



UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM



"Red Sea" by Alison Shearman, artwork for 2010 UPJ Biennial

Annual Report

2010-2011 5771-5772

Mission Statement

The Union for Progressive Judaism exists to honour our tradition, inform the present and guide the future of our communities in the Australian, Asian and New Zealand region. This mission is fulfilled through:

- The establishment, strengthening and promotion of synagogues, schools and youth groups wherever there are Jews in this region searching for meaningful access to and expression of their modern Jewish values and life;
- Recruitment, training and placement of Jewish professionals;
- Sponsorship of programmes and publications for youth, education, leadership development, and all aspect of community building;
- The pursuit of social justice and equal rights for all Jews, here and in Israel;
- Connecting and working with Progressive Jewish communities and organisations around the world to derive strength from one another.

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The Year in Review



Australia Yuval Rotem, Steve Denenberg, David Robinson)

“Celebrating the journey” – the theme of our biennial conference in Canberra in November 2010 – was a most appropriate way to commemorate the completion of 80 years of Progressive Judaism in this region and to commence the journey of this year and the decades ahead. It allowed us to celebrate the growth of our movement from the establishment of the first congregation, Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne, to our current position of having 25 affiliated congregations and organisations, and a list of groups seeking to become members. (Pictured, from left, at the Parliament House celebration: Israel Ambassador to

The organisation of the conference owes special thanks to Convenor, Tony Leverton, David Robinson, Steve Denenberg and Jocelyn Robuck. Similarly, the continued success of the organisation is due to the dedication and commitment of many people, including our outstanding volunteers, especially President, David Robinson, Vice-Presidents Neil Samuel and Stephen Freeman, Treasurer Philip Levy, Secretary Sharene Hambur and the members of the Executive Committee. They, together with our small team of staff including Executive Director Steve Denenberg, Project Coordinator Jocelyn Robuck, Social Action consultant Miriam Wallach; Administrator Ellen Frajman and bookkeeper, Fran Hotz, have ensured another memorable and successful year. The community is blessed to have such a dedicated group of people serving them through this organisation and sincere and heartfelt thanks go to each of them.

Beyond that, the commitment of the Presidents and Boards of the congregations and organisations that make up the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) ensures that we remain focussed and energised in working toward our shared goals of developing Progressive Judaism, supporting Israel and the Jewish communities of the world; and *Tikkun Olam*, making the world a better place.

The organisation has continued its commitment to regional representation with the President based in Auckland, New Zealand, the Executive Director in Sydney, Australia and members of the Executive Committee located throughout the region. We have also worked closely in partnership with the Australian Reform Zionist Association (ARZA) and the UIA Progressive Trust to increase the financial, moral and political support provided to the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) and, in particular, to the development and support of the Progressive movement and its work in Israel.

Some highlights from the past year include:



Mishkan T'filah: After many years of dedicated and time-consuming work by our rabbis, volunteers and professional staff the official launch of *Mishkan T'filah* – World Union edition took place at Parliament House, Canberra in the presence of the leadership of the WUPJ and the South African UPJ; Federal politicians and diplomats; the Israeli Ambassador; and the delegates to the UPJ biennial conference. The Siddur is now being used by UPJ congregations throughout the region, as well as in South Africa.

Awards: Each year the UPJ presents awards to outstanding and long-serving volunteers in our congregations, as well as to a potential leader of the future. These awards reflect the wonderful spirit of enthusiasm and dedication, which is the hallmark of so many of our congregations. Award winners this year included: Geoffrey Cowen (Emanuel Synagogue, Sydney); Joshua Goldman-Brown (United Jewish Congregation, Hong Kong), Philip Bliss (Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne), Lynette Ninio (Beit Shalom, Adelaide), Jonathan Taft (Leo Baeck Centre, Kew) and Eva Popper (Brisbane Progressive Jewish Community) who, as Past Presidents of congregations in our region, received Vatik Awards. Rhondda Hall (Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne), Fred Albert (Temple Sinai, Wellington) and Eva Phillips (Beit Shalom, Adelaide) each received the Ner Tamid Award. The Atid Award winner was Steven Goldman (King David School, Armadale). The inaugural special President's Awards for Outstanding Service were presented



to Phyllis Dorey (above left), Penny Jakobovits (above centre) and Michael Lawrence (above right). During the year President David Robinson visited many of the congregations in person and presented engraved awards to each recipient.

The UIA Progressive Trust: This annual campaign continues to be a vital part of the work of the UPJ in providing financial support for the work of the WUPJ in strengthening and developing the Progressive Jewish community in Israel, and especially its work to welcome and integrate Refugees and Migrants arriving from around the world. Thanks to the tireless work of a small handful of dedicated volunteers we continue to send significant amounts of money to Israel via the UIA Refugee Relief Fund. This, in turn, frees resources to support the development of Progressive congregations in Israel, as no government funds are provided to Progressive institutions, unlike the immense funding that goes to Orthodox rabbis and synagogues.

The fact that the total amount donated exceeded previous years even though we did not have a special guest speaker is a great tribute to those in our community who understand the issues and the need to support the cause of making Israel the inclusive and democratic society longed for by the majority of Jews around the world. It is also a tribute to our cause and to our volunteers and their dedication.

World Union for Progressive Judaism: It is a wonderful tribute to our region that we now have three representatives on the WUPJ Executive Board: Philip Bliss (Vice-Chairman), Phyllis Dorey and Ian Samuel. We were also absolutely delighted that the leadership of the WUPJ – including the outgoing Chairman, Steve Bauman and current Chairman, Mike Grabiner, together with key volunteers and staff – joined us for our biennial conference in Canberra. It is clear that, while our main focus must remain within our region, we have a considerable amount to learn from, and contribute to, our colleagues and friends in the WUPJ.

Congregations: At a time when overall interest in religion is diminishing, it is gratifying to report on the continued growth of Progressive congregations in our region and in Israel. It is particularly pleasing to welcome the congregation of S'dot Zehav in Bendigo, Victoria and to note that we are working with the congregation on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and the NSW Board of Progressive Jewish Education on their potential affiliation. In addition, we are proud to note that Rabbi Joel Oseran travelled to Shanghai, China to run services over the recent High Holy Days.

As will be seen later in this Annual Report, the breadth and depth of services provided by our member congregations is absolutely amazing and a source of great pride for all associated with the work of the UPJ. However, it is a concern that although we are being continually approached by new groups seeking to establish Progressive minyanim, the overall number of members is relatively static. Over the coming year we will be specifically seeking to provide information and support that will assist congregations in recruiting new members.

Communication: Our focus on educating and informing our members and the wider community has continued through our online magazine, *Gal Chadash* (“New Wave”), through regular mail-outs on matters of interest and an upgrade of our website to make it a destination for anyone interested in Judaism and a link to our affiliates and partners.

Representation: We sent a delegation to the WUPJ biennial Connections Conference in San Francisco in February 2011. It is worth noting that the convention was co-chaired by our Immediate Past President, Phyllis Dorey. The UPJ is also represented on the Executive Board and Finance Committee of the WUPJ. Locally, the UPJ continues to be represented at every level of community leadership and involvement at State, Federal and regional levels, including the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) and State Zionist Councils, as well as involvement in numerous interfaith and lobbying groups where members of our movement hold positions of leadership.

Gatherings: An extremely productive and enjoyable gathering of Presidents, UPJ Executive and members of the Moetzah was held on the Gold Coast in May 2011. The agenda focused on “*Tachles*”, and featured a range of workshops and sessions providing practical advice and assistance on issues ranging from fundraising to prioritizing and succession planning for Boards of Management. At a joint meeting of the Presidents and Executive Committee, it was determined to save funds by not convening another Gathering until the biennial Conference to be held in Sydney in October 2012. (Pictured, from left: Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Rabbi Adi Cohen, Barbara Ford, Charles Simon)



Australian Reform Zionist Association: ARZA continues its work of promoting Israel and is the greatly valued religious Zionist branch of the UPJ. During the year, the regular distribution of email-based newsletters kept members informed about events in Israel, Australia and throughout the Jewish world. Chairperson Barbara Ford has done a wonderful job involving younger people in the organisation; providing sponsorship for numerous events; and generally trying to raise the profile of this important organisation, as well as providing representation on the ZFA and at the ARZENU Seminar and President’s Conference in Israel in June 2011.

Social Action: In addition to the considerable and extensive programmes of social action carried out by our constituent and affiliated organisations on a continual basis, our Social Action programme retained its focus on the Nothing but Nets programme to eradicate malaria in Africa, as well as in the re-establishment of Mazon as a fundraising mechanism to show a Jewish response to hunger. Under the guidance of Patricia Keith, Coordinator Miriam Wallach has also initiated a programme in conjunction with Jewish Aid Australia to send volunteers to Nepal.

Leadership development: The commitment to develop new leadership remained a priority, with three delegates sent to the Beutel programme at the Saltz Centre in Jerusalem; scholarships provided for other development programmes; and in assisting a young delegate to attend the ARZENU Seminar in Israel.

Moetzah: The Council of Progressive Rabbis is a vital and integral part of the UPJ. Together with the rabbis, we constantly review religious practice and policy in order to remain relevant to our congregations and involved in interfaith activities and social advocacy issues. Chairman of the Moetzah, Rabbi Gary Robuck, has maintained and developed the outstanding partnership that exists between the Moetzah and the UPJ. He has also used our technical facilities to arrange a series of Gatherings and discussion groups to deal with aspects of the Moetzah's work, thereby enabling their actual meetings to focus on the most important religious and spiritual issues. We offer him heartfelt thanks as he concludes his term of office and welcome incoming chairperson Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky.

Visitors: Further to the highly successful visit last year by Saltz Centre educator, Paul Liptz, we had two absolutely outstanding guest speakers visit us. Executive Director of the Israel Movement for Progressive



Judaism, Rabbi Gilad Kariv, spent time with our rabbis and leaders during the Gold Coast Gathering and then gave a number of outstanding presentations in Sydney and Melbourne. In August of this year, further to her visit to Auckland, foremost Israeli human and social-rights worker and Executive Director of the Israel Centre for Religious Action (IRAC), Anat Hoffman (pictured left, with Gary Zamel), visited Sydney and Melbourne. In a grueling schedule, she appeared on TV and radio; gave interviews to the national and community press, as well as countless addresses to the Progressive and wider Jewish communities. In addition to these meetings, run in coordination with other communal organisations, she enjoyed time with our young leadership, and leaders of our congregations.

Advocacy: Our involvement in speaking out on a number of important issues, including climate change, patrilineal descent, same-gender commitment ceremonies, and religious discrimination in Israel, all form a vital part of the UPJ's work. Inspired by recent visits from Rabbi David Saperstein (Religious Action Centre in Washington DC) and Anat Hoffman (IRAC) during this time we have taken the first steps to establish our own Religious Action Centre, with "in principle" agreement given by the Executive Committee and the recruitment of the Advisory Committee started. As part of our commitment to open debate and discussion in the community, it was with great pleasure that we provided sponsorship to Limmud Oz, which included human-rights worker, Naomi Chazan, and Limmud NZ, where the keynote speaker was Anat Hoffman.

Professional development: As part of our commitment to maintaining and developing the calibre of the professionals serving our community, we have continued to actively encourage and support those who seek formal training and qualification as rabbis, cantors or educators. The UPJ provides loans to those undertaking approved courses and these funds are converted into grants as the person returns and works in the region. We continue to assist Rachel Safman during her studies to become a Rabbi, and she has graciously followed her visit to the Mumbai congregation for High Holy Days with a visit to Temple David, in Perth, this past month to conduct High Holy Day services. We also provided some assistance to Judy Campbell to develop the range and quality of musical presentation in our congregations, and we have already been repaid handsomely through her work in developing the UPJ Music Network.



Netzer: The UPJ's support for Netzer has been maintained, including financial support and ensuring involvement in many aspects of the lives of UPJ congregations. We never cease to be impressed by the dedication and talent of the Netzer leadership, and are delighted to have them as part of the UPJ team. The Netzer programmes of outreach to smaller communities in Australia and New Zealand have been most successful, and it was a real pleasure for us to fund groups of Netzer bogrim from Victoria and NSW to travel to Queensland to help with the post-flood clean-up.

Intern: We have long been seeking ways to provide a means to acknowledge the outstanding leaders of Netzer and to offer ways for them to remain involved in our work. We have received a donation, for which we are extremely grateful, to cover the cost of sending an intern to work for four months in the IMPJ offices in Jerusalem. The successful person will be a Netzer boger who, after completing the programme, will become involved here in the work of the UPJ as a volunteer.

Shlichut: Over the years, we have been blessed by a series of outstanding Community Shlichim, and this has continued through to the present, thanks to the dedication and commitment of Dana Bar-Zuri (pictured left, with Lisa Gelbart) and Anat Baruch. We said farewell and offered a huge “Toda rabah” to Dana during this period and welcome her replacement, Lior Argaman. Fortunately NSW Shlichah Anat Baruch agreed to extend her contract to a third year, and she has been absolutely outstanding in her work at State and Federal level. The UPJ remains committed to maintaining a strong programme of shlichut, as well as exploring other means of creating closer ties with Israel.



UPJ Cultural Fund: After some time in formation, and with grateful thanks to Arnold Bloch Leibler, we have successfully established a Cultural Fund for the UPJ. The Trustees have been appointed and, in addition to helping in the set-up of the Fund, Sharene Hambur has accepted the role of Public Officer, for which we are most appreciative. The UPJ Cultural Fund will be available for all constituent organisations to use to receive tax-deductible donations for programmes and activities that will promote and develop all cultural aspects of Judaism across the region. We offer thanks to the Progressive Jewish Cultural Fund for their support and assistance during the time before the UPJ Fund was established.

The Centre for Living Judaism: Thanks to the concept proposed by Rabbi Gersh Lazarow and nurtured most generously by the King David School, during the year the UPJ, along with Progressive Judaism Victoria (PJV), became sponsors and partners in the innovative resource *The Centre for Living Judaism*. With the first Fellow, Marshall Voit, in place, we believe this Centre will greatly enhance our ability to provide resources, including programming material, ideas and support, to every congregation and organisation within the UPJ. We look forward to promoting the Centre, appointing the second Fellow from Israel, and seeing the creativity of the Centre increasingly utilised and enjoyed by our members.



