

# *The Shofar*

November/December, 1993



## *Welcome New Members!*

*Ron Beller & Jennifer Moses  
Alison J. Berkley  
Martin & Else Berman  
Alexander Bloom  
Karl & Rita Bongarten  
Jonathan Braude  
Alan Brenner  
Elly Brooks  
Robert & Stephanic Bull  
Karen A. Burgman  
Michael & Mary Kenyon Cooper  
Gordon Crovitz  
Robert & Jamie Davis  
Andrew Dietz  
Lisa Distelheim  
Marc & Mimi Dollinger  
Jillian & Peter Dove  
Jason Felton  
Jonathan Fink  
Maureen Fox  
Ben Frankel & Fiona Connell  
Gary Gaines  
Anthony D. Gerard  
Matthew Ginsburg  
Jennifer Gold  
Carl Goldstein & Liv Hustvedt  
Marni Hardin  
Alan & Jennifer Hershey  
Chuck & Chai Sook Himmel  
Terri Hirschfield*

*Dan Hornak  
Bert & Hertha Horwitz  
Neal Horwitz & Jane Horan  
Keith & Iliran Jacobson  
Karen James  
Ms Lee Kaplan  
Ronald & Rachel Kent  
John & Jody Kuzmik  
Scott Kwiker  
Elise Lanoue  
Adam Laschever  
Lawrence M. Lee  
Franklin & Suzanne Lowenstein  
Barbara Mackenzie  
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Malek  
Steven & Ellen Meltzer  
Viviane Meyer  
Herb Moscowitz  
Clare Ray  
David Reiner  
Vicki Salmon  
Mel & Diana Satok  
Susan Schoenfeld  
Henny Sender  
David Shapiro  
Jason Shaplen  
Carl & Roberta Sheffer  
Vicki Zeitlin  
Gideon Sheps & Natalie Richter  
Yaron & Sharon Yoel*

Apologies to any new member(s) whose name(s) we may have failed to include in the above list. Please let us know so that rectification can be made in the next issue of *The Shofar*.

## from the Rabbi's study . . .

### *We are unique.*

We are different than many congregations one finds in a Jewish community.

We have a sense of family. We have members we are close to, members with whom we get along, members who drive us crazy (not too many). But we need each other. So we care about each other and we know that every last one of us is important. We are not an *institution*. We are *people*.

We have a sense of tenacity. We know how fragile a community is and how important it is to stay alive, stay involved and stay together . . . no matter what. So we do.

We have a sense of involvement. Most research on organizations says that they operate on an average level of involvement of less than five percent of the membership. Is it so rewarding to know how many of us are involved most of the time.

We have a sense of *personal responsibility to The UJC*. When everyone depends on you, you tend to carry through. You might not always want to, but you do what you have to do . . . and you are usually glad that you did.

We have a sense of humor. In a congregation with no building, very limited funds, the first resident rabbi, we have to have something enduring.

We have a sense of *tolerance*. We exist in an area that can be far removed from the centers of Jewish life. Here some of our best friends are not Jewish. And our children's best friends are not Jewish. Here we depend on sharing what we have with the entire Hong Kong community so they can see that we have something worthwhile. At the same time, we also exist in a Jewish community *that knows little or nothing at all about Liberal Judaism*. Our work is to help them understand that Jews have always expressed their Jewish life in many different ways, but we are all Jews!

We have a sense of community. In a very real sense we are a Jewish community. We have a responsibility to carry that message to all . . . Jews and non-Jews . . . who want to listen.

### *We are unique.*

## A prayer for the Jewish community

We Jews always seem to have a difficult time getting along with each other. We all know the joke about the two Jews and the three synagogues. It is frustrating and at times painful to be involved in internecine battles. I wish that disparate members of the community would accept differences. I even dream of a time when we could celebrate our differences. I am confident that in the end sanity will prevail.

I came across the following prayer last year and have appreciated it ever since. I think that this is an appropriate time to share it with you:

When in reverence and in awe we acknowledge that our Holy God is sovereign over all,

Then all that has divided us will merge  
And then compassion will be wedded to power  
And softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind  
And then both men and women will be gentle  
And both women and men will be strong  
And then no person will be subject to another's will  
And all will flourish and be free and varied  
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many  
And all will share equally in the Earth's abundance  
And then all will care for the sick and the weak  
And all will nourish the young and the old  
And then all life's creatures will live in harmony with each other  
and the Earth  
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

## UJC education gets off to excellent start

Many members of The UJC are taking advantage of our large number of opportunities to study together. The *Lunch and Learn* group, for example, has been meeting at the office of Chuck Monat for several weeks and learning a lot of Talmud. The discussions begin sharply at 12:40 P.M. and end promptly at 1:20 P.M. The class meets every Wednesday.

The P.A.C.E. (Parent and Child Education) for November was super. We learned about the symbols of the synagogue, we studied the *mezzuzah*, *kippa* and *tallit*, we discovered the role of colors in our tradition, we talked about the Magan David, and we even thought about 'Jewish good luck charms.' Through arts and crafts we made all kinds of things from *mezzuzot* out of clay to oragami Magan David to Joseph's Coat of Many Colors. This program is most suited for five to 13-year-olds.

*The Shofar* and the *UJC Update* contain details of all our education programs. Please join fellow UJC members in super study experiences.

## Shabbat Can Be

Our Friday night Shabbat services are the best way you can bring your week to a close and take a breath from work. We are able to create a feeling of rest and warmth of community in that hour of prayer.

Join us! Come with family, friends. Bring the children. Shabbat can be a lovely way to mark the end of the week and begin anew, refreshed.

## Sir Sigmund Visits Hong Kong

Sir Sigmund Sternberg, chairman of The International Council of Christians and Jews, and Lady Sternberg were in Hong Kong November 4-7. Sir Sigmund, distinguished member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Governor of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and a leader of several other noteworthy organizations, was here on an official visit concerning Christian-Jewish relations in Hong Kong and religious life in China. It should be added that Sir Sigmund was honored by the Vatican for his work in the field of Christian-Jewish understanding.

