

Newsletter of the National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Robert Orkand, President



I retired in 2013 after serving several congregations during a 40-year career, the last 32 of which were in Westport, CT. I loved my rabbinate and all the opportunities it afforded me. In short, I loved being a rabbi.

Then, I retired. It was time. I didn't quite know what I wanted to do next, but I knew that I was tired of working 24/7 (a slight exaggeration). Joyce and I wanted to travel. We wanted to spend more time with each other. Because we were living in a parsonage, we had to leave our home and we knew we had to leave Westport, a community we loved, but to where? Joyce wanted to move to Phoenix, her hometown. But then, our first granddaughter was born. I held her for the first time and said, "I'm going with

her!" And we did! We moved to the Boston area and have lived there for almost nine years.

We knew no one in the Boston area other than our family. I was feeling lonely and cut off from a life that I basically loved. We had attended the RPB's retirement seminar, but that was mostly about finances (thank God for the RPB) and I felt reassured that money was not going to be a problem. But, there was little talk about how to cope with retirement, about moving out of one's community, about the loss of friends and--perhaps most critical-- about no longer feeling important.

Happily, soon after arriving in Boston I was invited to join a weekly study group made up of retired Reform rabbis. We meet every Monday morning, and that time has proven to be one of the highlights of my week. I now teach six classes—all online because of Covid—which forces me to continue learning and fills my time in meaningful ways. And, I discovered NAORRR. The annual conventions with friends and colleagues telling stories and offering advice about retirement have meant the world to me. We retired rabbis, spouses and partners have discovered we are part of a unique and wonderful club populated by people who actually understand what it is like being a retired rabbi. And, our most recent convention, with its wonderful speakers; the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Sally Priesand's ordination and women in the Reform rabbinate; our joyful Havdalah on-line celebration, and the moving statements by members of the 50-year class—all reinforced the importance of NAORRR in my life.

I am becoming your president at a unique time. NAORRR has expanded its programming exponentially due to

COVID. If there is any silver lining to this awful pandemic with which we have been living it is that. Our monthly webinars have allowed us to learn from each other, as well as from other teachers and scholars. Because of the wonders of technology, we have been in touch with each other in new and wonderful ways. What a joy that has been!

Sadly, those most responsible for managing all of that change will be leaving us, at least in their official capacities. Having little choice, Susie and Julian Cook—our indefatigable Executive Vice-Presidents-- quickly learned to manage the "new normal." We all had to do that, but Susie and Julian kept it all together in remarkable ways. As your program chair I saw that first-hand. I can't thank them enough for all they did for me. We will have an opportunity to honor them in person at our next convention, but I want them to know how grateful I am for their support and guidance.

Happily, Joanie and Gary Glickstein, each of whom has unique talents and skills, have already jumped with both feet—or, is it 4 feet—into their roles as our new Executive Vice-Presidents. They have wonderful ideas as to how we can move in new directions to increase our programming and our impact on the larger Reform movement. I can't wait to work with them to continue re-imagining our re-imagined NAORRR.

And, so, please look for announcements of our upcoming programs and plan on participating in them. I can't wait to see you in person in Scottsdale, Arizona, in January!

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Executive VP Message



IT'S ALL IN OUR HANDS!

Marty Lawson, First Vice President

Thoughts on NAORRR's Programs

These are most definitely exciting times! In February, we engaged in wonderful learning with our colleague, Rabbi Laura Geller, teaching us about *Getting Good at Getting Older*. Her wisdom and caring responses lift us up. I hope many of you will purchase her book and use it as a guide in pursuit of making each day a source of blessing for yourself and others.

I feel so privileged to be working with the amazing members of our Program Committee. We are planning monthly programs for all of us. The pandemic made this essential to maintain our *kesher* (connection) in spite of our physical distance from each other. We cannot thank Julian and Susie Cook enough, as well as Bob Orkand and the Board, for reconfiguring NAORRR to meet our collective needs. Gary and Joanie Glickstein are now taking charge of NAORRR's administration and are working with the Program Committee to innovate, building upon our past. Our Program Committee is committed to continuing the model of excellent learning and *hevruta*.