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Administration: The constant commitment to improving efficiency and effectiveness in administration has been manifested in a number of ways during this year. We continue to review and, where possible, improve governance and administrative processes; maintain the joint administrative position in partnership with the PJV; and seek to increase the use of technology in order to minimize costs and achieve efficiency in our administrative work.

Running a regional office with a tiny staff and limited budget presents many challenges, particularly as our previous successes make us strive to maintain the high standards now expected by our constituents and those we work with. Requests from congregations and individuals are diverse and often complex and time-consuming. We continue to try and meet each one with the professionalism and positive attitude that we believe is the hallmark of the UPJ.

Planning: As has been described in this report, this period has been a very busy one. However, it has also included time and effort for the planning for two major events that will take place in 2012. In April 2012, the UPJ, ARZA and Emanuel Synagogue will co-host will a Mission to Poland and Israel, focusing on the Shoah and the growth of Progressive Jewish life since that time. In October, we will celebrate our biennial conference in Sydney, with an exciting programme of presentations and activities around the theme of “Mind, Spirit and Being.”

Conclusion: This past year has been a time of development, achievement and considerable effort “behind the scenes” to maintain and support our congregations whilst trying to develop our role as the representative body of Progressive Judaism in this region. Our position in the world movement has never been stronger, and we have continued to develop and strengthen our links with both the WUPJ and the IMPJ. As we conclude the 81st year of the organisation, we can, in spite of continual challenges, look back with pride on what has been achieved.

More importantly, though, we are inspired and encouraged to redouble our efforts to establish innovative programmes and to identify individuals who can provide our congregations with information and support. The strength of the UPJ is its members, and we will continue to explore new ways of informing and assisting member organisations so that Progressive Judaism will continue and develop its vital role in the communities of our region, Israel and around the world.

UPJ Executive:

David Robinson, President
Stephen Freeman, Vice-President
Neil Samuel, Vice-President
Sharene Hambur, Honorary Secretary
Philip Levy, Honorary Treasurer

Committee members:

Philip Bliss
Shirley Bosman
Helen Bryant
Patricia Keith
Daniel Kirwin
Tony Leverton
Alison Marcus
Roger Mendelson
Ian Samuel

Anat Baruch (Netzer Shlichah)
Barbara Ford (ARZA President)
Lisa Gelbart (Netzer Federal Merakezet)
Rabbi Gary Robuck (Moetzah Chairman)
Geoff Sandler (Schools Representative)

Staff:

Steve Denenberg, Executive Director
Ellen Frajman, Administrative Officer
Jocelyn Robuck, Project Coordinator
Miriam Wallach, Social Action Coordinator

Greetings from the World Union for Progressive Judaism – Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs, President

It is a privilege for me to extend greetings to the UPJ because, in a very real way, my journey to the presidency of the WUPJ began in Australia!

I enjoyed a mini-sabbatical from my congregation in Connecticut at the beginning of 2010, and I decided to spend three weeks in Sydney and Melbourne, and take in the Australian Open Tennis Tournament, as I am a huge fan.

The warm, wonderful welcome, with invitations to sumptuous Shabbat dinners at Emanuel Synagogue in Sydney and Beth Israel in Melbourne, really opened my eyes to the richness of Progressive Jewish life outside of North America and Israel. In particular, the gracious hospitality of Rabbi Paul and Lisa Jacobson in Sydney, and Rabbis Rayna Gevurtz and Gersh Zylberman in Melbourne touched a very special part of my soul. (As I write these words I am looking forward to spending the Shabbat of December 10-11 as scholar-in-residence at Rabbi Zylberman's and Rabbi Gevurtz's present congregation in Newport Beach, California.)

I also vividly remember how, when interviewing for my present position, the entire search process took a complete hiatus so that all of the members of the Search Committee could attend the gala 80th anniversary celebration of Progressive Jewish life in Australia.

Throughout the search process, people told me over and over again that Australia and New Zealand were "jewels in the World Union Crown" for the wonderful way you operate.

In the ensuing months, those impressions were confirmed for me, particularly in the marvelous presentation on fundraising by Steve Denenberg at the San Francisco Connections Convention, to which the WUPJ invited me as an observer-guest. I hope and pray that in my fundraising capacity I can successfully implement the most useful instructions that Steve imparted.

In the few short months (I began July 1) since I assumed my post, it has been an honour and an inspiration to work closely with Dr Philip Bliss, who so ably chairs our Advocacy Committee and coordinates our efforts in that important realm.

In becoming acquainted with my new role, it has been wonderful to discover the achievements of the UIA Progressive Trust, which regularly provides vital funds for our activities to help refugees and migrants.

I was also delighted to learn of our partnership with the UPJ to develop Jewish life in Asia, with special focus on Shanghai. We look forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen the presence of Progressive Judaism throughout this area and in developing your prominent role in our global family.

For all of these reasons, I eagerly look forward to joining you for the UPJ Biennial in October 2012, where I anticipate the pleasure of knowing more of you personally and working closely together to help Progressive Jews connect more closely to one another and our Progressive Jewish ideals than ever before.

May Progressive Judaism in Australia-New Zealand build on its illustrious accomplishments and go from strength to ever greater strength!

Treasurer's Report – Philip Levy, Honorary Treasurer

This report covers the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.

It is difficult to compare this report with the previous year, as we changed the reporting date from September to June and so the 2010 results are for only 9 months.

Overall we ended the year with a deficit of almost \$48,000. Despite being a deficit, this was actually a pleasing result as we had budgeted for a deficit of \$82,000. We improved on budget by \$34,000.

The main contribution to this improvement was the increased grant that we received from the World Union for Progressive Judaism for our operational and Outreach work in the region. As these funds account for approximately 30% of our income the additional funds were of great importance. The amount of funds that the World Union is able to distribute is affected by our own efforts to support the UIA Progressive Trust campaign and it is very pleasing to note the continued success of this major fundraising appeal. Our other major income item, affiliation fees, which are around 23% of budget, came in on target. In total our income was \$48,000 below budget, but this shortfall was overcome by savings in expenses.

Expenses were tightly controlled by our Executive Director and all major expenses were on or below budget. Total expenses were \$82,000 below budget.

At the end of the year our financial position was strong, with cash assets exceeding \$400,000 and no significant liabilities. Our total equity is \$419,000. We are in a strong position to budget for an active 2012.

That said, we cannot continue to budget for deficit results. The year 2012 is already budgeted for an approximately 'break-even' result, but this will not be easy to achieve as the requests for services, support and grants continue to grow rapidly. We will continue to look to our two main sources of income, which are membership affiliation fees and our grants from the World Union as well as exploring other sources of funding for much-needed programmes and activities. The support we receive from the World Union is greatly influenced by the funds we generate to support their work in refugee absorption in Israel. A change this year in the formula on which our grant is based will make that target even more challenging and so achieving "break-even" budgets will depend on achieving excellent campaign results.

We will possibly have to review our affiliation fees and the formula we use to set them. In addition, our Executive Director is actively exploring other avenues of income which may be developed over time.

Given the continuing efforts of our members and vigilant supervision of expenditure we are hopeful that we should be able to meet positive financial targets and continue the work of supporting our member congregations.

 **The Union for Progressive Judaism Financial Report for the period ended 30 June 2011 is attached to this UPJ Annual Report.**

Moetzah Report – Rabbi Gary Robuck, Chair

In 2011, the Moetzah enjoyed an active and productive year, providing able and inspired leadership to their congregations and to the UPJ. Ours is a diverse group, bringing together those with training and experience from many parts of the globe.

Membership in the Moetzah is fluid as colleagues move into and out of the region. Since the last annual report, we welcomed Rabbi Adi Cohen (Wellington) from Israel and bade farewell to Rabbi Dean Shapiro (Auckland). The Moetzah met in Surfers Paradise in May and again in Sydney in November. In May, rabbis of the Moetzah presented an evening of learning and an enjoyable, informal kumsitz to the Surfers Paradise congregation.

During the twice-yearly conferences of the Moetzah, colleagues addressed various issues. In May, the ambitious agenda included discussions concerning Keruv - the Role of the non-Jew in our congregations, organ donation, marriage equality, ethical eating, the role of the rabbi in the wider community, together with much else. In November, Moetzah “business” considered topics like Mazon, the need for a region-wide lectionary, young-adult initiatives, the employment of a part-time staff person and interfaith marriage. Much concern was expressed among colleagues regarding the falling out between Rabbi Nosan-Blank and the leadership of Temple David in Perth. It was reported that Rabbi Fred Morgan will be the consulting rabbi for Perth and will work together with the UPJ to support both parties.

In addition to discussing matters of the day and the work of the congregations, colleagues have focussed on their professional and personal development. In May we considered the traditional role of Rabbi as Mara D'atra (local religious decision-maker) and in November, as Yoetz (spiritual advisor and “way pointer”). At each of the two meetings colleagues shared dilemmas and challenges arising out of our work and programming ideas that work best throughout the region.

Increasingly, the Moetzah is employing technology to relieve the isolation of colleagues working far from the centres of Jewish life in Israel and the United States. Regular GoToMeetings made possible with the help of the UPJ office and Skype conferences like that which “brought to Australia” Professor Moshe Berger of the Siegel College of Jewish Studies (Cleveland, Ohio) were highlights of the year. Skype meetings also permitted us to hear from Rabbi Dan Medwin (CCAR) who brought us up-to-date with his organisation’s process of digitalising the Reform Jewish library; from Rabbi Hara Person on the steps being taken in North America to produce a new machzor (Mishkan T’shuvah); and from Edmund Case, CEO of www.interfaithfamily.com.

During 2010-2011, the Moetzah executive was comprised of Rabbi Gary Robuck (Chair), Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky (Vice-Chair), Rabbi Paul Jacobson (Treasurer) and Rabbi Gersh Lazarow (Secretary). We wish to thank the UPJ staff for its support and under the new chairmanship of Rabbi Kaminsky, will continue to assist in its important work and continue to provide forward-thinking, strong and able rabbinic leadership.

Project Coordinator's Report

Much of my professional contributions are included in The Year in Review, as I was privileged to work closely with Steve Denenberg on the many initiatives that have been achieved this year.

Some of the personal highlights for me included assisting with the biennial in Canberra, helping to introduce Mishkan T'filah to the congregations in our region and coordinating the visits of exciting scholars-in-residence.

I am grateful for the support of the Executive for the privilege to attend two professional development opportunities this year: Connecting Up, a three-day conference in Melbourne for nonprofits to learn new and improved ways to use technology; and a two-day MYOB course that provided basic knowledge for me to assist with bookkeeping tasks.

The focus of my ongoing responsibilities is currently centred on the relaunch of the UPJ website, coordinating the upcoming Mission to Poland and Israel, working on an upgrade of Gal Chadash, and helping with preparations for the next Biennial.

As ever, it has been a particular pleasure to have the support and ever-willing assistance of our dedicated UPJ Executive, especially David Robinson, Stephen Freeman, Neil Samuel, Sharene Hambur and Philip Levy. Not only do they provide expert advice; they make the work very enjoyable!

Jocelyn Robuck

Social Action Report

In 2009-2010, the UPJ's main social-action project was once again Nothing but Nets.

Nothing but Nets is a United Nations Foundation initiative to eradicate malaria in Africa. The UPJ committed to this fund, alongside the Union for Reform Judaism. We pledged to raise \$50, 000.

The main methods used to fundraise were:

- The sale of cards and t-shirts (which took place through 2009 and mid-way through 2010);
- The Nothing But Nosh appeal over the 2010 High Holy Days;
- bar and bat mitzvah fundraisers (particularly at North Shore Temple Emanuel and Temple Beth Israel);
- An online donation system through PayPal on the UPJ website and;
- Individual UPJ congregational appeals where people chose to fundraise in their own appeals.

The most successful fundraising means were card sales and online donations.

Just over \$40, 000 was raised. While this was below our target, the response from UPJ congregations was very strong. While the campaign has now concluded, our contribution was significant and UPJ members should be proud of our efforts.

In 2011, together with Rabbi Gary Robuck, we transitioned the UPJ's social-action focus to re-launch Mazon. In order to make this re-launch successful, it is essential that each congregation nominate a representative to the Mazon committee.

Miriam Wallach

Central Coast Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation – Brian Green, President



The Central Coast Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation comprises a 17 family units, which includes three single units of approximately 27 adults and 19 children.

The ages of congregants range from 4 – 87 years, with 11 children in Hebrew & Religion School and the majority of the adults in the congregation being in their late 30s and early 40s. Some congregants live in the Newcastle area one-and-a half-hour's drive from Gosford, where we meet. The Congregation has been in existence for 23 years and the Hebrew & Religion School celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. We have no established meeting venue other than renting a community hall, which we do mainly for Hebrew & Religion School. As the Congregation has reduced in size, we have found it more beneficial to revert to a 'home service model' to capture the chaverah that exists within the congregation. We have a family service, led by our children, once a month in someone's home. We only use the community hall for formal services, such as B'Mitzvahs, Communal Seders and Erev Rosh Hashanah services. On Yom Kippur, most congregants, by established custom, return to their home congregations, usually in Sydney. Otherwise we journey down to North Shore Temple Emanuel (NSTE), our closest formal Progressive congregation and the congregation of our consulting rabbi, Rabbi Gary Robuck, with whom we have very cordial relations.

Apart from our continued existence in an area almost totally devoid of Yiddishkeit, our major accomplishments have been with our Hebrew & Religion School. During the life of the Congregation, we have B'Mitzvahed a total of 20 children from our Hebrew & Religion School. In this endeavour, Rabbi Paul Jacobson (Emanuel Synagogue) and Gary Robuck (NSTE) have recently assisted us, although the preparation has been by our own H&R School teachers. In the forthcoming year, two children will be B'Mitzvahed: Janine Joseph and Chelsea Berman. We are also preparing the wife of one of our congregants for conversion.