A reception for Sir Sigmund and Lady Sternberg was held while they were here. Attending were leaders of the Christian and Jewish communities. I had the privilege of chairing the reception. It is our hope that some day we can launch a chapter of the International Council of Christians and Jews in Hong Kong. Reaching out to one another in the hope for understanding and mutual support only strengthens the role of the synagogue and church in Hong Kong.

After leaving Hong Kong, Sir Sigmund flew to Beijing where he was a guest of the Chinese government. They asked him to spend several days in China discussing religions and religious dialogue.



## New date: December 14 Raise in dues goes on AGM agenda

### Candidate search underway for Committee seats

Members attending the AGM will be asked to approve a proposal to raise annual dues from \$1,000 to \$1,800 (US\$233.00) for individuals and from \$2,000 to \$3,000 (US\$388.00) for families. Individuals 18 to 30-years-old will be offered the option of a special rate of \$1,200. The non-resident membership fee of \$500 will go up to \$800. The increases, if approved, will take effect beginning July 1, 1994. The Committee is exploring the possibility of allowing members to pay by autopay.

Members of the Executive Committee made the proposal at a meeting November 5 in light of increased expenses incurred in engaging a full-time rabbi, renting venues for services and other activities, establishing an administrative and rabbinical office, and hiring staff to deal with the vastly-increased workload.

Even with the increase, the dues will stand as among the lowest in the world for a Jewish congregation, particularly in light of the wide range of activities and services provided by The UJC. One member termed it 'the best deal in Hong Kong.'

The election of Executive Committee members will also be on the agenda. Broadening and deepening the leadership ranks is seen by some as the Congregation's single, most critical need. Vice-chairman Carol Betson was asked to head a nominating sub-committee responsible for identifying candidates for five positions to be vacated on the 15-person committee. Those interested in serving, particularly members with interests or talents in specific areas, should get in touch with Dr. Betson.

The AGM, originally scheduled for December 7, will be held instead at 7:00 P.M. Tuesday, December 14 at The Jewish Club. Light refreshments will be served from 6:30.

### Prominent pianist to perform

Internationally-known pianist Susan Starr, mother of prospective UJC member Lori Amada, will be featured as a soloist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic on December 3 and 4, playing Leonard Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety* and a piece by Orff.

## Campaign continues Fund drive still short of goal

Although contributions to the *Lamed-Vav Tzakkikim* ('Righteous 36') fund drive have reached to within \$40,000 of the target figure of \$667,000, The UJC is still short around \$500,000 in its overall campaign to fund expenses connected with having a full-time rabbi and an expanded program of activities.

As reported earlier, the top 36 donors to the *Lamed-Vav* campaign will be accorded special recognition. The list is being compiled and will be publicized at an appropriate time in the coming weeks.

The General Committee is studying a variety of suggestions to improve the implementation of this and future fundraising efforts. Karen Handmaker, head of the fundraising subcommittee, has noted the need for a computer program to track and relate contributions to specific family units and time spans. The Committee will also re-examine strategy and ways to benefit from those members with institutional and congregational fundraising experience. (see page 8).

## Trustee shows the way Sponsor a Shabbat

In recognition of the high costs The UJC faces in renting conveniently-located function rooms for Shabbat services, Trustee Robert Dorfman has generously volunteered to personally sponsor four Shabbat services at The American Club.

The offer has inspired the Congregation to extend this opportunity to its members who wish, by sponsoring a service, to mark a happy occasion in their lives, memorialize a relative, or simply show their support for The UJC. For all occasions, members will be honored accordingly for their generosity.

The UJC is also grateful to Al and Sharon Fine, Amy and Don DaSaro, and Susan and Michel Millodot for sponsoring the November 26 Shabbat. Another family who wishes to remain anonymous has also agreed to sponsor a Shabbat.

The rental cost for a Shabbat service at The American Club is \$2,200 and somewhat less at the Ladies Recreation Club. Members may individually or jointly sponsor a service. Please call Rabbi Joseph or the Executive Administrator if you wish to be a sponsor.

## Talks underway UJC seeks accord to reinstate classes at The Jewish Club

The UJC has moved its adult education classes to new venues pending further clarification of a Jewish Club resolution restricting religious and educational activities at the Club to those approved by Rabbi Lopin of Ohel Leah Synagogue.

The resolution, adopted at a special Jewish Club meeting on October 31, was prompted by concerns from some visitors and orthodox members that non-orthodox activities would negate the *kashrut* (*kosher*-ness) standing and certification of the Club. This concern was reinforced by an opinion given by Rabbi Lopin who had earlier consulted the Chief Rabbi of London, Rabbi Jonathan Sachs.

The UJC has questioned the apparent change in Jewish Club policy, pointing out that there is no substantive difference between the classes in question — *Lunch and Learn*, *Introduction to Judaism*, and *Adult B'nai Mitzvah*, and classes conducted by The UJC at the Club for the last two years. The UJC has urged Jewish Club leaders to join in a search for a solution that will keep both *halachic* (Jewish code) and community interests in mind. Rabbi Joseph, Rabbi Lopin, Trustees, and Club and UJC leaders have been involved in discussions that are expected to continue in the weeks ahead. Meanwhile, UJC classes have been rescheduled to take place at office premises in Central.

## Trustees have new chairman, member

Mr. Michael Green was elected at a meeting October 5 to serve a three-year term as Chairman of The Incorporated Trustees of the Jewish Community of Hong Kong. He succeeds the late Lord Kadoorie who passed away August 25.

The Trustees also announced that The Hon. Michael D. Kadoorie has accepted an invitation to become a Trustee.

Mr. Green was born in Shanghai and has spent most of his life in Hong Kong. He attended King George V School in Kowloon and later McGill University in Montreal where he studied engineering. He has been working in Hong Kong since 1962 and is Managing Director of Arnhold and Co., Ltd. He is also director of The China Coast Community. (see page 4, profile of The Hon. Michael Kadoorie)

profile of a leader. . .

## Trustee brings new talents to the table

The Honorable Michael D. Kadoorie, newest member of the Incorporated Trustees of the Jewish Community of Hong Kong, not only perpetuates the distinguished Kadoorie name on the board but brings an impressive range of interests and managerial talents to the table.