By the time you read this article we will have had the privilege of hearing from Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League. Many of us know his impressive work on behalf of fighting antisemitism and advocating for just and fair treatment to all. His most recent book, *It Could Happen Here: Why America is Tipping from Hate to the Unthinkable – And How We Can Stop It*, provides much food for thought as we grapple with the explosion of antisemitism in our country and around the world. You should have received information regarding a special price on the purchase of Jonathan's book, exclusively for members of NAORRR.

By the way, we are recording all of our learning sessions and they will be available to NAORRR members following the programs. We are also working hard to plan our upcoming NAORRR Convention program in Scottsdale, Arizona for January 5–9, 2023. Make every effort to be present in person. We hope to make certain parts of the convention program available virtually for those who cannot be with us.

The Committee is still open to any ideas of interest that you may choose to share. Please feel free to send them to me at rabmsl7825@gmail.com. NAORRR belongs to each of us. Yes, it's all in our hands!

In the coming months we are planning opportunities with Dr. Andrew Rehfeld, President of HUC-JIR; our colleague, Rabbi Uri Regev, founder of Hiddush—exploring issues of “law” in Israel as it relates to issues of “marriage” and “conversion;” and the incredible Diane Steinbrink, sharing her vast knowledge of literature and the arts. Together all of us continue to make NAORRR special!

ADDRESS OR OTHER INFO CHANGES?

Has your mailing address or your email address changed recently? We want to keep our data current, so we ask that you please notify NAORRR of any contact information changes.

NOT TUNED IN?

Are you not receiving our email program flyers?



To subscribe to our email blasts, please let us know at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com



I find it helpful to envision NAORRR as a kibbutz as it existed in the early days of the State of Israel.

On *kibbutz* all *chaverim* (members) were equal and responsible for keeping the kibbutz flourishing.

I like that metaphor because the word *chaver* implies far beyond member. It describes the characteristics that are present in a friendship: caring, compassion, concern. A *chaver* is willing to help when needed. A *chaver* stays in touch and reaches out not just in a crisis, but often. When I think about NAORRR as a *kibbutz*, I imagine the ways in which we can become true *chaverim* to each other.

Examples of this approach already exist organically within our organization. It is important to shine a light on them that we may follow their lead. A group of our members study weekly online. Members take older members out to lunch. Another group meets once a month online to check in and share. Our caring committee calls our membership four times a year simply to connect. And there are many other

VIEWS אלו ואלו

Gary Glickstein

examples of friendship and concern within our group. These individuals are not only *chaverim* from the time spent at the College/Institute or in active rabbinic life. Many have made these connections after retirement. Some met at our convention. Some by an email. Some by a phone call.

In the musical “Dear Evan Hansen,” there is a song lyric that could be our pledge to each other: “When you need someone to carry you, you will be found.” Or as we read in *parashat Kiddoshim*: “You shall rise before an elder.”

We are *chaverim*; members but more than members.

We need to build more connections to each other.

Chaverim Kol Yisrael—All of us at NAORRR can be each other’s *chaver*. Let’s work on that as we re-imagine NAORRR.

Chaverim Kol NAORRR!

Gary Glickstein

Tell Us You Want To... GO Green

If you would like to “Go Green” and not receive a mailed hard copy of the Ohr L’Naorrr, email us at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com

mitzvah

OPPORTUNITY

גמילות חסדים

by Melanie Aron

Along with all the limitations, losses, and trials of Covid, Zoom and other virtual meeting spaces have expanded our ability to connect to people far away.

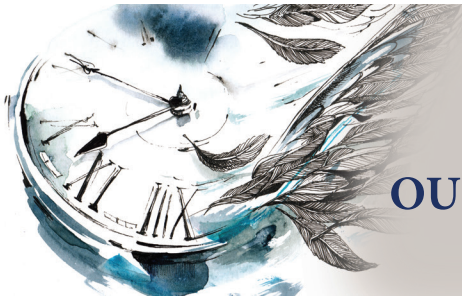
During the worst days of the shutdown I noticed an appeal from Friends by Nature Israel for English tutoring via zoom and signed on. At first, I worked with a student who was in a community college program, as English is often the key to success in higher education. Others tutor school students, for whom English is important for the *bagrut* exam, still important for advancement in Israeli society. This year I am working with a member of the staff of the organization who wants to improve her written English.