We have established a Jewish cemetery (consecrated by the Chevra Kadisha), in the Wyong Shire of the Central Coast and, with that council's assistance in providing donations of native trees, we are attempting to beautify it and other areas of the Central Coast. On Tu b'Shvat each year, for the last 16 years, we have, as an experiential learning exercise for Hebrew & Religion School pupils and their parents, planted donated trees in the areas designated by council as needing regeneration. In this way as well as teaching the significance of Tu b'Shvat in its modern iteration as an Arbor Day in Israel, we are also fulfilling the mitzvah of Tikkun Olam, the repair of the world so apt in an era of increasing global, environmental degradation and species extinction.

We provide a hospital visiting service for non-affiliated Jews receiving palliative care in hospital and/or their home if requested. We are also available to say final prayers with them and conduct their funerals. As part of our relationship with other residents of the Central Coast and other faith communities, we outreach educationally to any school in the local area requiring information on Judaism, Jews and Israel. In the past year, we have visited several schools in the area. Apart from this, individual Hebrew & Religion school parent/congregants have addressed the secular schools their children attend on a whole range of topics, mostly relating to festival celebration.

Our congregational Board of Management is made up of myself as President and Education Director; Gary Berman as Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer; Sheryle Berman as Honorary Secretary, Shofar Editor and Publicity Officer; Jennifer Green as Welfare Officer and Caroline Leadbetter and Shelly Russell as Co-Principals of the Congregation's Hebrew & Religion School.

All office holders have acquitted themselves well in their various roles and capacities and being involved in all aspects of congregational management. The Congregation is grateful to them for their talents and dedication and particularly for the fact that they are all busy working and running their homes. As

Education Director, I am also grateful to those parents who contribute to our community by serving as teachers and co-teachers in our Hebrew & Religion School. Their unpaid contribution and volunteerism makes it possible. We are small but are an extremely active community.

Perhaps our greatest challenge is to maintain the integrity of our Hebrew & Religion School once the majority of our senior students have become B'nai Mitzvah. Four left us in the last two years and four will leave us in the next two years. In our B'Mitzvah class, we have three students. Junior class has two students; Intermediate class has two students and senior class has four students, making the total 11 in all. Numbers are drastically reducing. As a consequence of this, it will make the paid teacher/coaching initiative, recently introduced, no longer viable and hence we are liable to also lose contact with our post-B'Mitzvah students who have been fulfilling this role. Like all congregations, post-B'Mitzvah involvement by our youth has been and is our Achilles' Heel.

With static congregational numbers, the challenge will be for us to outreach to unaffiliated Jews living on the Central Coast. This will be pursued vigorously. We look forward to an exciting and eventful 2011. The major events in our calendar included the Bat Mitzvah of Janine Joseph in June and Chelsea Berman in July 2011. In 2012, we have one Bar Mitzvah and two Bat Mitzvahs. In early 2013, we will be conducting a Bar Mitzvah at the Kotel/Jerusalem and a Bat Mitzvah at Kibbutz Ginesar on the Kinneret/Sea of Galilee.

North Shore Temple Emanuel (NSTE) – Susan Kadar, President

The last year was an outstanding year for the NSTE community. We harnessed the inspiration of our Jubilee in 2010 and have gone from strength to strength.



The year started with our well-attended Big Ideas Day, with Rabbi Dean Shapiro providing the keynote address. Of the many initiatives that came out of that event, two deserve special mention: The History and Heritage Project, aimed at documenting the major and minor events of the past 51 years; and revitalising the Chavurah movement.

We started Keshet, a once-a-month Shabbat morning service for our youngest members to complement the playgroup for the tots.

The Meah program developed by Rabbi Robuck for the students and parents of our Hebrew and Religion School is delivering results. In the past year, six different classes/groups of students presented their work on Shabbat, introducing them to the congregation and linking the school and the synagogue much more strongly than before.

We set up a laboratory for our bar and bat mitzvah students and others who wish to practice leining. The David Burnett Hebrew Language and Learning Centre – a tribute to an exceptional young man – was made possible through the generosity of his family.

Adult educations programs have continued, including the North Shore Night School, as well as other programs targeting various interest groups.

Our choir is actively engaged in services, as well as concerts. We also introduced a series of jazz concerts and film screenings in our rejuvenated social hall, VJs.

To enrich the spiritual life of the community, we introduced a monthly Mincha service, a Kabbalah meditation class and continue to provide Shabbat Groove and family services.

In partnership with B'nai B'rith, we are introducing an outreach program for interfaith families. We conducted a comprehensive membership survey that had in excess of a 60% response rate, which provided us with important information about members' needs and priorities, as well as feedback on how we meet their expectations.

The year also saw significant changes behind the scenes. Our CEO retired after nine years and a new manager has been engaged. The office infrastructure, as well as the accounting and management system, is being upgraded.

Emanuel Synagogue – Rodney Brender, President

The past year has seen many achievements, with many challenges and transitions along the way. Despite the return of an uncertain global economic climate, membership remains steady in all minyanim. Generous membership donations also remain steady.



We have some new members on the Board; others retired following our AGM. The new Board has worked on being a welcoming community, to have a presence at all services and a roster of Board members identifiable, to attend both Friday night and Shabbat services. Volunteers also join in this role to welcome community.

A few months ago Sam Zwarenstein joined us as General Manager. Sam has been an active member of our Masorti minyan and has in a short time invigorated the efficiency of staff and implemented new regimes for new initiatives and programs.

Rabbi Ninio took her sabbatical in the U.S. in the middle of the year, gathering new ideas for services and activities and commencing with “Shabbat Live” at Friday night services from November.

We held the Cantor Deutsch Memorial and Tribute Service on Sunday November 13 2011. The sad passing of Cantor Deutsch late last year marked the end of an era for the Emanuel Synagogue and the era of great Chazzans in the Progressive movement. He had the love and respect of all who knew him. We now have the added strength of our Shaliach Tzibur Martin Yafe from Argentina, who has settled into his role and will focus some of his time on youth in the Emanuel community and the Emanuel School, as well as being service leader with cantorial/music duties.

The creative energies of Staff, Rabbis, the Board and volunteers have seen a full year of activities achievements and initiatives.

Highlights since last UPJ conference:

- Completing a Strategic Plan and Listening campaign (after Sydney Alliance workshops) & Community Survey, all a blueprint for going forward;
- Development Application approved by Woollahra Council for our redevelopment plans for a new single campus for all three Minyanim;
- Launch of our Capital Appeal to fund Stage One and Two of the Development Plan, including installing new seating throughout the Main Sanctuary, building a new sanctuary, preschool, education space, kiddush courtyard and other facilities;
- Greater use of our Website, Weekly Bulletin, TELL magazine, including for bookings and advertising of events;
- Growth of all three Minyanim;
- Continued strong relations with the Emanuel School and Emanuel Kindergarten;
- Renewal monthly Shabbat and High Holy Day services;
- Implementing a year of Educational and Cultural programs as highlighted below ;
- Purim Spiel a huge capacity audience for the annual event ;
- Lunch and Learn monthly Shabbat lunch with guest speakers;
- Harbourview Young Adult Shabbat service and dinners: seven this year, run by Rabbi Jacobson and his wife Lisa in their home, attracting singles and couples;
- Shabbat Tot regular creative Shabbat activity for 2-5 years;
- Yelladim Shabbat opportunity led by Netzer for 6-8years;

- Preschool programs Emanuel Preschool and Paul Kornmehl Centre at Emanuel School;
- Emanuel School teaching (year 7-9);
- My PlaySpace @ Emanuel playgroup each week;
- Board of Progressive Jewish Education Hebrew and Religious School;
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring;
- Post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Pizza with the Rabbi: on average 15 students for six sessions per term;
- Post-Bnai mitzvah student and Adults reading Megillah on Purim and Torah on High Holy Days;
- Basic Jewish Concepts classes;
- Introduction to Hebrew Reading
- Our Jewish Story – weekly discussion of texts and the Jewish people;
- Midweek study group with residents at Montefiore Home;
- Ziknei Emanuel –weekly classes for senior members of Emanuel;
- Rosh Chodesh women's group for celebration of the new moon;
- Weekly Kabbalah meditation;
- Meditation for Emanuel primary and high school students;
- People of the Book Club –tea and discussion of topical books of interest;
- Communal gathering with guest speaker Anat Hoffman from IRAC;
- Visit by Robert Esformes Kabbalah teacher and Chazzan from U.S. and various workshops and events with the groups, including Renewal minyan and Rabbi Orna Triguboff;
- Concert as part of B'nai Brith Cultural Day – this year Klezmer Divas and Band;
- Social Justice and Social Responsibility;
- Mazon collecting food for distribution;
- Vegetarian Cooking classes to coincide with introduction of a non-meat Kosher campus;
- New Social Justice Committee volunteer programmes: Sunday breakfasts at Matthew Talbot for homeless men and assisting with Centre for Asylum Seekers Surry Hills, providing lunches;
- Our wonderful group of Rabbis remain one of our key strengths, enabling us to retain the strong pluralistic and egalitarian community and carry out all the year's activities. The three Minyanim remain unique in terms of Jewish communities In Australia and beyond.

Brisbane Progressive Jewish Congregation (BPJC) – Tony Leverton, President

This year has been a challenging one, with deepening global financial troubles and extraordinary weather events in Queensland. It has also seen much activity, with many highlights to record:



- Farewelling our trusty siddur Gates of Prayer with a special prayer of gratitude for its durability, versatility and relevance over 35 years of service to Progressive Jewish community (16 October 2010);
- Introducing Mishkan T'filah – World Union edition, a siddur designed by and for the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) and the South African Union for Progressive Judaism – truly a remarkable achievement. All the more so as BPJC is only one of two major sponsors identified on the fly sheet (6 November 2010);
- 2010 was the 80th year of Progressive Judaism in Australia, from the founding of Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne in 1930. The year of activities concluded with a special 80th Anniversary Biennial Conference in Canberra (25-28 November 2010);
- Commencing televised services, for one Shabbat a month and the High Holy Days, using the Awcast live webcasting facility (from 18 December 2010);
- Rallying round our community's flood victims at the time of the January floods and also organising, with UPJ, teams of Netzer members to assist flood-devastated Lockyer Valley residents. BPJC supported the Jewish community flood appeal by giving out free kosher popcorn at the special fundraising event held at Burbank, and by auctioning an original painting generously donated by our member Dr Eva Popper (January – April 2011);
- Signing an historic agreement with the Brisbane Chevra Kadisha for Tahara and the use of a part of the Mt Gravatt Jewish Cemetery for the burial of Progressive Jews (20 February 2011);
- Our Congregation was privileged to have had the opportunity of involvement with Netzer on four occasions during the year: two associated with their assistance with Queensland's tragic floods, as well as a sleepover Shabbat with Netzer on 22-23 October 2010 and a Shabbaton Netzer weekend camp from 11-13 March 2011, both in cooperation with our sister Congregation Temple Shalom Gold Coast. The combined Congregations made a \$500 profit from the March camp, which was set aside for use in future local Netzer activities;
- The presentation of UPJ's highest honour, the Vatik Award, by UPJ President David Robinson to Dr Eva Popper for her service as a Congregation President and for continuing outstanding Jewish community support. This award was presented during a Shabbat service, with representatives of all the major Brisbane Jewish organisations present (19 March 2011);
- The engagement of Cantor David Bentley, after an eight-month absence in Sydney (1 March 2011);
- The creation or revision of policies for B'nei Mitzvah, Child Protection, Complaints and Gabbai support (February-July 2011);
- The congregation's communal Seder, very ably led by our Minister Cantor David Bentley (19 April 2011);
- The Board biennial strategic planning session (19 June 2011);
- Recommitting to our Building Fund, with a Shavuot request to members and supporters for donations and bequests (8 June 2011);
- Reviewing BPJC's fees and charges policy for life-cycle events and the creation of a Ministerial Services Fund to help meet the ongoing costs of our Cantor (May-July 2011);
- Entering into an agreement with Gan Gani Kindergarten in Fig Tree Pocket for the use of their premises for our Kabbalat Shabbat services and festivals, such as Sukkot, Chanukah and Purim, (11 August 2011);
- Starting a BPJC choir (16 August 2011);
- Reviewing the existing BPJC Constitution (August 2011);

- Beginning a new membership drive to ensure that we maximise our potential amongst the Brisbane Jewish community (August-September 2011);
- An official visit of our UPJ Advisory Rabbi Paul Jacobson. We were delighted to host Rabbi Jacobson in Brisbane from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon, to participate in a full weekend of activities, including a Bar Mitzvah, a broadcast lay leaders training session and a Bet Din (2-4 September 2011);
- Welcoming three graduates of the UPJ Conversion program (17 September 2011);
- Putting our Building Fund management on a sound footing with the appointment of a Building Fund Committee (September 2011);
- Surveying all our members and supporters for their views on improvements to the services and activities conducted by BPJC (September 2011);
- Hosting a baby naming and four B'nei Mitzvah for our Cheder graduates.

This has been a busy and eventful year, full of significant achievements, with a hard-working Board. I commend all those who served and contributed to the advancement of the Congregation.

Membership at date of report: 16 Family, 24 Individual and 1 Honorary Life = 41 billing units.

Temple Shalom – Andrew Abrahamson, President

It has been another very busy year for Temple Shalom Gold Coast.



Our AGM in July saw the completion of the second consecutive two-year term for Kate Lesser as President, and the election of Andrew Abrahamson as our new President. Kate had given three years as vice-president prior to her presidency. Her energy and enthusiasm demonstrate a proactive management style that has already carried over to her new role as Immediate Past President and as a strong support for our new President.

Religious services are held on Erev Shabbat and Shabbat morning each week, and services are conducted for all of the chagim. The Guild supports the religious side of each chag. Twice a month, we enjoy a Shabbat meal together as a community, with the Oneg Shabbat growing enormously. There are many young people who attend, so we have been able to provide their own designated after-dinner space in the Spray Hall. We have at least one Family service each school term, giving our cheder young people the opportunity to participate in this way. The full gamut of lifecycle events have been celebrated, as we share our joys and sorrows together as a community. We began using Mishkan T'filah following the 5771 High Holy Days, with a very good transition from the old to the new. The Services Management team continues to oversee all religious activities associated with our shul.