The 53-year-old Trustee serves as: Chairman of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels chain which includes the world renowned Peninsula Hotel; Vice-Chairman of China Light & Power; Chairman of Heliservices (HK) Ltd., a local commercial helicopter company; Chairman of Rotair Ltd.; and Director of 17 other corporations.

Educated at King George V School in Hong Kong, Le Rosey in Switzerland, and Applegarth in the United Kingdom, Mr. Kadoorie comes from a long line of Jewish traders and merchant bankers who settled in Iraq many centuries ago.

Like their fellow leaders in Baghdad, the Sassoon and Gubbay families, the Kadoories began looking eastwards in search of opportunities in the late 19th century. In 1870, the eldest son of Silas Kadoorie travelled to India and the Far East where he joined the firm of David Sassoon in Hong Kong. Later, his brothers followed including Eleazer, later to become Sir Elly, (grandfather of Michael Kadoorie). In due course, Elly and Ellis Kadoorie left Sassoon's firm to set up their own business and did much to promote the expansion of trade and industry in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

Since the turn of the century, the Kadoorie name has been synonymous with philanthropy, particularly in education. The Kadoorie Agricultural Colleges in Israel and the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association Experimental & Extension Farm in Hong Kong are world famous, having initiated many improvements in farming methods.

Son of the late Lord Kadoorie and nephew of Sir Horace Kadoorie, Mr. Kadoorie married Betty, daughter of Juan and Bertha Tamayo of Coral Gables, Florida in 1984. They have three children: Natalie, born in 1986, Betting, 1987, and Philip, 1992.

He is also involved in the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association in Nepal, described as one of the most effective private aid programs in the world. Mr. Kadoorie, a UJC member, includes flying, motor cars, boats, skiing, and photography among his hobbies.

from the chairman . . .

## Everyone is right

**PURCHIK** (student from Kiev): There's more to life than talk. You should know what's going on in the outside world.

**VILLAGER I:** Why should I break my head about the outside world? Let the outside world break its own head.

**OTHER VILLAGERS:** Well put.

**TEVYE:** He's right. As the good book says, if you spit in the air, it lands in your face.

**PURCHIK:** Nonsense. You can't close your eyes to what's happening in the world.

**TEVYE** (pointing to Purchik): He's right.

**VILLAGER II:** He's right and he's right? They can't both be right!

**TEVYE:** You know, you're also right.

I couldn't help thinking how applicable these words of Tevye the Milkman were to our situation here in Hong Kong when I attended a performance of *Fiddler On The Roof* the other night.

Faced by the demands of a changing world and knowing that his 'Tradition' was threatened, Tevye had to make some hard choices. And although we are far removed from Tevye's shtetl, we are still beset with the ambivalence that arises from the effort to reconcile demands from our ancestral world with those of the larger world. The only thing that distinguishes modern Jews from Tevye, Benjamin Pollock suggests in a recent article in the Jewish newspaper *Forward*, is their self-consciousness, 'the honesty with which they reformulate [tradition].'

The good thing, I suppose, about the resolution passed October 31 prohibiting (in effect) UJC adult education classes at the Jewish Club ('the only place in Hong Kong I feel discriminated against as a Jew' is Robert Meyer's classic remark) was that it highlighted differences and misunderstandings which have been at the root of long-simmering discontent in both the Orthodox and Reform communities. As challenging as these differences may be, it is probably healthier to have them out on the table where they can be more openly dealt with and, perhaps, more easily resolved.

At first glance, it would appear that the dispute is purely religious in nature, having to do mostly with differences in style and content of belief and observance. But sitting as I do on the Committees governing both the Reform and Orthodox communities, I have heard things which reflect, in my opinion, more than just religious differences but national and cultural differences, a lack of communications, and just plain ignorance.

To some Orthodox, the Reform community is seen as a threat to their traditions and even their very survival when, in fact, completely the opposite is true. Most Reform Jews accord the greatest respect to these pious and committed members of our community and would be among the very first to defend their interests. At the same time, it seems many Orthodox and Reform Jews here have had relatively little exposure to the practices, beliefs, and attitudes of the other. This unfamiliarity easily degenerates into distrust compounded by differences in culture, language, and even dress.

Members of both communities must therefore avoid judgments which, essentially superficial in nature, obscure a deeper understanding of the issues, impede the establishment of friendships, and obstruct the process of building community. Those members who rise above these prejudices will ultimately define and advance the shared interests of the larger Community. But enough of this civics lesson in being good neighbors. Few people listen to such goody-goody sentiments anyhow.

It would be naive to think we can easily correct the "commonly held notion that Progressive Jewish communities practice a 'less authentic' form of Judaism than their more observant co-religionists," in Pollock's words. Progressive Jews, wherever they may be, can also never count on a favorable opinion from Halachic Headquarters. And yet, if the Trustees' visionary, courageous plan 'to bring all Jews in Hong Kong together in harmony' is to be realized, the understanding must ultimately prevail that 'Jewish tradition is by nature dynamic, that change is an integral part of even the most legalistic of Jewish dogmas.' In the meantime, everyone is right.



# Adult Education: Coming Up

## *'Thursday series'*

### **Introduction to Judaism**

Thursday, November 18

7:00 P.M. — 9:00 P.M.

UJC members who want to know more about the basic content of Judaism will find this course particularly helpful. Rabbi Joseph leads regular, Thursday night sessions in a discussion of holidays, life cycle events, and Jewish beliefs, practices, concepts and history. The course includes information essential to those planning to convert and as such is a prerequisite as part of a larger program of study and participation in UJC activities.

Classes may meet at City Hall beginning in January at which time a nominal fee will be collected to cover the cost of room rental.

November 18

December 2, 9, 16, 22

702 Dina House,  
11 Duddell Street,  
Central District

## *'Wednesday series'*

### **Lunch and Learn**

Wednesday, November 24

12:40 P.M. — 1:20 P.M.