Friends by Nature is an Israeli non-profit run by and for the Ethiopian community in areas, such as Gedera, with a high percentage of Ethiopian immigrants. Founded in 2005, their leadership includes Israelis from a variety of backgrounds. Their goals include decreasing high school dropout rates, supporting community development, and running summer camps with meaningful activities. One of their programs that particularly intrigued me was a community garden where Ethiopian-born grandparents can share their farming skills with younger people, giving them value in the community, and promoting intergenerational connection. If you are able to visit Israel, they welcome you to come and visit.

Through my weekly one-hour online meetings, I have learned a great deal about the culture and practices of the Ethiopian community, their unique Biblically based Judaism, and the conflicts with Orthodox Jewish practice. Younger Ethiopian Jews are returning to an appreciation of their own community's ways though their education has presented as normative the Orthodox Jewish interpretation of Jewish law. The organization also has contacts with Reform communities nearby and has an openness to involvement with them.

Many of the volunteers are from Canada where a nucleus of supporters live, but Hebrew-speaking volunteers from the U.S. are very welcome. What a great way to keep your spoken Hebrew alive while helping a young person advance in their education.

If you have an hour a week that you'd like to use in this way, please let me know and I will connect you with Friends by Nature Israel. Melanie Aron (HUC 1981) rabbiaron@shirhadash.org



חיינו ואורך ימינו

OUR LIVES AND THE LENGTH OF OUR DAYS

by Bailey Bloom

Almost 65 years ago, on June 10, 1957, Bernard (Bert) Bloom and I were married. He had been ordained in Cincinnati on May 25; I had graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in English Literature a few days later; and after a week's honeymoon in New York City, we arrived in Nashville, Tennessee on July 1. He had just turned 28. I was not quite 21.

Nashville was a culture shock for me, both generally and Jewishly. It was 1957. Nashville was not “deep south,” but it was thoroughly segregated. Signs saying “colored only” and “whites only” were everywhere. And the next Spring, in March of 1958, the Jewish Community Center was dynamited by a group calling itself The Confederate Underground! The senior Rabbi, who was tough, fair, and very capable, was also very brave. After the JCC dynamiting, he preached a powerful sermon on the evils of segregation and the Jewish ideals of social justice. He also got himself a permit to carry a pistol.

My Jewish background was rather traditional Eastern European. Experiencing a classical Reform congregation almost for the first time was also a culture shock for me. Nor had I ever encountered the red Union Hymnal. How far we've come musically from those days!

It wasn't until years later, after experiencing the ways of other communities and other congregations, that we came to really appreciate how exceptional the Temple and the Nashville Jewish community were. There was a real sense of obligation. Many in the Temple went on to become leaders in the Reform movement, and even Rabbis in a couple of cases.

Happily, I did learn to cook and bake! We frequently had guests for Friday night dinner as we rushed to get to Temple on time. We had dinners for visiting speakers and other dignitaries, and for many years, Rosh Hashana open houses for the congregation. And

although Bert (and sometimes I too) frequently had evening meetings to go to, we tried to sit down together as a family and manage to have some conversation before everyone scattered for the rest of the evening.

I can't imagine what my life would have been like if I hadn't married Bert 65 years ago this June, even though there were some rocky times. And some funny times, too. Like when the women would invite me to lunch and kept serving crabmeat, which I don't eat. After a few times trying to explain “kosher” to these third generation Reform Jews, I finally solved the problem by saying I was allergic to shellfish. That they could understand!