The Cheder continues to provide for the education of our young ones. Cheder families involve themselves in events surrounding the chagim, especially at Pesach when families get together to prepare kosher l'Pesach foods for our Model Seder. Our families always throw themselves into Purim celebrations and all participated in decorating the sukkah again this year and learned together how to make a lulav.

Netzer has really 'got off the ground' on the Gold Coast. In addition to our annual Netzer camp (March this year), we had our second Netzer sleepover, the first one being in October last year. The weekend begins with the Kabbalat Shabbat family service and we enjoy a wonderful time together until we leave, exhausted and happy, quite late on motzei Shabbat. Our facilities are ideal for these sleepovers. Young Netzer personnel from interstate have ensured that our young people are already lining up for the same again next time!

Our Guild attempts to stage at least one purely social fun function each month. This keeps our members well connected. We involve ourselves in social action each year at Shavuot (providing requested items for a local womens' refuge) and during the High Holy Days with our Mazon Bags program, with food being given to the Salvation Army. A first this year was our Pink Ribbon Afternoon Tea in the sukkah, with raised funds going to breast cancer research. We have a good working relationship with our sister congregation in Brisbane, the BPJC. We have shared a number of activities with the local Orthodox community for Yom HaShoah, Purim and Chanukah. We were delighted to host the UPJ Gathering in May this year on the Gold Coast.

Our Rabbi search continues in conjunction with the UPJ and we look forward to a good outcome in the near future.

Beit Shalom Synagogue – Alison Dwyer, President

Another year at Beit Shalom has gone by and as always we have had a busy year of festivals, life-cycle events and a full community calendar. We have an active community with engagement from a wide range of members, demonstrating our demographics from the very young to our most knowledgeable and long-lived adults.



Last year I wrote about my concerns from the anecdotal evidence that service attendance was on the decline. Although I would like to report that this has changed, the reality is that regular service attendance is not always huge and we do, at times, struggle to make our minyan. But I don't believe that things have changed from last year to this one and I am more inclined to believe that in an era where people are time poor, we pick and choose how we are going to make being Jewish an integral part of our lives. Overall, Beit Shalom is still a vibrant, active place to hang one's hat and we have a range of activity happening at our facilities every week. Our doors continue to be open a lot more than just Friday night and Saturday morning, and I think that we should be optimistic about our future.

This year, Beit Shalom membership numbers are the same as last year at 140 member units. The membership figures are broken down below.

TYPE	2011	2010	2009	2008
Family	50	55	50	48
Single	24	24	24	24
Student	4	3	3	3
Single pensioner	32	34	35	34
Country/Interstate	15	14	15	14
Family Pensioner	9	6	5	6
Honorary	4	4	4	5
Conversions	2	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Total	140	140	142	139

For the past few years, our numbers have been fairly static as some members move or pass away, and we attract a few members through new families, babies and conversions.

I announced earlier this year that Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky's contract will be extended for a further three years, which means Beit Shalom has committed to employing our Rabbi through to October 2015. Rabbi Kaminsky has found a home here in Adelaide. She has become an integral leader and member of our community and goes above and beyond the call of duty. Rabbi Kaminsky is generous with her spirit, commitment and time to our children, to our extended families as well as to our visitors and interfaith colleagues. She continues to lead and participate in a range of activities within our synagogue and the broader community.

Our year always encompasses more activities than a small congregation should be able to support, but Beit Shalom is known as a synagogue that regularly punches above its weight. We had a few themed Oneg Shabbats this year, including two competitions: our annual Shavuot Cheesecake Competition and a Fringe "Make your most creative dish" competition.

Our famous Purim Spiel took a walk on the supernatural side with its vampire theme and it was great to again see our newest members participating.

Beit Shalom held a wine auction this year – something we do every 2-3 years. The auction is a major fundraiser for our synagogue and this year we broke our record.

An ongoing education program supported by Beit Shalom this year is the Abraham Institute. The Institute promotes interfaith dialogue and understanding. This year's focus has been the history, culture and people of Israel, with speakers addressing a wide range of history and contemporary issues.

The Sisterhood continued to be very busy this year with a highly successful book club. The Sisterhood Catering Committee continued to provide a great service to the community for many simchas and events.

Beit Shalom continued with an active cheder this year, with three classes to cater for the broad range of ages, with kids aged 4-13 attending.

The broader Adelaide Jewish Community faced a major change this year with the closure of Massada. Beit Shalom will continue to offer Jewish education to our members and other Jews in the community through our Cheder.

JAZY had an active year, running programs and camps for our children, as well as an interesting program for parents. It is not yet clear what shape JAZY will take over the next few years as it faces a gap in youth leadership.

Under the auspices of the State Zionist Council, our community calendar continued to be full this year with memorable events. Beit Shalom also benefitted from the energy of a community Shlichah this year.

Hobart Hebrew Congregation – Daniel Albert, President

This year was a watershed year for the congregation. The congregation, and the Jewish community in Tasmania, was boosted in the immediate post-World War II period by an influx of those seeking refuge from the aftermath of the war. Unfortunately, with one or two exceptions, the children of these migrants are not participating in the communal life of the Tasmanian Jewish community.



They have either moved interstate, as part of the ongoing movement of Jews from regional Australia to the large capital cities, or have chosen not to identify themselves as Jewish. The issue therefore was whether the community could survive when this generation ceased to be active in the community.

This year I believe the question was answered, and the answer is: yes the community can survive. This year, probably for the first time since their arrival, we had none of this generation participating in High Holy Day services. Despite this unfortunate situation, services were still successful. While the congregation is smaller in membership – particularly active membership, we still had a successful year. This has been due, in part, to the new participants in the community and new members of the congregation. We continued to hold services regularly, as well as holding functions to celebrate various festivals and sometimes simply because it is Shabbat.

A considerable number of visitors are shown around the synagogue each year. Most are from interstate or overseas. However, we hold an annual open day aimed specifically at Tasmanian residents. The purpose of the open day is officially to show the historic building and it is done as part of the annual Tasmanian Heritage Festival. However, it is hoped that by Tasmanian residents visiting the synagogue and talking to members of the congregation it will improve the understanding of Judaism in the state. What is particularly heartening, is the increasing number of requests, we are receiving from Tasmanian schools to show their students the synagogue and take some time to explain Judaism to them. We also have a very good booklet on Judaism, produced by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, for teachers and on occasion the students to take away with them.

There are two groups whose work and dedication keep the congregation and therefore Judaism alive in Tasmania. They are the very small group of volunteers from the community and those from interstate who assist us. The congregation has no paid employees. All work is done by volunteers, particularly members of the board. The second group is those who come from interstate, including rabbis, and laypersons who offer their services to the congregation.

Kehillat David HaMelech (Kedem) – Margaret Visbord, Immediate Past President

When I first began to talk with Caryn Granek about the possibility of her becoming the next President of Kedem, she asked me to list what I saw as the strengths and challenges for Kedem in the year to come. I'm not completely silly – I wanted Caryn to take over the role – so in fact have managed to come to this point without ever having handed over such a list. However, I do feel that this is an appropriate time to do a traditional SWOT analysis of Kedem – looking back over the year that has been, and looking forward.



As always, the major strength of Kedem lies in its people. I have been fortunate this year to have been supported by a committed Board, and an Executive that have been steady and wise in the face of many challenges. My thanks go to all the Board, in particular to Deb Absler (who has survived two years as a valued counsel and assistant) and Caryn Granek. They have both worked constantly and have been my right hand people at all times. Also I am particularly grateful to Bev Gelbart, whose unflagging energy in all aspects of Kedem has meant that she hasn't had much rest in her role as Immediate Past President. Sym Kohn has brought a droll wit and dexterity with numbers as our Treasurer, in what has been a very challenging financial environment for Kedem. I also thank Deb Maybloom, who left the Board during the year after many years of service on the Board. We continue to benefit from Deb's skills in a variety of ways, including her organisation of the MTC Theatre group and the money she raises in this way. David Huppert, Shaun Miller and Jim Cyngler all made valuable contributions via their portfolios on the Board, and I thank them. David is leaving the Board, but we are hopeful he will return when his work commitments change.

Gabbi Sar-Shalom, our Mashpiah, concluded her contract when she gave birth to her beautiful baby boy, Ohr David, and I take this opportunity to wish Gabbi and Aviad mazal tov on this happy event. We also thank Gabbi for her hard work over the past 18 months. There is a saying: "You don't know what you've got til it's gone" and whilst I did know how hard Gabbi was working, I didn't realise how many "holes" would have to be filled when she stopped! Gabbi was diligent in creating relationships with new people who expressed an interest in Kedem, and many of the new faces that we all saw over the recent High Holy Days were a result of Gabbi's friendliness and outreach. The new Board has committed to reviewing the role of the Mashpiah, and we hope that we will be seeing Gabbi working with our community in a variety of ways in 2012.

My thanks go to Rosi Meltzer, our Office Manager extraordinaire! Nothing is too much trouble and she always puts in that bit "extra" for all the members and for me. Every member of Kedem contributes in some way. All help and contributions are greatly valued.

Other strengths that I have observed lie in Kedem's diversity, community and versatility. The range of Kedem's services, activities and events testifies to its diversity. From challah-making and a discussion group borne out of fascinating Tikkun Leil sessions, to a deep and meaningful study group for 20-30-year-olds, from cheesecake competitions, a weekend group holiday to Tassie to a regular book club, Kedem caters for all ages and stages and interests. As long as someone puts up a hand and says: "Here I am" and takes responsibility for the organisation, it will happen!

As a community, we come together more often than many families, and none more significantly so than in May when Jim Cyngler led a day-long Kedem Forum, which was attended by more than one-third of our members. One of the pertinent questions raised considered where "Kedem the Shul" sat with our range of community activities. There was a general consensus that the Shul was the focal point, the heart of our community. We could all belong to many other community action groups, but it was the heart and soul of Kedem as a Shul that drew us together and made all the other activities meaningful.

This year we expanded our Kedem Shabbat offerings to be both innovative and versatile. In addition to our regular Shabbat services on the first and third Saturday of each month, our traditional fifth Shabbat study session, and the ever popular Kabbalat Shabbat and Shared Shabbat meal on the second Friday night of the month, we added the Kedem Service for the Soul on the fourth Shabbat. Thanks to the Huppert family and Alice Peer and Benny for hosting these services in their homes, and also thanks to those presenters who contributed to these services. Gabbi and Libby, with assistance from Devorah and Robin introduced many musical changes to add to our services. As we have all become more familiar with the workings of the Mishkan T'filah our services have changed and in many ways become more beautiful as a result of new inclusions.

Perhaps more euphemistically called “challenges”, Kedem has a few. Like every other community organisation, ours of course centres on money! Kedem members are creative, innovative and demanding and are used to events of a very high calibre. In addition, we have a yearly calendar that is very full with Shabbat and Chaggim services. As a result, Kedem members, who volunteer their time and energy over the years, become “burnt out”. The membership of Kedem has not been large enough to provide new people willing to take on some of the tasks required, so it was decided that the way to alleviate the burn out and to generate more new members was to employ a professional educator/leader/community facilitator (Mashpiah). The creation of this position meant a need for financial resources beyond our traditional membership funding. Hence, for the first time in Kedem’s 16-year history, we had to increase membership dues and also embark on some serious fundraising. Whilst we have a temporary respite because we came to the end of the current Mashpiah’s contract, the challenge remains to fund such a role into the future. In addition, we have a number of initiatives beginning in 2012 to engage families with young children, with Netzer-aged kids, and the adults in our community in the 0-30 age range. As new programs, each of these will require nurturing and development in the coming year.

Within the Progressive Jewish movement, Kedem is well positioned to be a leading community. We can show other congregations how to grow membership by thinking creatively and by being inclusive. We are small, and that gives us the opportunity to respond to our membership’s needs, being intimate enough so that our members feel connected. The Progressive movement needs to harness the population growth in the general Jewish community, and smaller communities such as Kedem will attract Jews from all backgrounds who have felt alienated by impersonal synagogue community experiences of their childhood.

Being a lay-lead Shul is a point of uniqueness that presents opportunities. We offer an intellectual and spiritual experience that requires member’s involvement in very distinctive ways. Our vision statement says that we are innovative, and this also provides opportunities to change and experiment, to create a Shul community that is exciting and enervating.

As part of the UPJ, we can learn and share from communities around the country and across the region. Biennial conferences and meetings give chances to exchange ideas and meet others who share common issues. In particular, many other Progressive communities have faced similar funding challenges, and have responded in ways that we can utilise.

We have a vibrant section of our community under the age of 30. Many of these are members who have been Bar and Bat Mitzvah with us. Their enthusiasm for Kedem is a wonderful opportunity for both growth and innovation. Also, Kedem has an active “older” segment of the community, and this is a group that we must nurture by providing appropriate activities and services.

Threats however, serve to alert us to future problems that may be averted. Being “invisible” or “unknown” in the Melbourne Jewish community is a problem. In the highly competitive Shul market in Melbourne, unless we are known and seen as a viable Shul of choice by Progressive Jews and the Jewish community in

general, we will fade away. Our membership will not grow or regenerate, and we will be “swallowed up” by other Shuls. Thus we need to be vocal and “out there”. We have a wonderful offering, as all members of Kedem can verify. However, we need to stay relevant to our members. If we lose touch with what they want and what we can offer, we lose our credibility. We need to maintain our wonderfully high standards: of music, prayer and worship, critical and insightful divrei Torah, Tikkun Olam, commitment to Israel, and of course commitment to each member of our Kehillah. Not continuing in any one of these areas creates a threat to the future of Kedem.

At this point I would like to acknowledge the support of The King David School in the use of their facilities and the helpfulness of their staff. Also, as an active member of PJV and the UPJ, Kedem is committed to the wider Progressive community, and I thank both those bodies for their support over the past year.

It has been a privilege to serve as President of Kedem over the past two years and I look forward to continuing as an active member of the Board and the community into the future. I wish the incoming President and the Board every success in the coming year.