Fashioned to fit the fast-paced, time-conscious Hong Kong lifestyle, this midday Jewish study program begins and finishes exactly on time. Brown-bag it or grab a sandwich on the way (The Big Apple on the first floor of Dina House). Come earlier and stay later if you wish, but give us your attention for 40 minutes of study.

Using the Talmud and other Jewish texts (all in English), Rabbi Joseph leads a spiritual journey that will touch your mind and soul. You will look at the holy and profane, piety and apostasy, authority and creativity.

The Lunch and Learn program is designed to enable people to attend as often as they wish.

November 24

December: 1, 8, 15, 22

702 Dina House,  
11 Duddell Street,  
Central District

## **Adult B'Nai Mitzvah**

Monday, November 29

7:30 P.M. — 9:00 P.M.

This belated bar/bat mitzvah program for adults who missed their chance the first time around got off to a good start November 9 when ten UJC members showed up for the first session. The six-month course with Rabbi Joseph includes basic Hebrew and a number of other subjects of Jewish interest and importance. The course concludes with a B'Nai Mitzvah service on the night of Shavuot, May 15, 1994 at which all 'graduates' will participate and share the joy of the occasion.

Members must attend at least four sessions of the Adult B'Nai Mitzvah class and four other adult education sessions. A working knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet will be helpful although not essential. The November 29 class will be the last chance to join:

home of

David and Diana Muller  
29A Estoril Court, Block 1  
55 Garden Road, Mid-Levels

Venues for future sessions of the above classes and seminars will be announced.

## **Death and Mourning: The Jewish Way**

Death is the crisis of life. As there is a Jewish way of life, there is a Jewish way of death. Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph, well-known teacher and author on this subject will speak about:

- ◆ **Jewish rituals and customs surrounding death, from 'keria' to 'kaddish' (and how they relate to modern psychology)**
- ◆ **How to go on living when someone you love dies**
- ◆ **How to help a friend whose relative has died; what do I say or do?**

**Tuesday, November 30, 7:00 P.M.**

702 Dina House, 11 Duddell Street, Central District

first of a monthly series of seminars (each month, a new topic) conducted by Rabbi Joseph

## Join us for

### THE UJC'S FIRST **Tot Shabbat**

conducted by Rabbi Sam Joseph

for parents and their very  
young children (1 to 6 years old)

**Tot Shabbats  
are Special ShABBATS  
with Stories, Songs, arts  
and crafts, dance  
and Torah**

**Saturday, November 20, 9:30 A.M.**

Branksome School Building  
3 Tregunter Path, Mid-Levels



### THE UJC'S FIRST **Interfaith Thanksgiving**

Rabbi Joseph and Reverend Gene Preston of Union Church will lead the first-ever Jewish-Christian Interfaith Thanksgiving service in Hong Kong. The service, in the American tradition, is open to all members of the community. Hopefully, this will become an annual event.

**Wednesday, November 24, 7:00 P.M.**

Union Church, 22A Kennedy Rd., Mid-Levels



### **Shabbat Service**

**and conversion ceremony**

(Don DaSaro, Sharon Fine, Susan Millodot)

conducted by Rabbi Sam Joseph

followed by an Oneg Shabat  
and buffet dinner

**Friday, November 26, 6:30 P.M.**

The American Club, 49/f, Exchange Square II

## **Getting On, Off Our Mailing List**

The UJC is eager that all members of the community interested in our activities receive our various mailings. However, we do not wish to litter your mailbox with information you would rather not receive.

Our mailing list consists of (1) UJC members; (2) those who have made donations to the Congregation, attended a service, expressed an interest in our activities or have been referred to us as possibly-interested parties; (3) community leaders, i.e. Trustees, members of the Jewish Club's General Committee, and Ohel Leah Synagogue wardens.

Inadvertently, your name may have made it into our list without your wish to be so included. The UJC would be most grateful if you would call our office at 523-2985 so we can correct this error and apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

### **Small World**

If the world were a single town with a population of 100, one of those hundred people would have a college education, 30 would be able to read and write, and 15 would live in adequate housing (the rest would live in huts), and 50 would be hungry most of the time. Six of the 100 would control almost half the wealth of the town and of these six, three would be Americans.

submitted by Amy DaSaro, reprinted from her uncle's newsletter (he runs a shelter for the homeless)

### **The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong**

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Tel. 523-2985; Fax 523-3961

Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph: Tel. 523-2663  
Home Tel: 592-9325; Home Fax: 812-9531

Exec. Administrator: Mrs. Amy DaSaro



Chairman: GPO Box 6083, Hong Kong  
Tel. 735-3037, Fax 730-5507

#### **Executive Committee**

Chairman & editor, *The Shofar* . . . Bob Green  
Vice-chairman . . . . . Dr. Carol Betson  
Treasurer . . . . . Victor Falk  
Secretary . . . . . Martha Josephson  
Membership . . . . . Dr. Mark Michelson  
Children's Ed. . . . . Veronica Frankenberg  
Financial . . . . . Peter Kaminsky  
Fund-raising . . . . . Karen Handmaker  
Religious/Ritual & Legal. . . . Robert Meyer  
Publicity . . . . . Martha Josephson  
Community Service. . . Mollie Blaum-Sherbin  
Liaison . . . . . Tomas Frankenberg  
Charles Monat  
Social/Planning. . . . . Janet Golden  
Adult Education. . . . . Jacqueline Blinderman  
Mollie Blaum-Sherbin

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# ANNOUNCING

## The UJC Chanukah Party

Sunday, December 12, 4:00 P.M.

The American Club, Main Dining Room

28 Tai Tam Road, Tai Tam

Bring your menorah for the

**\* Chanukah and menorah lighting service**

Join in the games and contests (before & after dinner)

**\* gifts, gelt, prizes for all children**

Enjoy a delicious

**\* BBQ buffet dinner (children 11 & under: FREE)**

\* minute steak \* hamburgers \* hot dogs \* marinated cajun chicken breast \* veal sausage  
\* chicken satay \* corn on the cob \* fried noodles with beef \* french fries \* potato latkes  
\* vegetable samosas \* seasonal vegetables \* salad bar \* pasta salad \* coleslaw \* fresh  
fruit salad \* chocolate mousse \* creme caramel \* chestnut cream cake \* Napoleon tarts  
\* mini Linzertartes \* chocolate almond macaroons \* braided challah \* coffee or tea

## BBQ Buffet

(starts around 5:45 P.M.)

members: adults, \$200.00, children 11 and under, free

non-members: adults, \$230.00; children 4-10, \$120.00; children 1-3, \$60.00

**URGENT:** Sponsors needed to enable The UJC to subsidize free attendance for children at this important Jewish festival. Please contact Vernoica Frankenberg at 813-0173 if you can help us out.

