagogue.

Women's League is about people – women working together to challenge themselves and meet the needs of both the synagogue and the broader community. HAWL has held many successful programs with Hadassah including one on women's health and another on human trafficking. The involvement of the same women in both organizations makes this partnership very useful. As HAWL plans for the future it is the spirit of collaboration which is the key to program planning and success.

Not every HAWL project this year has been mentioned in this short review nor all the individuals listed by name, but I must take this moment to thank my hard-working board for all their efforts. The outcomes of teamwork are both a better team and more successful programming. While I am sure I will leave someone out – and I apologize in advance – I want to recognize Peggy Littmann, Andrea Cone, Lisa Jacobson, Melissa Sturm, Shuli Mesa, Shelley Hecht, Anna Iroff-Bailey, Dahlia Smith, Jeannie Bobroff, Shannon Martindale, and Marian Jay for their support and their commitment to Women's League. I also want to thank Ken Brown, Mary Ann Merrell, Rabbi Ferency, and Beverly Wilcox for their help and guidance during the last year. It has been both a challenge and a lot of fun.

As I move on to the role of immediate past president of HAWL, I am excited about what Lisa Jacobson, as the new president, and her board will bring to fruition. Please join us for their Installation on the morning of June 16 during services and for the kiddush that

follows. Thank you all for the opportunity of striving with you to make our Heska Amuna community succeed by aiming high and working together.

Cemetery Committee Report
Joshua Hedrick, Chair

The cemetery has been in good shape this past year, not requiring any significant maintenance. Thanks to the excellent work and generosity of the Women's League, the cemetery received a donation of \$2,500, which was well-needed and which will be put to good use in long-term projects. Thanks are also due to Marilyn Burnett for her hard work keeping the grounds beautiful.

In the coming year, our goals will be to focus on fundraising and the starting phases of planning for expansion, which will be required in the next few years. Members who are interested in or have questions about the cemetery are invited to contact Joshua Hedrick at 865-250-0119.

Chevra Kadisha Committees
Jenifer Ohriner and Martha Iroff, Women's Co-Chairs
Jerry Becker, Men's Chair

The Chevra Kadisha is a congregational committee that performs the mitzvah of preparing the deceased for burial in accordance with Jewish tradition. The duties of the Chevra Kadisha are among the most important mitzvot incumbent upon us. Membership is a distinct honor, carrying with it the appreciation and respect of the entire congregation. Members of the Chevra Kadisha include men and women who serve and perform their duties willingly and piously.

Heska Amuna Synagogue is honored by the service of the following volunteers and welcomes others who might want to join their ranks.

Men

Chair: Jerry Becker

Bill Berez

Ernie Gross

Tommy Hahn

Marty Iroff

Rich Kaplan

Gene Rosenberg

Women

Co-Chairs: Jenifer Ohriner, Martha Iroff

Anne Bendriem

Wendy Besmann

Jeannie Bobroff

Margy Goldman

Anne Greenbaum

Rachel Iroff

Elise Jacobs

Ellen Kern

Rosalie Nagler

Myrna Russotto

During 5778 the Women's Committee served Carol Harris.

Appendix I

Appendix II

Appendix III

SLATE OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

June 3, 2018

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair

Ken Brown

Chair-elect

Jeff Becker

Immediate Past Chair

Hal Manas

President

Mary Ann Merrell

Immediate Past President

Raphe Panitz

Financial Vice Chair

Jeffrey Jacobson

Treasurer

Marty Iroff

Secretary

Kimberly Hedrick

Facilities Vice-Chair

Harriet Cooper

Education Vice-Chair

Barbara Mintz

Programming Vice-Chair

Frank Floyd

Membership Committee Chair

Marilyn Burnett

Sisterhood President

Barb Levin

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Bernard Bendriem

Jeannie Bobroff

Abraham Brietstein

Gloria Greenfield

Marian Jay

Eytan Klausner

Serina Scott

Mark Siegel