Etz Chayim Progressive Synagogue – Frank Moore, President

The past 12 months have been a very active year for the Etz Chayim Synagogue. We started the year as Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue and rebranded ourselves in December 2011 to Etz Chayim. We took this name from our past leadership who gave us this name and placed it in Hebrew on the front of our building.



The name change reflected the continuation of our rebirth, and as the flagship of Progressive Judaism in the Southern Suburbs of Melbourne.

Not only did we change our name, but we cleaned and painted our building and landscaped our back area of our property.

This physical change is a work in progress, with a number of other building changes that we are working on.

As well as changing the way we look, we are changing the way we are run, with our new board looking closely at our past practices and putting together new processes and practices that will take us into our 60th year and further.

We have also revamped our Religion School model, which is proving to be a big winner with numbers expanding faster than we had planned for. Numbers expanding is probably the biggest blessing at Etz Chayim.

All our activities that we have been presenting have worked to the point that the organisers are continually being caught out with the numbers being much greater than expected.

Not only are our events bringing big numbers, we are seeing a rapid growth in our membership. This growth has meant that the Board has had to respond to our community need for more clergy time due to the expanding membership. Rabbi Lazarow has been doing amazing work, but unfortunately we have not the option to extend his time. The community has been very lucky as we have been able to engage Cantor Laloum on an initial one-day-a-week basis. This means we have the pleasure of being lead by both Rabbi Lazarow and Cantor Laloum. This team is already having an impact on the membership and we expect to continue to grow under their leadership.

The work we have performed over the last 12 months is only the tip of the iceberg. The Board is already looking at what we need to do to restructure ourselves to handle what we expect to be a continued strengthening of our membership.

To add to a very busy schedule for our community, next year is our 60th anniversary and we expect to have a number of events to celebrate this milestone for our community.

Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive Judaism – Henry Okraglik, President

Professional Staff: Full time Rabbi, (Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black), part time office administrator, part-time administrative secretary, part-time volunteer book-keeper, and sessional cantors for services, teachers for Sunday school & B'nei Mitzvah programs, part-time caretaker.



Shabbat Services: Every Shabbat morning and monthly Erev Shabbat services.

Billing Units: Approximately 300 families

Congregational Committees: Arts , Care, Communications, Community Activities, Fundraising, House of Study, House, Membership, Ritual, Security, Social Justice, Youth Education, Young Adults, Information Technology, Library.

Programs: Regular: Sunday school/Netzer club, weekly B'nei Mitzvah classes, monthly B'nei Mitzvah workshops and mentoring; Jewish after-school play and educational group for pre Sunday school children: House of Study provides a regular series of events within and outside the Jewish community; LBCinema film screenings with discussion; Interfaith functions; weekly study group; regular topical panel discussions; Israeli dancing; walking group; Israel awareness group; Chavurah lunches with congregational and external guest speakers and fine wine and music speakers; quarterly Art exhibitions; Jewish Meditation Group; LBC Women's Group; Exercise for Young at Heart; Singing Group.

Occasional or annual events: Fundraising events; Yom Ha'atzmaut restaurant nights; book launch; concerts; annual Leo Baeck lecture; participation in annual Kew festival; outreach programs for unaffiliated Jews in our area and beyond; annual service at the historic Ballarat synagogue in country Victoria attended by LBC members and local Jews; development of Erev Shabbat Chavurah in Geelong.

Successes: Integration of Netzer into Sunday school club; establishment of Jewish Counseling service for the aged at LBC (via Jewish Care); Ten Pound Pom Cabaret night; Israel Awareness Group growth; Outstanding lectures by high profile overseas visitors including Professor Paul Liptz, Anat Hoffman, and Professor Gareth Evans (with Australian Jewish Democratic Society);.

Plans: Minor improvements to buildings, facilities and grounds; completion of library cataloguing and making assets available for on-line search and booking; feasibility plan for renovating and extending building facilities.

Temple Beth Israel (TBI) – Sam Sharman, President

It has been another incredibly busy and fulfilling year at Temple Beth Israel.

This year we welcomed Rabbi Kim Ettlinger as Associate Rabbi. Kim has brought her warmth, knowledge and an ability to reach out to all ages and walks of life.

She has worked closely with committees, children and their families, and literally “took over the shul” whilst Rabbi Morgan was on 11 weeks’ leave.



Robyn Felman joined us in February as our new General Manager and literally hit the ground running as the previous incumbent Art Feinman left us in December 2010. Robyn has done a remarkable job and now has a very cohesive team around her. Jenny Schulman joined us later in the year as our new full time receptionist.

A major event for us all was the launch of the new siddur Mishkan T’filah, which has been very well received at TBI, even if it is a little weighty for some.

Our annual breakfast with guest speaker Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP and our hostess luncheon with speaker Mr Tom Elliot, Managing director of MM&E Capital Limited, were both highlights of the year.

Our Board of Governance has taken “on board” the recommendations that came out of the members’ survey done last year, and set up Steering Groups to address the major issues raised, and continue to work tirelessly.

Our volunteers continue to be an integral part of our community, and it is difficult to imagine where we would be without them. From the Kol Yisrael packers to the Shamashim and the caring community, they epitomize the very essence of what it means to belong to a kehilla kedosha.

Under the leadership of Dr Howard Freeman, the cataloguing of our history for the last 80 years is now “a work in progress”, which will see in the foreseeable future a substantial portion of our documents being stored with the Latrobe Collection at the State library of Victoria.

So now there is a whole new year ahead of us. There will always be challenges. That is called Life.

Temple David – Jeremy Culshaw, President

It has been a privilege to serve at the President of Temple David for the past year, from February 2011. The 2010/2011 constitutional year has had both challenges and highlights for the congregation.



After much reflection and consideration, the Board took the decision to end the employment of Rabbi Sheryl Nosan-Blank, approximately halfway through Rabbi Sheryl's contract. The decision was not an easy one and was undertaken with considerable sadness; having said this, the decision by the Board was unanimous and one taken with the best interests of the congregation as the primary focus. Following the decision to end the employment of Rabbi Sheryl in June 2011, the Rabbi launched legal action against Temple David, which has now been resolved in the last week. Temple David had some years previously taken out employment insurance in relation to this type of legal action and as such there was no cost to Temple David arising from this legal action, other than the appropriate payment to Rabbi Sheryl in accordance with its contractual obligations.

I accept the decision to finalise Rabbi Sheryl's employment was not well received by some members of the congregation and I am obviously both empathetic and respectful of their views in this regard. As I stated in my recent missive to the congregation, a relationship breakdown has causal factors on both sides. We also as a Board and "manager" of Temple David need to address and contemplate why this breakdown occurred and how we can prevent it occurring in the future. It is complex and there is no easy solution. We are not the first organisation to be faced with these sorts of challenges and I firmly believe as we head into our 60th year we are strong enough to face and deal with these issues. I believe there needs to be a change in the culture of management, communication and congregational contact at Temple David. We need to be able to "call it at face value" – to be straight with each other and be confident that others are robust enough to respect our view and engage in positive debate about issues that affect the Shul.

As a Board we do need to share information at a much more specific level with the congregation and be prepared to do so. I have observed that there has been a tendency to at times unintentionally run matters on a "need to know" basis.

The fact is, many members of Temple David are probably not aware of what the Board does on a weekly basis; much of it is mundane, but I for one find each Board meeting challenging and interesting. The Board is not a secret organisation – it must at all times be fully accountable to the congregation. However, there are times that the Board is there to "manage" in accordance with its responsibilities pursuant to the Constitution. There is nothing in the Constitution to prohibit a member of the congregation attending a Board Meeting on the basis that they attend only as an observer and, presuming that I continue in my role as President and Chair, I believe that it is appropriate to designate some Board meetings as "open" to members to attend and observe the business of running a Progressive Shul (subject to required privacy and confidentiality issues being respected).

As in any year, challenges and difficulties are balanced by highlights and Temple David has during the past year enjoyed its fair share of these. We have seen an amazing number of B'nei Mitzvah in the past year – 9 in all, and I would like to acknowledge Helen Bryant for "stepping into the breach" and preparing the kids for this very important day from July 2011 and onwards (as well as her assistance and involvement prior to Rabbi Sheryl's employment coming to an end).

The 60th anniversary celebrations are underway under the stewardship of Ray Findley

The adult education program continues to thrive under Maree Findley and Helen Bryant.

Our Religion School is as strong as ever and I acknowledge Joanie Romick and Helen Bryant for their continuing efforts.

We have managed to maintain the status quo in membership numbers from our previous year (no mean feat, given our ageing congregation). Thanks to Alan Lee and his membership committee.

The year saw a very successful communal seder and well-attended new event, being the Rosh Hashanah lunch. We also had variously well attended Onegim throughout the year. I thank and acknowledge our head of catering, Arlette Culshaw, and her band of volunteers.

Hadashot has continued to represent our excellent (and regular) medium for communication for Temple David and I acknowledge and thank Kathryn Teale for her efforts as Editor in this regard.

With the difficulties that ensued during the year, it is important for the congregation to recognise that we remained at all times a fully functioning and operational Progressive Shul, which continued to offer all of the required life-cycle events that fall within the Progressive Jewish calendar. Regardless of whether or not we have a Rabbi, this still needs to occur as it always has.

In this respect, as President I acknowledge and thank (in no particular order):

1. Our office administrator Leona and caretaker Jeff, who operate under the supervision of the chair of our admin committee Maree Findley. Both Jeff and Leona certainly make my life as a volunteer so much easier;
2. All of the lay leaders and Torah readers, who continued to conduct services and be responsible for the Ritual aspects of Temple David, both during Rabbi Sheryl's employment and thereafter. Ritual matters fall within the responsibility of our Ritual Committee, whose Chair is Helen Bryant;
3. Our TD choir, led by Ken Arkwright;
4. Barbara Goldstein and Darryl Todd, for their work on the Building and Maintenance committee in ensuring that the premises (given their current condition) are maintained as to an optimal standard as possible;
5. Our treasurer, Robert Ellis and his finance committee, for their work in relation to the maintenance and management of the financial aspect of Temple David;
6. The ever-growing and popular Kol Hakavod Choir managed by Nadine Perlen, who in this year sang their first "gigs" at various services, both with and without our established choir;
7. Our Hon. Solicitor David Woolfe and the chosen executive members, who were responsible for micromanaging the Rabbi Sheryl disagreement;
8. The 2010/2011 Board;
9. Our congregants from whom I feel I have derived support over the last year;
10. All members who made donations to Temple David both openly and anonymously;
11. Anyone else I have unintentionally forgotten to mention.

I confirm that it is my intention to undertake one further year as President (subject to the usual democratic processes of Temple David). The following represents the major issues that I believe need to be addressed. I have not included the 60th anniversary celebrations as these are being overseen by others.

Our social hall renovation is long overdue and but for various events that occurred in this year, together with the aftermath from those events, this project would have been more progressed. As President, I have

accepted personal responsibility for the ensuring that this project is completed (subject to the views and direction of the new Board). I confirm the following as an update:

1. As with any major capital works project, there are two major elements: planning and completing the project and the financing of the same;
2. Insofar as the first element is concerned, I have been working with a Building and Interior Design company Insite to finalise the preliminary plans and costings. This continues to be a work-in-progress;
3. At the same time, the Board has provided approval to retain Adam Levin of Jackson MacDonald Lawyers to establish a tax-deductible building fund to incentivise donations to the project. We are currently looking at a number of options in this regard;
4. No congregant should be under any illusion that this is going to be a cheap exercise. However, having said that, my dream is to convert the current social hall into a multi-purpose Progressive Jewish Community Centre that will encourage and bring both current and new members, as well as having the potential to earn income as a hire venue;
5. I am anticipating that the financing of the project will involve a mixture of the use of current retained income, external borrowings, borrowings for the Permanent Trust and the balance as represented by donations to a tax-deductible trust.
6. Having said all of this, my “dream” will require firstly Board approval and then approval at a Special General Meeting, given that pursuant to the Constitution the Board is required to return to the membership for a General meeting to seek approval for external borrowings.

Now that the disagreement with Rabbi Sheryl has been resolved, we are now in a position to recommence the search for Rabbinic candidates for Temple David. This has not been possible until all outstanding matters had been resolved with Rabbi Sheryl, as the Moetzah has a policy of not dealing with a congregation when they are in dispute with one of their members. Assuming that I continue as President, and subject to the views and direction of the new Board, I will seek to convene a Rabbinic Search Committee to commence the search process.

Beth Shalom – Rob Bernstein, President

The past year has been difficult in a number of ways: the economy is doing poorly

following the banking meltdown, the dreadful earthquake in Christchurch and the quake, tsunami and radiation events in Japan – from failure to disaster to cataclysm. While these seem remote, they affect us deeply as a community and personally – a lot of our community is in trouble.



In contrast with these, our community has had an amazingly successful year:

- The Pesach Seder and Tu bShevat seder have become embedded in our custom;
- Ma'ariv dinners have become a treasured activity for those who attend and give;
- Cantor Esformes visit added great richness to our knowledge of Jewish style of ritual;
- The Biblical garden was completed and is already being enjoyed, with the best yet to come;
- The Shabbaton was a high point of the year at spiritual, intellectual and communal levels;
- Pot luck dinners have developed a life of their own, with a speaker or activity being the norm;
- The Bequest program was launched with enthusiasm, which should pay dividends over the next years;
- Introduction of the Chai curriculum at Hebrew School has given a clever structure to our unqualified teachers;
- Bar and Bat Mitzvahs remained exceptionally successful and worthwhile;
- The conversions have been very successful, with participants acclaiming the process;
- Web site use has risen to 22,000 page views in the past year. This huge usage indicates the preferences of the community;
- Mishkan T'filah was launched, and the value of this has been immense and is still unfolding;
- The new shlichim were gladly received, and they have already contributed significantly to the community at large and the Hebrew School;
- Tikkun Olam work is a core value and activity of our community. David Kranz gave a report-back on their activities over the year with Habitat for Life, and the committee's intentions to create work parties from Beth Shalom over the next few years. Sponsors have already been found, but the needs of the Christchurch community is not yet clear;
- Teruah has undergone significant modernisation and change which has been gladly received, and is still being improved;
- A new administration system has been installed and is being implemented with effect from 1 January 2011. This will take at least 12 months to properly implement and debug;
- Refurbishment designs of sanctuary were completed, together with 3 feedback sessions with the community. The community feedback has been strong and clear, and has been incorporated into the designs and proposal. The Board has been very mindful that it does not overspend or deplete hard-earned reserves, at the same time provide a modern and pleasant spiritual home to our community;
- Membership increase has been steady, with much opportunity for our community to grow.