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

tel. \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ adult(s), \_\_\_\_\_ children, and \_\_\_\_\_ toddler(s) made out to The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong. To help our planning, please advise ages of children who will be attending \_\_\_\_\_

please return by December 9 to The UJC, GPO Box 5259 or fax 523-3961

# If not now, when?

Executive Committee member Robert Meyer inspired the *Lamed Vav* ('Righteous 36) fundraising campaign launched earlier this year and has been a mainstay in The UJC's efforts to build a Congregation and Community since its very start. The remarks below are taken from his talk at Yom Kippur services this year. The full text, abridged here due to space considerations, is available by calling or faxing the UJC office.

Rabbi Hillel, a Liberal and Progressive Jew who lived 2,000 years ago in Israel said: 'If I am not for myself, who am I? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?'

Who am I? What am I? When? What did he mean?

Let's think about this collectively as Reform, Liberal and Progressive Jews in Hong Kong, as *Y'hudim Mit-kadmim*.

*If we are not for ourselves, who are we?* Who will stand up for Reform, Liberal, Progressive Jewish beliefs, if we won't? Who will seek to understand the Torah, Talmud and traditional Jewish beliefs and customs in a modern light, if we won't? Who will take care of children of mixed marriages, whom we regard as Jewish as long as either parent is Jewish and the children are raised as Jews, if we won't? Who will promote liberal, modern changes in a Jewish world often besieged from the outside by assimilation and the inside by fanaticism and fundamentalism, if we won't?

*If we are only for ourselves, what are we?* In our congregation, in our Jewish community and in the wider community of Hong Kong, what are we if we are only for our own selfish and narrow interests?

If we attend UJC services only on Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, or only for part of these days, and don't lead and participate in UJC activities during the rest of the year, *what are we?*

If we fail to contribute to Jewish well being, both within the UJC and the Jewish world in Hong Kong, *what are we?*

If we don't each pull our financial 'Jewish Oar' but rather let others do it for us, or even worse, allow for no one to do it at all, *what are we?*

*If not now, when?* When we will have lived in Hong Kong for two, four, six or eight years and it is time to return to our country of origin?

*If not now, when?* When the UJC celebrates its tenth anniversary five years from now and we don't have a permanent rabbi, cantor, synagogue, office, school, or other facilities? . . .

The UJC is now well over 300 members strong from a fledgling start five years ago. . . The UJC consists of a remarkable group of Jewish people who are warm, open, friendly, extremely hard working — and all volunteers. I've never worked with such a capable, talented group of people, with such great cooperation, little friction and out-and-out dedication to establishing a fulfilling progressive Jewish community in which we can all feel comfortable. . .

Hong Kong has reappeared on the Jewish Map of the World with an influence and importance in the Jewish and non-Jewish world far exceeding the small number of 3,000 to 4,000 Jews actually living here — most of whom are unaffiliated.

We sit in Hong Kong on the edge of China and therefore are the largest and clearly most strategically placed Jewish Community located between the West Coast of the United States and the State of Israel, with the exception of Australia.

The whole world is focussed on China, on Hong Kong, on how China will treat Hong Kong, before and after 1997, and how China will integrate with the rest of the world. In the Jewish world, we wonder how China will treat out Jewish Community in Hong Kong and other Jewish communities establishing themselves on the Mainland. . .

China and Israel have recognized each other diplomatically. Trade and commercial relations between the Jewish State and the Chinese State are mushrooming. With peace (hopefully) on the doorstep in the Middle East, further other dimensions have now been added to the strategic positioning of the Hong Kong Jewish Community here.

And . . . we are in the middle of all this. We UJC members are in the middle of all this as the single largest Jewish organization in Hong Kong.

How Hong Kong's Jewish Community will continue to organize and express itself and meet the needs of the Jews of Hong Kong — 85% of whom are nonorthodox and non-traditional — is a critical question for all of us to deal with on many levels and over many years.

We can take our place as strong leaders for these 85% non-orthodox Jews, that is *ourselves*, only if we have the rabbis, teachers, books, place of worship, office, budget and yes, the money, to support ourselves.

It takes money — no surprise to any of us who live in the real, money-conscious world of Hong Kong. . .

The UJC did not raise our annual dues this year — currently only \$1,000 per year (less than one-tenth the dues of an American, big city congregation), because we wanted to encourage donations from our members, donations which also have the attraction of being tax deductible for both U.S. and Hong Kong tax purposes.

We intend to honor the UJC's own *Lamed Vav* contributors — those 36 top donors to our rabbi and general funds, hopefully making an average donation in a \$1,000 multiple of *chai* or \$18,000. We will publicly identify these contributors later only alphabetically by name and *not* by amount donated. It is on their account and because of their Jewish and financial leadership that Progressive Judaism in Hong Kong under The UJC can be allowed to continue and flourish.

Please make your donation. If not now, when? Would those hidden and unknown *Lamed Vav* please show us who they are by being very generous with this Congregation for the sake of yourselves, your families, and your fellow Progressive Jews in Hong Kong and Asia — and for The UJC.

It is traditional, even among we non-traditional Progressive Jews, to ask our fellow Jews on Erev Yom Kippur, on Kol Nidrei — 'All Vows' Night — to remember to keep one vow: this is to support our Jewish Community, to help The UJC continue to be the center of Progressive Judaism in Hong Kong and in the Asia/Pacific region.