There have been so many changes in the world, and in the Reform movement, since we started out in 1957. As one senior colleague, the late Harold Silver, wittily put it, “From ‘God is in His Holy Temple’ to ‘Ya Ba Bim Bam’”. From matching hats, bags and shoes for women, jackets and ties for men, to anything goes. From silver serving trays and china cups and saucers to paper plates at the Oneg Shabbat. From ladies pouring tea and coffee to do-it-yourself service. From the slim Union Prayerbook to the much heavier Gates of Prayer, to the current Mishkan Tefillah, and onward. Now, the Rabbi is often a woman, and the spouse, a man, or a woman. The roles have changed with the times and the different pressures of life today. Most Rabbis are now in two-career families. What I and many other spouses of my generation did, we did largely out of choice and, for the most part, that was accepted. For that, I'm grateful. I know it was not always the case for other spouses.

So this is my story, or at least part of it, from 1957 to 2022. From Nashville, Tennessee, to Saratoga Springs, New York. With our three children, their spouses, and our seven grandchildren, we feel greatly blessed and grateful for the full and enriching lives we have led as a rabbinic family for 65 years.

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

מדור לדור

DRIVING RABBI BASKIN

Bernie Baskin lives just down the street from me, and for the past few years it has been my privilege to take him out to lunch every once in a while, along with Michael Stroh. First I drive to Bernie's seniors residence to pick him up, then we cruise round the corner to collect Michael, then off we go to our chosen dining establishment.

During the time I'm alone with Bernie in the car, we have a chance to chat. So I ask him: "How are you today, Bernie?" He pauses, utters a deep sigh, then says, "Ah senescence ..." How I wished I had brought a dictionary – which would get a lot of use when you're with Bernie. So I looked it up later: flip, flip, flip – "aging!"

And it didn't stop there. After a lovely meal, Michael suggested that, while we wait for the bill, we figure out what tip to leave. Bernie replied, "Well, this isn't an elyamosenary institution." (Not even sure of the spelling, but flip, flip, flip – "charitable!") And during the meal he had warned us to beware of "crapulous" individuals (flip, flip, flip – actually, you can look that one up yourselves).

Bernie turned 102 on March 9, and he still has one of the sharpest minds, keenest insights into world affairs and a most affable sense of humour. Almost fifty years ago, when my fledgling congregation was in the midst of deciding to which movement they would belong, they invited Bernie to speak to the Executive. After listening to him, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the Reform Movement was a perfect fit.

Ever since then, it has been a privilege to know Bernie, to enjoy his company and to benefit from his wisdom.

Larry Englander

I have known Bernie Baskin since I arrived in Toronto, in 1966, as an elegant, thoughtful rabbi, with a knowledge, not only of Rabbinics, but of world literature. He had an amazing book collection. Pre-Pandemic, Larry Englander and I have periodically taken Bernie out for lunch, always very enjoyable. Larry has referred to his sharing with us his knowledge of esoteric words. My present goal is to come up with a word he doesn't know. My current choice is '*lagniappe*' (pronounced 'lan-yap'). Of course, if Bernie reads this note, before our next lunch, this could become a *b'rachah l'vatalah*. I have been privileged to know Bernie for 56 years, and I have been enriched by being his colleague. Mazal Tov, Bernie, on your 102nd birthday.

Michael Stroh

HAVE YOU STILL GOT IT?

If so, consider spending the High Holy Days 5783 - 2022 with B'nai Israel Congregation, Hattiesburg, Mississippi (Great folks!).

For all the details, call our colleague Ed Cohn: 504-833-7200.

Okay, if you must - rabbiepc@gmail.com

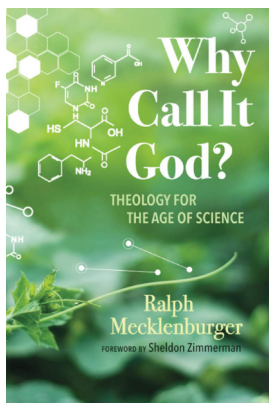


BOOK PEOPLE עם הספר

BOOK REVIEW

Review by Richard Agler

Why Call it God?: Theology for the Age of Science by Ralph Mecklenburger



Familiar advice for writers is “write what you know.” It may be better counsel to write what you want to know. In *Why Call it God?: Theology for the Age of Science*, our colleague Ralph Mecklenburger has done the latter. At the same time, he has managed to write a great deal of what we want to

know. His book is an eminently readable, eminently profound introduction to what faith can and perhaps should be in the twenty-first century.