In particular, we are unusually effective in the following areas:

- How we have deal with sad events with compassion, support and real caring;
- Bar/t Mitzvahs and adult bar mitzvahs remain the focus of much communal activity and enthusiasm, and this small ordeal for each candidate forms the basis of their connection with Judaism;
- General friendliness and giving.

We have a very effective and functioning community. In particular during the last quarter, we have:

- Started the process to establish work teams over the next few years to help in the rebuilding of Christchurch;
- Membership has been steadily increasing;
- Udi Dvorkin has played a vital role in energising the Hebrew School, supporting teachers programs and individual teachers. His role will increase when our Rabbi leaves;
- Rabbi Dean Shapiro left our community during the period under review. We are starting on a new strategy on defining the real rabbinic needs of our community, with a view to searching for a rabbi which we can afford on an on-going basis. This might take the form of a part-time semi-retired Rabbi.

Temple Sinai – Jeremy Smith, President

Approximately 270 adult members

Congregational committees: Education and Beit Midrash, Social action, Ritual, Membership, Conversion, Keshet (community support)

Programmes: Religion School (Beit Midrash), Adult Education, Conversion, B'nei Mitzvah, Seniors, Post-Bnei Mitzvah group, and a young professionals group 21-35ish



Highlights of the year:

- The major highlight of 2011 has been the appointment and subsequent arrival of our new rabbi, Rabbi Adi Cohen and his family (wife Gila, sons Shaked, Yoav and Tomer) in May. A number of strong applications were received, and after a lengthy and rigorous process (including the final two candidates spending time in Wellington to meet with the congregation) Rabbi Adi was selected and commenced his role in May 2011.
- The Board's strategic plan for the next 5 years focuses on four key areas: spiritual leadership, Youth engagement, Community involvement, and education (at all levels), under the byline 'happy active members'. We believe Rabbi Adi has the skills, experience, knowledge and personal appeal to be able to drive these key areas successfully, and he has already begun a number of new initiatives targeting these different areas and the different groups within the current Temple membership and beyond.
- In addition, the Board endorsed the continued paid positions (part-time) of Youth Leader (Kfir Koral) and Mashpiah (JoEllen Duckor). Both of these positions are reviewed regularly in terms of both achievements and the ability of our budget to sustain them. Both JoEllen and Kfir have made a huge contribution to the engagement of our young people and their commitment to being part of our wider Temple family.
- Beit Midrash has enjoyed a very good year, with around 20 children attending regularly.
- Six Bnei Mitzvah have either completed or are currently completing their learning.
- Ten new members welcomed to our congregation over the year.
- We welcomed Cantor Robert Esformes and Israeli poet Tsippy Levine Byron, and are excited about the imminent visits of Rabbi Dr Peter Knobel and music leader Judy Campbell.
- We have continued to work in partnership with Wellington's Downtown Community Ministry providing support and assistance to marginalised people living in the central city area.
- We have provided some financial support to Habonim for their winter and forthcoming summer camps, and offered the use of Temple Sinai's facilities for the Wellington ken's regular meetings.
- The Board of Temple Sinai and the Board of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox) have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis and to share ideas for where we can jointly progress a vibrant and continuing Jewish life in Wellington. Two such successful meetings have already been held.
- Temple Sinai has a growing presence at Limmud NZ, which has run in Auckland for the last 2 years, and we will continue to encourage more of our members to attend. This is also an excellent opportunity for members of the Wellington and Auckland Progressive congregations to see more of each other.
- We have made good progress on the concept of a 'cyber-shul', allowing country members and those not able to attend services and other events at the Temple to be involved more closely. Currently a group of country members get together for weekly Torah study through Skype, and a mid-week morning service is also up and running.
- New opportunities to learn with Rabbi Adi and to discuss important topics through regular lunchtime and early evening meetings at a downtown venue

Plans for the coming year include:

- Continue to develop our strategic plan and focus on a few selected, high-level activities for the short, medium and long term
- Launch a new more interactive website as a primary form of communication with members and potential members.
- Continue to develop the cyber-shul opportunities for learning and mutual support.
- Strengthen our adult education programme and take advantage of visiting Israeli and other Jewish skills and knowledge.
- Continue to build a robust and engaging curriculum for Beit Midrash students and encourage wider parent involvement.
- Support our programme for post-Bnei Mitzvah youth to ensure they remain committed to Temple Sinai and a Progressive Jewish life
- Continue to work with the Wellington Hebrew Congregation on joint activities
- Develop initiatives for fundraising that bring in the amounts of money we will need to fund the salaried staff we want to have for the future
- Increase numbers of lay leaders, chazzanim and adult education tutors to prevent 'burnout' of our committed staff and volunteers.

The United Jewish Community of Hong Kong – Bob Cooper, President

The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong (UJC) has had another active and productive 12 months. Shorashim, the congregation's religious school, completed its tenth year. The UJC Sanctuary and other parts of the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) were the main venue for the Shabbat services, many festival celebrations, educational programs, including Shorashim, and administrative functions, while outside venues were used to accommodate major holiday events. Numerous life cycle and other celebrations were held, including B'nai Mitzvah, Brit Milah, conversions and naming ceremonies.



Rabbi Stanton Zamek; Education Director Rabbi Martha Bergadine; and Cantorial Soloist and Programming Assistant, Diego Edelberg provided spiritual leadership and developed or expanded programs for the congregation, JCC and the Hong Kong community.

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 13, 2011, elected the following UJC members to the Executive Committee: Cheryl Blanco, Clayton Carol, Bob Cooper, Andrew Gordon, Daniel Kirwin, Jonathan Kriegel, Adam Nelson, Ria Nova, Sharon Ser, Stuart Spencer, Barbara Thomas, Andrea Viders, Kenny Weinstein, David Weisner and David Zeiden. Robert Green, as Founding Chairman, Robert Meyer, Mark Michelson and Charles Monat are Honorary Members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee chose the following officers: Bob Cooper (president), David Zeiden (vice president), Andrew Gordon (treasurer) and Daniel Kirwin (secretary). Nancy Lui, Executive Administrator and Charlene Hsia, Assistant Administrator, continued to make outstanding contributions to the operations and spirit of the UJC.

Membership figures (in units) as of September 30, 2011, were as follows:

Type	Number	Annual Dues
Family	100	HK\$10,750
Individual	26	\$6,600
Individual "Under 30"	2	\$4,000
Non-Resident	12	\$2,400
Associate	1	\$6,600
Life	3	-
Total Members	144	249 adults; 234 children

The majority of members have come from Reform or Liberal congregations in North America and Commonwealth countries, although many have also been affiliated with Conservative synagogues. The UJC is thoroughly international, including members from the Israel, Britain, France, Spain, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and China. A growing number of UJC members are originally from Hong Kong or other parts of Asia. Although some congregants have lived in Hong Kong for decades, the majority are in Hong Kong for specified periods of about five years. The membership is comprised mostly of executives, professionals or entrepreneurs, journalists and academics, and includes many families with school-age children, as well as many young professionals.

A special Shabbat service to welcome new members was held on May 27. It was followed by dinner at the JCC. The UJC holds a weekly Friday night Shabbat service in its permanent Sanctuary. Family Shabbat services are conducted approximately once per month, including songs, stories and prayers designed to appeal to the entire family as well as honouring celebrants of birthdays. Family Shabbat services are preceded by a Shabbat dinner geared to the needs of families with young children. Unless a B'nai Mitzvah or festival service is scheduled in the Sanctuary for Saturday mornings, Torah Study sessions are held in the Rabbi's apartment in Robinson Place.

The following is a summary of the Shabbat programs offered during the year:

- Shabbat Evening Services are held every Friday, 7:00pm in the UJC Sanctuary -- followed by Shabbat dinner at the JCC;
- The Family Shabbat Service is a special way for the whole family to welcome Shabbat, songs, stories and prayer designed to appeal to the entire family, and includes a special blessing for everyone who celebrated a birthday during the month;
- Havdalah Pyjama Party is held about once a month on a Saturday evening, 5:30-6:30pm in the UJC Sanctuary. The program is for our 3-year-old members and their parents. Parents and their children gather for songs, a craft, a story, and a snack, usually focused on an upcoming holiday, and say “goodbye to Shabbat” and “hello to the new week” by making havdalah;
- Torah Study and Parashat Hashavua is held at the Rabbi’s Residence every Saturday, 9:30-11:00am, with bagels, coffee, tea, and study of the Torah portion of the week, drawing on both traditional and contemporary sources;
- Sewing of the Sefer Torah on November 11, 2010;
- UJC 20th Anniversary Torah Project Siyyum: November 14, 2010;
- New Members’ Shabbat Service: May 27, 2011;
- ExCo Installation Ceremony: September 23, 2011;
- When the rabbi and song leaders were away, lay leaders or visiting clergy conducted services;
- Visiting Rabbis, Scholars etc;
- The UJC 20th Anniversary Year of Torah with Torah Scribe Jamie Shear: November 11-14, 2010;
- Michael Partem, The Movement for Quality Government in Israel: November 7, 2010;
- Dr. Nan Sussman: December 7, 2010;
- Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz: December 10, 2010;
- Professor Reuven Firestone: March 2-6, 2011;
- Judy Amit, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee: April 13, 2011;
- Brian Barbour, Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre: April 15, 2011;
- Rabbi Marcelo Polakoff: May 20, 2011;
- Marlene Myerson, URJ Education Consultant: September 5-11, 2011;
- Rabbi Joel and Rachelle Oseran: October 12-16, 2011;

The UJC again organized an active and diversified schedule of holiday and festival events during the past year. Rabbi Stanton Zamek, Rabbi Martha Bergadine, Diego Edelberg and numerous UJC volunteers took the lead in planning, coordinating and conducting these celebrations.

Social Activities included:

- Rosh Chodesh Group: Monthly meeting where UJC women and their friends gather to discuss a specific topic or listen to an informational talk;
- Jewish Beer Drinking Association: Meets once a month at various watering holes to sample an assortment of amber delights offering fellowship and good cheer, in the best tradition of such groups;
- The Bookers: The UJC book group is for anyone who likes to read and discuss Jewish books;

Rabbi Stanton Zamek taught a variety of classes and courses. They included the following:

- The UJC Academy of Adult Jewish Studies offered weekly classes in the evening (in the UJC Sanctuary) and at lunch time (in a congregant’s business conference room). Classes included Introduction to Judaism, Treasurers of the Bible, and “One Congregation, One Book” Project;
- Bagels & Binah: Discussion with the Rabbi, every Shorashim Sunday;
- Shorashim, under the leadership of Education and Programming Director Rabbi Martha Bergadine continues to provide quality liberal religious and Hebrew language education to primary and middle

school age children and their families. The school is inclusive and egalitarian, reflecting the values of Progressive Judaism and the diversity of the Jewish Community in Hong Kong. Shorashim is for children pre-kindergarten to grade 8 and covers history and social studies, holidays and ceremonies, Hebrew and prayer, ethics and values and Torah. High school students continue to be involved with learning and also serve as madrikhim ("guides" or teachers' aides) for the lower grades. Education is really the cornerstone of the UJC, and the quality of Shorashim emphasizes that commitment. On average, 48 students were enrolled during the year;

Community Service projects included Shorashim students and congregants raising funds for Japan Disaster Relief, St. Baldrick's Cancer Research, Hazon Yeshaya, Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre, World Wildlife Fund-HK, International Rescue Committee, Half the Sky Foundation, Oxfam Japan, and Box of Hope.

During the past year, UJC members celebrated: 5 B'nai Mitzvahs, 11 Brit Milah, 6 Baby Naming, 1 Conversion, 1 Memorial Service. In addition to the above, four children were born to UJC members during the year and more are imminently due.

The UJC continued to publish a bimonthly newsletter, The Shofar. Created by Bob Green, The Shofar is a vital source of information for past and present members as well as other Jewish organizations and communities around the world. The Shofar was supplemented by mailings, faxes and flyers prepared by Charlene Hsia – in conjunction with Rabbi Stanton Zamek. Rabbi Stanton Zamek produces the "Shabbat Shalom" commentary every week.

UJC members and other friends of the congregation make donations to the congregation during High Holidays, in connection with the annual Gala and Tribute Book and in honour of special occasions. The UJC is grateful to the Incorporated Trustees of The Jewish Community of Hong Kong for their generous subvention to our Congregation, including the UJC office premises, the UJC Sanctuary and the apartment for the UJC Rabbi.

The President would like to thank Rabbi Stanton Zamek, Rabbi Martha Bergadine, Diego Edelberg, Nancy Lui, Charlene Hsia, the Executive Committee, event organizing committee members and UJC members who contributed so much time and energy to the Congregation during the past year.

Rodef Shalom – Norman Elijah, President

The following is the Jewish Religious Union programme and order of events from the High Holy Days 2010-2011:

September 2010: Our High Holy Days services were led by Rabbinic student Rachel Safman, who was sponsored by the UPJ and came with her husband Daniel. The Congregation was very appreciative of her sermons;

October 2010: The Simchat Torah celebration included lots of members and their families. The seven circuits were made by men, ladies and children supported by their parents;

December 2010: Chanukah celebration included a talk on "Miracles" followed by a quiz on the Ten Commandments, games and dinner;

December General Body Meeting: Two Trustees resigned due to ill health, and were replaced by Benny Isaac and David Jacob;

January 2011: Visit to Beth El Synagogue at Panvel in the Konkan area (25 miles from Mumbai), where a thanksgiving prayer of Malida was offered (a Bene Israel age-old custom in India) and Eliyahu Hanavi prayers were sung;

March 2011: Picnic to Karjat (45 miles away, near the foothills of the mountains). A busload of members and families enjoyed the day at Pinewood Resort;

April 2011: Our Passover Seder was celebrated by 100 attendees, including senior members invited from Orthodox synagogues.