Why is this done on Yom Kippur? Perhaps we believe that our contributions will constitute that one last measure of *tzedakah*, or charity, which will tip the scales of Judgment for the coming year in our favor, so that we will be inscribed and sealed for a blessing in The Book of Life for the forthcoming Jewish New Year, 5754.

Please think back on Rabbi Hillel: please show *who* you are and *what* you are and give your strong financial support to The UJC. If not now, *when?*

■ Robert Meyer, September, 1993



# What makes us Jewish?

This is a question many of us ask ourselves from time to time and in fact, was the subject of an entire issue of *Moment* magazine earlier this year. David Shapiro, a longtime resident in Asia and a new member of The UJC, was moved to ask himself the same question recently and submitted these remarks to *The Shofar*. Some portions have been omitted due to space considerations. Readers may obtain the full text by calling or faxing the UJC office. All bold lettering is as submitted.

## Am I a Jew?

Recently, in China, I was asked if I was Jewish. I asked myself what made me a Jew. **Let me count the ways.**

My father and mother are Jewish as were their parents and their parents' parents. **Does that make me a Jew?**

I was brought up in a home that was kosher and we observed all the religious holidays. **Did this make me a Jew?**

I had a bar-mitzvah and was circumcised according to the laws of our religion. **Does that make me a Jew?**

We had a *pishke* in our home to remember to donate to the causes in Israel. **Does that make me a Jew?**

I went to Hebrew school in an Orthodox synagogue to prepare for my bar mitzvah, learning to read Hebrew but never being taught what the words meant. **Am I a Jew?**

My grandfather who came to the United States from Russia and who spoke no English always said to me in *Yiddish* 'You can always find a Jew no matter where you are, **We are a Family.** This I always remembered, **We are a family.**

Thirty years ago I came to Hong Kong and fell in love with my wife who is Chinese. I always had been taught that as a Jew we do not marry out of our faith. How does one tell a person you love, respect and admire that certain members of this community would say 'you can't be a Jew' in the orthodox sense. Is it because of her face, clothes, or birth that one can't be a Jew?

The Rabbi at Ohel Leah at that time was from the Middle East and ultra orthodox. I was not comfortable in this environment as over many years of travel I was exposed to the many faces of Judaism.

I went to Kobe where there was a Rabbi that was from America and he explained to my wife what it was to be a Jew.

To Join a Family. To study the history of our origins. To love, respect and honor the family.

He said as a Rabbi he is only a teacher. It is their duty to interpret the writings of the Bible and there has been many different interpretations by many Rabbis over the centuries of what the Torah writings mean. There will always be this controversy but what is certain is 'A Jew is a Jew, no matter how he prays as long as God is in our hearts and there is only one God.'

I did get married and 25 years ago in commemoration of the occasion I donated a set of *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* to the Jewish Community. I had the opportunity to visit The Jewish Club the other day and I was glad to see that these books were on display. . .

There are a minority of people in Hong Kong who would have me believe that I am not a Jew because I belong to the Reform congregation of Hong Kong. Do they have the right to judge what a Jew is . . . Only God will tell me when my time comes . . . **Yes, You were a Good Jew.**

Can the Board of Directors of the Ohel Leah congregation dictate to all Jews what they can do or can't do to be Jewish? Where is it written in the Bible that if we want to pray in English we are less of a Jew? Are we not reading the same bible? Do we not pray to the same God?

When I was in the military the rabbis said that we should eat everything that was given to us . . . even pork. They said God would understand. Did the soldiers in biblical time say to the Egyptians; 'Let's wait until sundown before we

fight as today is Saturday.' Are there not reformed Jews in Israel? Are they less Jewish?

If the Trustees of the Ohel Leah congregation are so concerned that so many of the Jewish families have joined the United Jewish Congregation they might look deeper for the reasons why.

Why don't they understand and respect that, in Hong Kong the Jewish population have come from many parts of the globe and have practised the religion in other ways.

When I went to the synagogue growing up in Brooklyn, New York, I remember how old the congregation was, how unfriendly they appeared to be. The next generation saw the building of new and modern Temples with facilities that catered to the youth. That brought them together both for religious reasons as well as social. They kept the family together.

My grandchildren living in Miami have been going to a reform pre-school and I am ashamed to say that they are more Jewish than me. They are receiving at an early age the real meaning of being a Jew and the knowledge of our history. Is it wrong that they are learning it both in English and Hebrew and with stories and songs. **Are they Jewish?**

Why can't the Ohel Leah board recognize and respect me, 'Yes, I am also a Jew.' . . .

**Is Jewishness and Zionist the same. I am an American Jew and I separate politics from religion. I am proud of what the people of Israel have done. I am proud to be a Jew, but in My Way!**

There was a financial grant made to the Jewish people of Hong Kong. It did not dictate the country of origin, the language they speak, the color of their skin or the way they interpret the bible . . . It was for the '**Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong.**' [ed. note: the wording in the original Sassoon trust document is 'for the Jewish people residing in Hong Kong]. **It was not for any sect, nationality or based on the language you used to pray, it was for the Jewish People of Hong Kong.**

We are not asking to use the Old Temple but we should be provided with the same resources to build our own temple of prayer. In the meantime, we should be given the same GOD GIVEN RIGHT to hold classes in the current facilities. That is '**If we are still Jews.**'

I do not read Hebrew nor am I able to translate it or understand it. Must I pray without understanding, without feeling? Why can't I pray in a language I understand?

**Am I not a Jew if I pray in a reformed manner? Am I not a Jew if I believe that I can pray to my God in English?**

**Do I have to be Hassidic, or Sephardic or speak Hebrew to be a Jew? Does one have to revert back to medieval times to be Jewish? Does one have to wear black knickers and long sideburns to be Jewish?**

**Am I not a Jew if I want to sit together with my family whether they be men or women during the prayers? Am I still a Jew if I don't eat kosher food?**

Many years ago I had major surgery and was in a Catholic hospital. The Priest came to me before I went into the operating theatre and asked if he could pray for me as they were unable to find a Rabbi. I said please, and with thanks. It was comforting that he respected my beliefs and prayed to our God, as there will always be ONE GOD for us all, no matter what religion, what language, what nationality or the colour of our skin.