We are the inheritors of a great and ancient tradition that we cling to, perhaps at times a bit too closely. Many of the pictures, descriptions, and accounts of our texts and teachings on God, Prophecy, Commandment, and Prayer are, these days, broadly rejected by large numbers of our co-religionists. While we are acutely aware of this, we have yet to systematically replace or reframe them with tenets that modern Jews can embrace unabashedly.

The agnosticism and atheism that are byproducts of the Enlightenment have often put Religion at a disadvantage vis a vis other fields of knowledge. If we are to reclaim at least some of our previous stature, it will need to be done on the Enlightenment’s own terms.

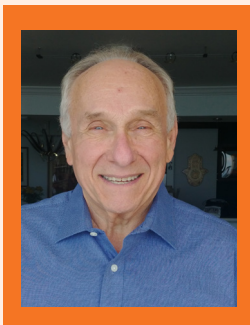
Why Call it God? gives us a path forward, providing a road map to a spiritually enriching and intellectually grounded modern faith. Ralph Mecklenburger’s understanding of Judaism allows room for poetry and metaphor, but has, at its core, tenets and beliefs that cannot be dismissed

out of hand, neither by educated adults nor bright and inquisitive youngsters.

His teachings on the familiar dichotomies of Faith v. Science, Ritual v. Ethical, and Universal v. Particular offer nuance, perspective, and depth. All the while, his analysis embraces the highest standard of our Movement, namely, that of well-informed and fearless inquiry. Maimonides, Shakespeare, Tertullian, Kaplan, Tillich, Heschel, Aristotle, and Spinoza are all brought to bear on faith’s eternal questions. The book’s conclusions are noteworthy for the spirit of honesty and humility at which they are arrived.

Why Call it God? is suitable not only for adult edification but its teachings can, and arguably should, be introduced into our religious school curricula, beginning at an early age. We might see less disenchantment when our students reach intellectual maturity if it were.

It is worth noting for this Newsletter in particular that a number of our NAORRR colleagues have written on related themes. There have been conversations suggesting that we use our collective wisdom, experience, and clout to see that updated ritual and instructional materials are implemented within the Movement. *Why Call it God?* makes it clear that such steps are both timely and necessary.



The Boomers have taken over NAORRR!



Who knows what will happen?

Shelly Harr – Immediate Past President - Boomer

Bob Orkand – President - Boomer

Marty Lawson – 1st Vice President - Boomer

Jack Luxemburg – 2nd Vice President - Boomer

Henry Karp – Secretary - Boomer

And now we join them in the role of co-Executive Vice Presidents—both of us Boomers. We stand on the shoulders of all the Greatest Generation and Silent Generation leaders who built our wonderful organization; Rabbis and spouses/partners who led us through the first decades through the pandemic re-imagining. We are very excited and honored to help continue and enrich that re-imagining work.

Some of you may recognize our names and/or faces from personal encounters over the decades. For those of you who do not, we would like to introduce ourselves to you, our colleagues.

GARY: Following my 1974 (C) ordination, I served as assistant to Harold Hahnz”l at KK Bene Israel (Rockdale Temple) in Cincinnati for three years. Joanie and I moved to Temple Sinai in Worcester, Massachusetts, with our son Avi in 1977. Sarah and Jesse were born there during our tenure at that congregation. The whole mishpacha moved to Miami Beach’s Temple Beth Sholom in 1985, where I served until my retirement in 2018.

JOANIE: My professional life as a teacher, both elementary and pre-school, has been a major part of my identity over the years. However, my volunteer work with Jewish Federation, National Council of Jewish Women, the Guardian ad Litem program and a Women’s Emergency Network Hotline (in addition, of course, to Temple activities) has given added meaning and dimension to my life.

We live now in Coconut Grove, in Miami, Florida. Sam Levinson once remarked that Israel may be the land of milk and honey, but Florida is the land of milk of magnesia. In retirement, we have joined that demographic. Our three children and their spouses are dispersed over three states with our seven nechadim. And with God’s help we hope to gather the entire clan for Pesach 5782.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Executive Vice Presidents. It is still Adar as we write these words and we are filled with joy and hope. May you and your families be blessed.