June 2011: Shavuot celebrations had to be cancelled due to heavy rains and floods.

September 2011: The congregation was very happy to have Rabbi Stanley Davids and his wife with us for the High Holy Days (for the 4th time, sponsored by the WUPJ). Rabbi Judith Edelman Green also joined us.

October 2011: Simchat Torah was celebrated with a huge crowd of our members and families.

United Hebrew Congregation – Naomi Herman, President

The United Hebrew Congregation is the only congregation that serves the Conservative and Reform Jewish population in Singapore. While we used to be a more transient community, today many of our member families are long-time residents of Singapore. UHC started 19 years ago with just a few families and last year we had approximately 120 member units, including singles, couples and families with children.



We have a full schedule of programming throughout the year. Our congregation holds monthly Shabbat services and dinners, adult education talks and holiday celebrations. In addition, we hold events that target certain segments of our congregation such as our empty nesters and young adult groups. We even have monthly Tot Shabbats for kids under five. Although we do not have a permanent building, we have some regular spaces that we are able to use for services and programming. UHC also welcomes Jewish travelers to Singapore to join our community for Shabbat, the High Holidays or Passover.

Most of the year our services are lay led. We also have a Rabbi-in-Residence program that allows us to bring Rabbi Lennard Thal to Singapore twice a year. He comes from New York for six weeks over the High Holidays and three weeks at Passover time to lead services, perform life cycle events and provide counseling and spiritual guidance to our members. During the six weeks that Rabbi Thal was here, we sponsored a myriad of events including two adult education sessions, a learner's minyan, Shabbat services, a Sukkot meal and Simchat Torah celebration. We also had a number of youth events including a Rosh Hashanah arts and crafts and music event and a youth Shabbat. Rabbi Thal also performed three baby namings and a Bat Mitzvah celebration.

Cantor Susan Caro from California also joins our congregation during the High Holidays to help lead services. Cantor Caro has been coming to Singapore for almost 10 years and we are fortunate to have her talent, energy and enthusiasm. Almost 300 people attended our High Holiday services and community meals last year.

This past year has been a year of continued evolution. For the first time, we have hired a paid Executive Director to manage the congregation as a whole. Prior to this year, our congregation was run solely by volunteers. Marah Altenberg, who moved to Singapore in 2010, was happy to take on the new role. Marah had worked for several congregations in the United States and brings with her a wealth of programming and organizational knowledge that we have already benefitted from. During this past year, she added a number of programs, including our first large-scale Chanukah party and Purim party and carnival. Both of these events had more than 100 members in attendance. Besides those programs, we held our annual Passover seders with more than 150 people each night. The first night is a family seder and the second is an adult seder. We also added a children's Passover arts and crafts and music event. In Singapore, we also have a close relationship with the Israeli embassy and we try to partner with them to enrich our events and support the events they hold throughout the year.

The biggest boost to our management process is having an Executive Director to increase both the quality and quantity of our programming and organize administrative functions behind the scenes. We also still rely on our volunteers to make our congregation successful. Our incoming board includes President Naomi Herman, Vice President Stefanie Green, Treasurer Ruth Crossley and Secretary Gary Nelson. Naomi and Stefanie have many ideas to move the congregation forward and are very enthusiastic about the future. We have also hired a part-time youth director and plan to have two youth programs a month that will include social and social action components.

Rabbi Thal has announced that he will be retiring in two years and we have put together a Community Development Committee to come up with a strategic plan for our congregation and provide guidance as we transition to a new Rabbi. After we complete the first stage of our fundraising, we will be set up a search committee for a new part-time or full-time Rabbi. We are planning a 20th celebration and reunion for the fall of 2012. We hope that many of our past members who have left Singapore will return to celebrate with us and stay for High Holiday services. Currently, our congregation does not have an education program. Instead we rely on the Talmud Torah Sunday School run by the Jewish Welfare Board for after school youth education. Increased education and B'nai Mitzvah training for our children will be a large part of our strategic planning. We are also looking at ways to better utilize technology such as our website, Facebook and Paypal.

ACT Jewish Community – Peter Wise, on behalf of the Progressive Subcommittee

This past year has been one of consolidation and growth for the Progressive Congregation.

The Progressive Subcommittee that was formed last year to further develop and enhance services and activities within the Progressive Congregation continue to function well. The Subcommittee comprised the following members: Robert Cussel (co-chair), Gracie Stifelberg (co-chair), Peter Wise (secretary), Rebecca Lehrer (co-coordinator of services), Jerzy Jagiello (conversions), Eric McDonald, Sally McDonald and Nancy Robertson.



The vision we have for the Progressive Congregation involves:

- instilling more *ruach* in our services and the way we worship
- encouraging more people to take ownership of the services and run them in a style that has meaning for them
- introducing a program of children's services
- assisting candidates for conversion.

We continue to contribute to the wider ACT Jewish Community. The ACTJC is a demonstration of how Orthodox and Progressive Congregations can work effectively together to make a dynamic community.

Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins continues to provide assistance in his role of Consulting Rabbi for the purpose of providing assistance regarding *halachah* and conversions, with Rabbi Alison Conyer serving as our visiting Consulting Rabbi. Unfortunately, due to family commitments, Rabbi Conyer has not been able to visit us this year. We hope to be able to organise further rabbinic visits in the coming year.

The UPJ Biennial Conference was held at the National Jewish Centre in November. The feedback received from participants was overwhelmingly positive. A Committee comprising Robert Cussel, Gracie Stifelberg, Peter Wise and Bill Arnold was formed to liaise with the UPJ regarding the running of the Conference. However, this was very much an effort of both Progressive and Orthodox sections of the ACT Jewish Community, and demonstrated how a small and very diverse Community can work together to successfully stage a major event.

In February, Peter Wise and Rebecca Lehrer ran a workshop for current and prospective service leaders in the Progressive Congregation. Subjects covered included the history and purpose of prayer and the basic structure of a Shabbat service. Several tunes to well-known parts of the service were taught. It is hoped to offer further training for service leaders in the coming year. Unfortunately, due to technical issues, we were unable to take up an invitation to participate (remotely) in a service leaders' workshop conducted by Rabbi Paul Jacobson and the Brisbane Progressive Jewish Congregation in September. Peter Wise will be attending the UPJ Regional Music Network weekend in Sydney this month.

Jerzy Jagiello continues to provide support for a group of our congregants undergoing, or considering, conversion. A hearty *Mazal Tov* to Jerzy and Eric McDonald for completing their conversions in the past year.

Gerry Jacobson, one of our service leaders, continued to run Jewish meditation sessions at his home on Friday evenings for all who wished to attend. During Sukkot, Gerry ran a well-attended Jewish meditation session in the Sukkah.

A baby naming was held in November for Hannah Dahlia Zuckerman, the second child for Michael and Susannah Zuckerman. The Bar Mitzvah of John Licinio, the son of Professor Julio Licinio, was held in December.

A highly successful Pot Luck Dinner was held in May. It is hoped to conduct further such events in the coming year.

This year, Rebecca Lehrer once again co-ordinated the Progressive High Holyday services, with the assistance of many members of the Congregation. Her warm and engaging manner ensured that all participants felt included.

The ACT Jewish Community held a Gala Dinner on October 31 to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Community and the 40th Anniversary of the opening of the National Jewish Centre in Canberra. This was also a celebration of our diverse yet unified Community. The auditorium was filled to capacity for this joyous event. We were delighted that Barbara Ford and her partner Charles, representing the UPJ, were able to join us for the occasion, as was Rabbi John Levi. In conjunction with the Dinner, a Panel Discussion was held the previous day entitled "How does history inform the future for Australian and Canberran Jews?" Rabbi John Levi and Professor Suzanne Rutland spoke entertainingly and provoked a lively discussion.

Thanks go to all the members of the Progressive Subcommittee for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

ARZA – Barbara Ford, President

ARZA has had a very busy year. In May there was a UPJ gathering at the Gold Coast, at which our guest speaker was Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Executive Director of the IMPJ.

After the conference, Rabbi Kariv spoke in Sydney and Melbourne congregations.

If you missed his talk we have a DVD and we are happy to send it to you.



In June 2011, ARZA sponsored Alice Moldovan to attend a seminar in Israel, together with representatives from nine countries. These young adults got to know each other and experience Israel together. They discovered that they shared many things in common and were able to assist each other in finding ways to get together and stay connected. ARZENU, the parent of ARZA, had its annual meeting following the Young Adult seminar. It gave all the country delegates the opportunity to hear firsthand from the Young Adults

This was followed by the Annual General Meeting attended by ARZA representatives from Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, Brazil, Denmark, USA, Australia, South Africa, Switzerland, and Argentina. France, Poland and Denmark have joined ARZENU. We then attended President Shimon Peres' conference, where 'Tomorrow' was discussed. Some of the topics covered were "Conversion: Who keeps the Gate for the Jewish Nation", "The Israeli- Palestinian Peace Process: How far away are we from a 'Tomorrow' of Peace and Intergenerational Dialogue". Speakers included President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni, Natan Sharansky, Tony Blair (ex-UK Prime Minister), Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Jimmy Wales (co-founder of Wikipedia), David Fischer (Google) and his father Stanley Fischer (Bank of Israel Governor), to name just a few. This conference was followed by meetings of the Zionist General Council, Jewish Agency and Board of Governors.

Ten very enthusiastic ladies got together under Lorraine Larri's guidance to paint three tallitot, which will be taken to the North American Union for Reform Judaism's biennial congress in Washington in December where they will be given to the new President for the World Union for Progressive Judaism. This event was organised by Emanuel Synagogue, UPJ and ARZA. Another class is planned for North Shore Temple Emanuel next year.

ARZA was proud to sponsor the Hebrew Camp at The King David School for Years 7 and 8 students in August.

ARZA helped to sponsor a NSTE Young Adults Weekend for 23 young adults between the ages of 23 and 37, who joined together for Shabbat and a weekend in NSW's Hunter Valley wine region on September 2-4. A wonderful time was had by all and the group is already planning the next retreat!

Anat Hoffman, Executive Director of IRAC dropped in for a very busy few days in Australia on her way home from Limmud Oz in New Zealand. She spoke at synagogues in both Sydney and Melbourne, met for coffee with Young Adults in Sydney and Melbourne, spoke on the Radio and was interviewed by the press. She also updated us, amongst other things, on the Women of the Wall. If you would like to support the Women of the Wall by buying a tallit, please contact us. We were able to record Anat at one of her talks, so if you missed her we are happy to lend you the DVD.

We would love you to join us on a unique trip to Israel and Poland. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Please join us from 15 April-1 May 2012. Details are on the UPJ website.

Emanuel School – David Nathan, President

Enrolments remain strong with over 750 students including our kindergarten and look promising for 2012.

We have developed our go forward strategic plan which we have shared with our parent body.

We have recently completed a Parent Survey and are analysed the same.

Our students continue to shine in multiple domains.

We continue to enhance our learning and teaching.

We are creating new learning experiences for our students including the recent first ever trip to an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory which we hope to find a donor to help enlarge the program in 2013 so some of their students can join us at Emanuel just as we visited them.

We continue to benefit from having an Emanuel Synagogue Board member on our Board and from Rabbis Kamins, Ninio and Jacobson playing an active role in school life.

We are enthused about the year ahead.



Netzer – Lisa Gelbart, Outgoing Federal Merakezet

It has been an exciting few months for Netzer, and I am pleased to be able to share these events with the UPJ executive.



At the end of September, Netzer held our second and final chinuch (education) seminar for the year. The theme of the seminar was cleverly named “The Middle East is revolting” and contained many interesting programs about the Arab spring, about the domestic protests in Israel and about our own relationship to the idea of “revolution”. I’d like to thank Steve Denenberg and Barbara Ford for both taking the time to give presentations on the seminar, as well as thanking Rabbi Kamins, Rabbi Ninio and Rabbi Robuck for participating in a rabbis’ panel and answering challenging questions on the relationship between Judaism and Israel.

At the seminar, we also held our Federal Moetzet, where we elected the Federal mazkirut (board) for the forthcoming year. It is my pleasure to officially announce these new position holders:

Federal Merakezet (coordinator): Alice Chipkin

Shnat Rakezet: Isabella Williams

Rosh Chinuch (education): Tal Meretz

Gizbar (treasurer): Yoni Bresley

Rosh Yechasei Tzibur (PR): Rik McKenzie

The tafkid of Rosh PR is a new position that we have added to our federal body to help with the promotion of Netzer’s brand federally. We are very excited about the potential for this new federal body, who will officially take over the movement following federal camp in January.

We were also pleased to use the high holy day season to officially launch our Summer Camps – Machane Eifo Effie (Where’s Wally). Dates for camps are as follows:

Federal Camp (yrs 10-12 + going on Shnat): 4th-12th January 2012

Sydney Junior Camp (yrs 3-8): 4th-8th January 2012

Melbourne Junior Camp (yrs 3-9): 17th-22nd January 2012

If anyone would like camp fliers or further information about camps for their communities, please contact me at federal@netzer.org.au.

Finally, we have also had a number of successful events in the state branches over the past few months. Netzer Sydney held a Year 9 retreat from 30 September–2 October, which was well attended and was a good transition for participants to be exposed to Netzer’s senior movement. Netzer Melbourne recently held our annual community Rosh Hashanah dinner. The night included a lovely dinner, Israeli dancing and a stimulating discussion in the lead-up to Yom Kippur. The night was also a very successful fundraiser for Netzer Melbourne. Netzer Perth is looking forward to the return of Mitch Parsons from Shnat and Sam Slade from his gap year. Along with Joseph Fink, these boys will make up a strong team to continue to build Netzer Perth over the next few years. In addition to this, we are looking forward to outreaches to Perth and to the Gold Coast over the next few months.

I am excited to report on such a bright future for our movement. As my time in Netzer comes to an end, I have every confidence that the movement will continue to go from strength to strength.