Going into the 21st century and in my twilight years I ask myself '**Am I STILL a Jew?**'

■ David Shapiro, Hong Kong

## The good news is: we're no longer floating The UJC Sets Up in Central

What had been the oldest established permanently floating Reform/Liberal Jewish congregation in Hong Kong became a little more settled in mid-October with the establishment of an office to accommodate our rabbi and administrative operations. This important step forward in our short history came thanks to the efforts of Charles Monat who spent several weeks scouting locations around Central. Mr. Monat also donated a computer system and some office furniture. Andrew Szende and Victor Falk also donated some furniture. All in all, it's what we call 'a great little office.'

Members are invited to stop by for a look (and do some volunteer work). The address is:

**802 Queen's Place  
74 Queen's Road Central  
Tel. (office): 523-2985  
Tel. (rabbi): 523-2663  
Fax: 523-3961**

The entrance is actually on the corner of Stanley and Pottinger Streets, behind Lane Crawford, putting the UJC in a neighborhood that's in transformation from ethnic to modern. Visitors can stop by the historic Luk Yu teahouse (and bring their birds for morning tea), pick up some incense from a nearby lane, or have some matzoh ball soup at the Cincinnati Cafe across the street, run by a former Jewish Club waiter. We're not sure, but we think this remarkable coincidence (Rabbi Joseph is a professor at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati) has some kind of cosmic significance.



### Make the Connection

Please send the UJC Membership Committee the names of unaffiliated friends, relatives, co-workers, new neighbors, and business associates to help in our Member Search Program. We will be honoring all UJC members who help us make these new connections.

name of prospective member

spouse

address

tel. #

how do you know this person (family)?

your name

**Please fax to The UJC at 523-3961 or  
mail to GPO Box 5259, Hong Kong.**

## The bad news is: Amy's leaving Administrator Resigns

UJC Committee members were disappointed to learn that Mrs. Amy DaSaro, The UJC's Executive Administrator, is leaving her post at the end of November due to personal reasons. She has been an invaluable aide to Rabbi Joseph and the Congregation. She set up the first UJC office in Pacific Link and more recently, our new office in Central.

'The best part of this job has been working with Rabbi Sam,' Amy told Committee members in her letter of resignation. 'He is truly a phenomenal teacher and human being — and not afraid of hard work. I wish I had more hours in the day to devote to this job — he certainly deserves the best possible support staff.'

'That the UJC exists at all in Hong Kong is a miracle. The tremendous commitment and work that the Executive Committee has put into this congregation has filled a great need in this part of Asia — as witnessed by its stunning growth, fueled by our remarkable Rabbi. I will remain a whole-hearted supporter, forever grateful for the benefits my family has derived — my husband's upcoming conversion and my son's bar mitzvah ceremony top that list. Neither would be acceptable at Ohel Leah — nor am I, for that matter. Thank you for making me feel welcome as a Jew and helping to give my family a Jewish identity.'

## HELP WANTED

**Fulltime, Parttime, Transition, Permanent,  
Chinese-speaking, English-speaking, Any  
Language-speaking, Paid, Volunteer, Indenture,  
Jewish, Non-Jewish, Whatever, American,  
English, European, Albanian, Etc.**

The imminent departure of Amy DaSaro (at the end of November) leaves The UJC in critical need of help. If you'd like to get involved as either a paid or volunteer member of our staff, please contact Bob Green at 735-3037.

While the position title is 'Executive Administrator,' we need people who can do all or any of the following things: arrange mailings, make bank deposits, maintain a computer data base, keep financial records, issue debit notes and reminders, send mailings to prospective members, respond to inquiries, make bookings and logistical arrangements for various events, provide the rabbi with secretarial assistance, handle reservations, track and coordinate function details, maintain inventory, etc.

All of this is important, redeeming, meaningful work — even the grunt work — and is immensely important to our community and congregation. Although the work is demanding, it is varied and often interesting. It will provide an opportunity to make many new friends while offering a sense of pride and satisfaction that comes from being part of a growing organization.

Salary and hours are negotiable depending on qualifications and availability. The position may consist of one or more people working a fulltime and parttime combination. While hours must be regular, some flexibility can be built into the job for the right candidate.



## Mazel Tov!

**Karen and David Handmaker**, on the birth of a son, Callan Ezekiel, November 5

**Philippe and Laura Metoudi**, on the birth of a son, Daniel

**Arnold Zeitlin and Vicki Shek**, on their marriage, November 9

**Michael Green**, on being elected chairman of the Incorporated Trustees of the Jewish Community of Hong Kong

**The Hon. Michael D. Kadoorie** on becoming a Trustee

## Condolences

**Kate Michelson**, on the death of her father John Marcel Turner

**Susan and Bill Schoenfeld**, on the death of Susan's grandmother Miriam Grossman

**Veronica Frankenberg**, on the death of her maternal aunt, Margaret Acht, at the end of September

## Thanks!

**Henry Goldstein** for giving The UJC use of an office space at Pacific Link rent-free for the past year

**Chuck Monat** for donating a computer and office furniture for the new office, letting Rabbi Joseph use his office, and offering his conference room to The UJC for adult education classes

**Robert Dorfman** for sponsoring four Shabbat services at The American Club

**Al & Sharon Fine, Michel & Susan Millodot, Don & Amy DaSaro** for sponsoring the November 26 Shabbat service

**Victor Falk, Andrew Szende, Bob Green** for donating office furniture for the new office

**Philippe and Laura Metoudi**, for their donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund (to assist in special programs) in honor of the birth of their son

**The Alters and Blindermans**, for lending their apartments for meetings of pre-bar/bat mitzvah students

**Joan Donen, Mel Bazerman** for helping The UJC while moving office

**Mollie Blaum, Joan Donen, Amy Meyer, Uri Schwartz** for helping with mailings

**Amy Meyer**, for sharing her amah for the Rabbi's open house

**Sharon Fine**, for all her wonderful pictures as UJC 'staff' photographer

**Nancy Pyatt and Sharon Fine**, for handling the Italian buffet accounts so expertly at The American Club. Thanks for doing a thankless job.