Joanie and Gary Glickstein





MEMBERSHIP

Jack Luuxemburg

The most valuable asset of NAORRR has always been our members. The collegiality, comradery and caring that is shared among us is something special. This has been underscored during the past two years of Covid World. How much we missed and lamented the absence of our annual in-person gatherings clearly indicated the extent to which we found them both enjoyable and sustaining. On the other hand, due to the hard work of our officers, board members, Co-Executive Directors and many volunteers, we effectively pivoted and reinvented NAORRR as a regular and year-around opportunity to learn, celebrate and stay connected. This effort—and the outstanding participation in the various programs—was another indication of the important role NAORRR plays in the lives of so many retired rabbis and their partners.

We also learned some things that encourage us to take a new, expanded look at membership in NAORRR. The rabbinate we served has changed significantly over the years. Our colleagues who are now retiring had different experiences and may well have different expectations regarding retirement and what role NAORRR could play. In coming years, more and more rabbinic retirees will be women and their partners. How can NAORRR be relevant to them and how can NAORRR best benefit from their membership? We need to consider the experiences of our LGBTQ+ colleagues and their partners. How can NAORRR be welcoming and sustaining for them? A recent profile of the CCAR found that nearly one-third of its members are in non-congregational careers. What can NAORRR do to be receptive and relevant to those colleagues? Another challenge is making NAORRR welcoming to second-career colleagues. They reach retirement age before most of the cohort with which they entered HUC-JIR. For them, membership in NAORRR may be more about age cohort than class cohort. Are we reaching out to these colleagues in a thoughtful way?

We are all aware that membership in NAORRR is about more than numbers. Developing and growing NAORRR is important, but no less important is what we provide for our members. Webinars, celebrations and conventions are important, but so are caring, support and assistance. Membership in NAORRR is about what we do with each other and about what we do for each other. This is perhaps the most important quality of our chevre. How we maintain it and continue to develop it as the needs of our members change and diversify is another aspect of membership that merits attention, discussion and action.

It is with these considerations in mind that I approach my responsibilities as 2nd V.P., the position most associated with membership. Hopefully, in the year ahead, progress will be made in all these areas. To do so, will require the good ideas and best efforts of us all. Please contact me at rjl@bethami.org with your thoughts about membership and your willingness to join a working committee to consider how best to address the challenges and the opportunities we have to grow our numbers and strengthen our bonds.

It's time to re-join or join for the first time!

JOIN NOW

Please see facing page for NAORRR Membership Form 



2022 MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAORRR welcomes all CCAR members who are retired or who are 60 or older, their spouses and surviving spouses or partners.

Please complete and PRINT clearly

Date:

Rabbi's name	Ordination: Year ____ <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NY <input type="checkbox"/> LA <input type="checkbox"/> J Nickname, if preferred _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75
Spouse or Partner's name	Ordination: (if rabbi) Year ____ <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NY <input type="checkbox"/> LA <input type="checkbox"/> J Nickname, if preferred _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75
Surviving Spouse's name	Ordination year & campus of deceased spouse: Year ____ <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> NY <input type="checkbox"/> LA <input type="checkbox"/> J Name of deceased spouse _____	* No dues required
Additional contribution to support Hesed/Mitzvah Fund		\$
Additional contribution to support Convention Assistance Fund		\$
Additional contribution to support NAORRR Re-Imagined		\$
TOTAL AMOUNT REMITTED <i>(make checks payable in US funds to NAORRR)</i>		\$

Check here if would like to receive your Ohr L'Naorrr newsletter ONLY via an email link.

WE NEED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION:

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City	State	Zip
Member or surviving spouse email	Member or surviving spouse home phone	Member or surviving spouse cell phone
Spouse or Partner email	Spouse or Partner home phone	Spouse or partner cell phone

Send dues and this form to:
NAORRR – Joanie and Gary Glickstein
1 Grove Isle, #1803, Miami, FL 33133
Email: naorrrglickstein@gmail.com
Website: <https://naorrr.org>

NAORRR
1 Grove Isle
#1803
Miami, FL 33133