Progressive Judaism Victoria (PJV) – Philip Bliss, Chair

Progressive Judaism Victoria Inc took over from the old VUPJ at the AGM last November. Since then, PJV has a new constitution, a new executive, a new office and a whole new raison d'être. Much of the re-structuring was carried out by Sharene Hambur and Ian Samuel. PJV is now made up of independent executive members from the Victorian Progressive membership. Its new office is to be found in the Centre for Living Judaism, based at the Magid Institute campus of The King David School.

The King David School has been our perfect communal partner and we could not have asked for more in their generosity and support. Much of this happy situation is due to Michael Lawrence and Principal Michele Bernshaw, and we thank them.



The main task for the new PJV is to promote and grow Progressive Judaism in Victoria and to be the direct voice to the community, government, other Jewish organisations and NGOs.

The new education committee began this year, chaired by Julie Contole, with a revamping of the Introduction to Judaism course, which now has an online course to help Jews in remote areas to learn. Further re-development of the course will begin next year. Julie has also been a first-class secretary. I have valued her very practical opinions.

We have embarked on a whole new advertising and marketing strategy. We have strongly supported the new initiative of Rabbi Gersh Lazarow in developing the exciting Centre for Living Judaism, which is developing programming for all our congregations and affiliates and bringing young Progressive fellows from the USA and Israel. It has been delightful to see our first fellow, Marshall Voit, from the Reform movement in the USA, provide music support for each congregation over the festive season.

PJV has had a most successful Israel-awareness campaign, headed by Pamela Clements. We were able to have very well-attended meetings supported by all our congregations, with such luminaries as Professor Paul Liptz, Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Professor Naomi Chazan and Anat Hoffman. Some of these speakers have been brought to Melbourne by the UPJ, the New Israel Fund and the UIA Progressive Trust.

PJV is about to embark on an educational program, headed by new executive member Jonathan Barnett that will help draw in and support gay and lesbian Jews around Victoria. The program for teaching the teachers, rabbis, youth leaders and others who have influence on young gay, lesbian and transsexuals will be spearheaded by PJV, but we have a broad spectrum of the Jewish community and individuals involved in the organising committee. We hope to provide the program in the middle of next year and, if successful, repeat and grow the course each year. Again PJV will be seeking other community organisations to help promote and fund this very important initiative.

With the help of Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black, PJV organised to renovate the old mikvah at the City Baths so that now Progressive converts and other Jews do not need to use the sea for religious ritual. A number of our new converts have already used the mikvah facility.

We have a new young adults committee, headed by Danya Sterling and supported by Rabbi Kim Ettlinger and Tal Spinrad. Rabbi Fred Morgan is to head a new PJV Inter-Faith and Inter-Cultural committee to reach out to other communities in Victoria. We also have just engaged Romy Zyngier as our new Tamar leader for the next six months in cooperation with the ZFA and WZO and coordinated by UPJ.

PJV is in the process of developing a much more structured base to our outreach program to communities in Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong. Rabbi Keren-Black has been supporting the growing group in Geelong

and over the next year, we hope to see this support group grow and provide substantial support and encouragement to those groups outside of Melbourne.

We are also beginning discussions with some Progressive students on how PJV can support their activities on campus. We are excited by this opportunity to provide some Progressive religious support to this group and hope our activities will increase over next year.

We have successfully negotiated a new replacement for Dana Bar Zuri, our retiring Netzer Shlichah, who will start in November. Dana and Sophie Einfeld have helped to support Netzer and keep the fire burning brightly for our Zionist youth group. We are delighted that Lior Argaman, who has been part of Netzer Olami in Jerusalem, will be here with her family by the time of our AGM at the end of November.

We have also revamped our Jewish funeral home, Bet Olam, with a new board of directors chaired by Paddy Keith, who are also tasked with its promotion and development. Bet Olam has provided caring support for the bereaved over the past 16 years and much of this credit must go to the Bet Olam executive director Rhonda Nirens. Funerals have been enriched with the addition of Cantor Michel Laloum. Michel has also begun providing congregational services at Etz Chayim.

I would like to thank Alan Samuel in particular, who has been such a supportive treasurer with a wide breadth of communal knowledge. His attention to detail has allowed our financial base to be efficient and accurate. This has made planning much easier. Alan has provided much insight into some of the other committees as well.

It has also been a pleasure working with Ellen Frajman, who has been efficient and pro-active in all her “program co-ordinating” and other administrative duties. She has been wonderfully creative and works really well with the executive.

Altogether a really busy year and we shall see development on a number of fronts next year that should see a much higher profile for the Progressive movement in Victoria.

The King David School – Michael Lawrence, President

The year has been one of consolidation with limited growth, with a strong and clear focus on The King David School's identity and positioning in the wider community. The School and the School community has a great deal to be proud of across the School academic programs, and co-curricular offerings, and extra-curricular activities have been expanded. With the introduction of sporting coaches, students compete in a wide range of sports, including skiing and cross-country running.



Opportunity
to Excel

THE KING DAVID SCHOOL 

Council is proud of the development of the Rebecca Magid Centre, which now offers students state-of-the-art facilities, as well as a multi-purpose hall for all school assemblies and the like. It is unfortunate that the issues mentioned in my previous report with VCAT remain on-going.

Educational initiatives across the campuses included the following programs and activities:

Magid Institute:

- VSSEC CanSat Science program in conjunction with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (USA). King David students will be attending the competition in France in 2011;
- Australian Brain Bee Competition along with work experience in the neurology labs at Melbourne University and the Howard Florey Institute;
- Vintage Program – Investigating the Chemistry in viticulture;
- KDS Students participated in the VCAA Plain English Public Speaking Competition, as well as the Rostrum Public Speaking Competition.

Magid Campus:

- The revamped Kadimah program, including photography, circus skills, and leadership for Years 3-4, has now been extended to Years 3-5;
- Philosophy for Children now has 4 qualified staff members teaching Years 3-8;
- Professional coaches and qualified PE staff have raised the profile of sport in the school with early-morning training sessions four mornings per week and after school training three times per week.

Southwick:

- A new process has commenced in creating a new vision for our kindergartens, which includes the restructuring of the leadership, the philosophical approach and the refurbishment of the rooms;
- The Parent and Child Education (P.A.C.E) program was introduced from Prep to Year 8. The program is focused on creating opportunities for parents and their children to share in Jewish learning and to create memorable moments of Jewish living.

Alma Road:

- The Pre-school Centre participates in the National Quality Assessment Program and last year received the highest level of accreditation according to national standards;
- There is a focus on cross-campus programs between Alma Road and Kooyong Road Kindergartens in order to ensure a smooth transition between the two campuses;
- Implementation of the new National Early Years Framework and Victorian Framework has commenced;
- All employees have formal qualifications in early childhood education, ahead of new government requirements to have assistants trained from Jan 2012.

The King David School VCE results ranked an equal 8th in the State. Our Dux, Bryan Ladowsky, achieved an ATAR of 99.95, closely followed by School Captain Jordana Broons and Alix Friedman, with equal ATARs of 99.9. Bryan has also attained five Study Scores of over 46 this year – testament to his passion and commitment.

- 8.8% of students recorded an ATAR of 99 or above, placing them in the top 1% of the State;
- 25% achieved an ATAR of 95 or above, placing them in the top 5% of the State;
- 39% achieved an ATAR of 90 or above, placing them in the top 10% of the State;
- 4 perfect study scores were achieved in English and Business Management. 26% of all Study Scores were 40 or above.

These results place the school firmly amongst the top performing schools in the State.

The King David School worked closely with Sholem Aleichem College in assisting them to gain registration from VCAA as a single subject VCE provider in Yiddish. Principal Helen Greenberg has already submitted an article to the AJN to thank The King David School for enrolling the adult Yiddish students who would not otherwise have been able to undertake VCE.

The Daycare continues to be very popular, with waiting lists at all levels.

In 2010 a review of the Scholarship Program was undertaken, with additional scholarships being offered in performing arts, visual arts and language.

A review of student retention was conducted in 2010 by the Registrar and senior management of the school. In addition to curriculum initiatives, new transition programs were created to ease the transition of students from one campus to another, through a series of visits and shared activities.

In order to increase retention from Kindergarten to Primary, the school will adhere to its enrolment policy whereby if an older child is withdrawn from the school, then parents may forfeit the enrolment of younger siblings into Kindergarten and Preschool.

Intakes at Years 7 and 9 are on the rise again and forecasts for the future are promising.

With the building of the Rebecca Magid Centre now behind us, Council will turn its attention to upgrading the facilities at the Southwick Campus in Kooyong Road, and sections of the Magid Campus in Orrong Road.

The Southwick Campus imbues warmth to many parents and students both present and past, but Council recognises the need to provide further enhanced facilities. This work will be looked at by the Site sub-committee in the near future.

The King David School Foundation worked tirelessly over the past year to raise the funds to build the Rebecca Magid Centre, whilst also raising funds for our scholarship programs. I would like to thank every one of our very generous donors and their families. I would also like to thank the team that phoned, called on our donor's homes, and made that extra effort to meet the fundraising targets. We have succeeded and look forward to a successful 2011 campaign.

Michele Bernshaw continues to take the school forward with vision and dedication, encouraging all students to achieve their full potential under her leadership. Following the introduction of the Strategic Management Structure, the Heads of Campus (Guy Evans who replaced Debra Howieson on her retirement, Marina Gnatyshina, Russell Kaplan and David Opat) continue to support Michele in the academic and

operational running of each individual Campus, better positioning her to focus on strategies and new initiatives to take The King David School forward. Michele is further supported by the Business Manager, Mike Zammit and the HR Manager, Cathy Kaiserman.

Our teachers continue to inspire our children, encouraging them to explore and question the world around them while developing lifelong learning skills that will take them through their education, to university and beyond.

The school is very fortunate to have loyal and dedicated educational and administrative teams.

The current members of Council are: Mark Harrison (Chair); Sandy Abrahams (Vice President); Lionel Appelboom (Secretary); Phyllis Dorey; Jeffrey Goldberg (Treasurer); David Kobritz (Site); Jim Cyngler (Immediate Past President); Rabbi John Levi (PJV Rabbi); Michael Lawrence (President).

This dedicated team of people, who give so generously of their time and expertise, contribute greatly to the success of our school from behind the scenes. I would like to thank all members of the School Council for their work, commitment and dedication.

The past year has seen the implementation and ongoing work of many committees. The work of these committees is invaluable for the guidance and detail required in specialist areas for current and future activities. We have many talented people, both within and outside our school community, who devote their skills and time to assist the school. In areas such as building, marketing, education, finance, foundation, governance/structuring, school awards, human resources, Jewish life, liaison within VUPJ or Melbourne community, our school owes gratitude to the chairperson and their fellow teams for bringing our school the knowledge, leadership and direction needed to perform our many activities

I would also like to thank the energetic KDSPA, who work tirelessly to support the school, its students and their families. Funds raised by the KDSPA go towards special projects that enhance our children's environment.

The involvement and dedication of these people is what makes our school community so special. Thank you – you make an enormous difference to our school.

This last year has seen many changes within our school and its place in our community. The King David School is once again "the" school to educate children in a modern, thinking, Jewish environment. It is recognised as one of the leading Jewish day schools in the world. The school's Progressive Jewish culture and tolerance of all streams of Judaism allows a balanced understanding and education for all students and families.

Based on our academic results and the diverse programs on offer, together with the leadership of Michele Bernshaw, the school can look with confidence towards the years ahead. With the caliber of the professional leadership and volunteers within our school community, the opportunities are endless.

The Council and management will continue to manage and implement the strategic plans, whilst allowing for the widest choices and learning experiences.

I look forward to sharing with The King David School community the responsibilities and further development in the year ahead.

UPJ Awards: The 2011 awards will be announced at the UPJ AGM on November 28.

Ner Tamid Award: Since the Biennial Conference of the Australian-New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism held in Melbourne in November 1990, we have honoured the “Unsung Heroes” – members of congregations and affiliate organisations who perform exceptional service for our congregations, for the community, both Progressive and Jewish, and within the wider community. Previous recipients:

Fred Albert	Rhondda Hall
Libby Appelboom	Noel Hall
Judith Arkwright	Fred Hirsch
Stan Benjamin	Albert Isaacs
Alberta Bentata	Elijah Jacob
Heinz Bohm	Ted Lewis
Garry and Nola Braude	Jan Marriott
Eric Briskman	Valerie Minn
Nicole Brown	Charles Monat
Margaret Capkin	Betty Mortimer
Zvi Civins	Fred Mote
Marlis Cohen	Dorothy (Dot) Nathan
Arnold Cohn	Eva Phillips
Rachel Dennyss	Amelie Rauner
Anthony and Diane Deutsch	Ian Samuel
David and Sue Esterman	Chris Schiller
Norma Survana Esther	Nat Sharpe
Mick Fettmann	Fred Silberstein
Bev Gelbart	Harry Smith
Sydney Goldstein	Joe Stupel
Liz Goodman	Geoff Sussman
Sidney Grant	Michael Taft
Brian and Jenny Green	Joan Taylor
	Dorothy Tropp-Boas

Vatik Award: This award honours past presidents of congregations and affiliate organisations who have continued to give outstanding service and make a valuable contribution to their congregation and the wider community. We recognise these worthy individuals and their continued commitment to the community and furthering the Progressive Jewish outlook in our region. Previous recipients:

Merrilyn Ades	Hans Jensen
Ken Arkwright	Peter Kolliner
Arthur Berman	Stephanie Markson
Philip Bliss	Philip Mayers
Phillip Coleman	Lynette Ninio
Geoffrey Cowen	Eva Popper
Joshua Goldman-Brown	Jonathan Taft
Sam Granek	Ted Waxman
Sharene Hambur	

Atid Award: This Award is presented to students in recognition of outstanding achievements and ongoing commitment to the ideals of Progressive Judaism. Previous recipients: Cara Black, Steven Goldman, Sharon Ladowsky, Ramelle Lewis, Amira Nathan, Jennifer Shkolnik, Jemima Stanwix, Davina Vorchheimer, Dvora Zylberman.