## JWA Launches Women's Health Program

The first of four sessions designed to help women stay healthy gets underway Thursday, November 18 at The Jewish Club.

The program, sponsored by the Jewish Women's Association, will deal with preventive medicine for women in its first session. Topics of subsequent sessions are 'Know the Options for Breast Health' on Wednesday, November 24; 'Know the Reproductive System Surgery' on Thursday, December 2; and 'Stay Healthy While Travelling' on Thursday, December 9.

Guest speakers are practicing physicians. Dr. Carol Betson, Community Health Lecturer at Hong Kong University, is the course facilitator.

Sessions begin at 6:30 P.M. and last around two hours. The charge is \$300.00 for members, \$400.00 for non-members for the entire course, \$80.00 and \$110.00 for single sessions. For further information, contact Anne Godfrey at 873-0464 (fax 873-0942)

## Accolades to . . .

### Dr. Robert E. Allinson

on the publication of his book *Global Disasters* (subtitled *Inquiries into Management Ethics*) by Prentice Hall.

Dr. Allinson takes a close look at four major disasters including *Challenger* and asks, in effect, what's at fault — the complex technological systems which are often blamed or management systems which, uninformed by ethical and humanistic values, fail to value safety of all those involved. As described by his publisher, 'The book addresses the question of how to design a humanistic organization in our technological century where people continue to matter foremost. It stresses the place of moral responsibility in corporations and its importance for forming a corporate ethos.'

Dr. Allinson has authored or edited four books and 80 articles including *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots* (Oxford University Press). He is a member of the Graduate Faculty and the Department of Philosophy at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

### Dr. Michel Millodot

on the invitation from Wenzhou Medical College in Zhejiang, China to serve as senior advisor to its soon-to-be-created academic committee on optometry (in its National Center of Optometry) and as guest professor in the college's Department of Optometry and Ophthalmology. Professor Millodot is one of several internationally-known scholars or experts who have been asked to help the Center develop optometric education in China. Dr. Millodot is Professor and Head of Department of Optometry and Radiography at Hong Kong Polytechnic.

## What UJC men are made of

Robert Sherbin and Laurence Zuckerman completed the grueling 100 kilometer (62 mile) MacLehose Trailwalk in 27 hours and 31 minutes (in the company of two other journalists). They took only four 20-minute breaks and weathered the early November 0° wind chill and monsoon winds throughout the night. The two survived with nothing more serious than sore feet and bruised ankles.

## Letter To Everyone at UJC

All is well in Arizona except the heat! 105°F but only about 30% humidity. Our life is still hectic but to be expected. I really miss Hong Kong, UJC, my friends and my maid. I am jealous of all of you enjoying Sam and all his talents. We are still trying out different Temples, but will make a choice soon. My love and warm wishes for all of you in the new year. Love to all,

*Kathy Goeld*

# UJC Calendar: November/December, 1993

see notes, below, for addresses of venues

**Thursday, November 18, 7:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

Dina House

**Saturday, November 20, 9:30 A.M.**

*Tot Shabbat*

Branksome School Bldg.,  
3 Tregunter Path, Mid-Levels

**Sunday, November 21, 10:30 A.M.**

*B'Nai Mitzvah Havurah*

(families of pre-bar/bat mitzvah students)  
home of: David & Jacqueline Blinderman  
28B, 12/f, 101 Repulse Bay Road

**Wednesday, November 24, 12:40 P.M.**

*Lunch and Learn*

Dina House

**Wednesday, November 24, 7:00 P.M.**

*Interfaith Thanksgiving Service*

Union Church, 22A Kennedy Rd., Mid-Levels

**Friday, November 26, 6:30 P.M.**

*Shabbat Family Service and  
conversion ceremony*

(Don DaSaro, Sharon Fine, Susan Millodot)

The American Club

**Monday, November 29, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'Nai Mitzvah*

home of David & Dianna Muller (see p. x)

**Tuesday, November 30, 7:00 P.M.**

*'The Jewish Way of Death & Mourning'*

Talk/seminar with Rabbi Joseph

Dina House

**Wednesday, December 1, 12:40 P.M.**

*Lunch and Learn*

Dina House

**Thursday, December 2, 7:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

Dina House

**Friday, December 3, 6:30 P.M.**

*Shabbat Family Service*

The American Club

**Sunday, December 5, 9:00 A.M.**

*P.A.C.E. Holiday Workshop: Chanukah*

Ladies Recreation Club

**Wednesday, December 8, 12:40 P.M.**

*Lunch and Learn*

Dina House

**Thursday, December 9, 7:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

Dina House

**Friday, December 10, 6:30 P.M.**

*Shabbat Family Service*

The American Club

**Sunday, December 12, 4:30 P.M.**

*Chanukah Celebration*

American Club, 28 Tai Tam Rd., Tai Tam

**Tuesday, December 14, 7:00 P.M.**

*Annual General Meeting*

(light refreshments from 6:30 P.M.)

The Jewish Club, 4/f, Melbourne Plaza

**Wednesday, December 15, 12:40 P.M.**

*Lunch and Learn*

Dina House

**Thursday, December 16, 7:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

Dina House

**Saturday, December 18**

*Shabbat Service and*

*Bar Mitzvah of Michael Meyer*

time and venue to be announced

**Tuesday, December 21, 7:00 P.M.**

*'Judaism and Feminism' workshop*

with Rabbi Joseph

time and venue to be announced

**Wednesday, December 22, 12:40 P.M.**

*Lunch and Learn*

Dina House

**Saturday, December 25**

*Shabbat Service and*

*Bar Mitzvah of Ben Hornak (DaSaro)*

time and venue to be announced

## Notes

**702 Dina House**

**Rutonjee Center,**

**11 Duddell Street, Central District**

(office of Charles Monat)

**The American Club**

**Kam Shan Room, 49/f,**

**Exchange Square II, Central District**

Services are followed by Italian buffet supper

Dinner for members, \$125.00 adults, \$75.00, children  
under 12; non-members, \$140.00 and \$90.00

**Ladies Recreation Club**

10 Old Peak Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong