



OHR L'NAORRR

Newsletter of the National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis
SPRING 2026

HAPPY PASSOVER!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT NORM ROMAN



One of the benefits of writing an article for a Rabbis' (and Spouses'/ Partners') Newsletter is the realization that most of our readers will be quietly saying, "I know. I relate to that. I've been there. Me, too!" It's another indication that we share so much, professionally and personally. Key phrases, names, moments, places – all add to the lexicon and vocabulary of who we are. So I openly invite you to have your minds enhance these thoughts:

Issue Highlights

01

President's Message
Norm Roman

03

Convention Report
Laura Geller

07

Reflections on Etgar

09

Membership Renewal

As I struggle to type (I'm recovering from hand surgery) and as Joanie and Gary Glickstein ably edit and circulate this edition of our *Ohr L'NAORRR*, we are all focused on the Conflict in the Middle East, especially with Israel, the United States and other supporting allies battling the modern-day Amalek/Haman leadership of Iran. In addition to prayers and contributing to those agencies which I have traditionally helped in these times of crisis, I find special meaning in sending email messages and placing phone calls to friends and colleagues – including some of our young MARAM colleagues who have joined us at our recent Conventions. *Sha-alu Sh'lom Y'rushalayim!*

The days leading up to Purim this year also brought more challenges to us: at the Kotel and in the Halls of the Knesset, where, once again, our very legitimacy as Rabbis and as a Movement (more, in my mind, than just who can daven or read Torah) was literally thrown in our faces; around the world but conspicuously in North America,

vandalism and acts of antisemitism continue to call for our and our neighbors' strong response (I am dealing with a local "interfaith" clergy association that refuses to promote or partner with any organization whose prayers do not include reference to 'Jesus as Lord and Savior'); issues of aiding migrants and the unhoused, as well as the hungry and poor among us. And then our community is bereft at the untimely death of our friend and teacher, Rabbi Dr. Andrea Weiss (*zichronah liv'rachah*). *BaChodesh Adar? Marbim b'simchah?* Fortunately, Lynne and I were able to balance these obstacles to happiness recently, with time spent back in Michigan at a family Bar Mitzvah and brunching with friends, and with visits from and to some of our kids and grandkids – all of which enriched our hearts and rejuvenated our souls as only the young ones and their generation can. With Pesach coming, I have two long-standing study customs for the next few weeks: First, I look

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PLEASE SEE PAGE 9 TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP. PLEASE VISIT NAORRR.COM TO JOIN AND PAY DUES ONLINE IF POSSIBLE.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

through Haggadat both old and new for customs, insights, parody songs, and learning that I can share at our two Sedarim – one for the neighbors (50% or so who have never attended a Passover Seder) and the other for the members of the Active Seniors Congregation I serve part-time in Southern Arizona. For many we are their new family. (The ‘youngest at the table’,

invited to ask the Four Questions, is rarely under 65!) I also begin placing aside the books I hope to read over the Summer and researching who I will choose as the subject of my annual (55+ years) Yom Kippur “Hineini Sermon”, telling the story of one man or woman who answered the First Question in the Torah: “Adam, *Ayeka?*”

When challenged by life – its pains, sorrows, conflicts, disappointments – I look forward to the coming Spring Season---with Festivals and Celebrations, with Family and Community. May our relationship with each other, through NAORRR, bring us all comfort and strength!

Norm



NAORRR'S PROGRAM COMMITTEE

5786-87/2026

Melanie Aron, Second Vice-President

A committee of our colleagues and spouses has been meeting for about an hour monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 8pm Eastern to plan virtual programs on

a variety of topics. Members of the committee are Andrew Baker, Ari Cartun, Barbara Etkind, Fred Guttman, Henry Bamberger, James Dreyfus, Jeff Salkin and Rosalind Gold, with the support of EVPs Gary and Joanie Glickstein and officers Norm Roman, Bennett Miller, and Laura Geller.

We hope you enjoyed our first program of this year, an introduction to some of the music heard in the contemporary synagogue with Noah Aronson and Becky Mann. That was followed in early March by the presentation on the “Sermons of Rabbi Kalonymous in the Warsaw Ghetto” with Professor James Diamond, and at the end of the month by our program on bringing some non-Ashkenazi customs and music into your Passover Seder, featuring our colleagues Rifat Sonsino and Shelton Donnell along with musician and educator Loolwa Khazzoom.

We plan programs led by colleagues, spouses and outside

experts , which sometimes involve interaction among our hevre. One example of this is our upcoming program on “Doing Your Own Family Genealogy Search,” spearheaded by Karen Franklin with input from our colleagues with expertise in this area. We hope you have submitted your questions so that the group can choose some issues that are of common interest at our program on May 19th.

Issues relating to our lives here in the United States and to the upcoming 250th anniversary of the establishment of our American democracy will be addressed in two programs. On April 22nd Dr. Rabbi Gary Zola will speak to us about “Jewish Political Activism in America: Past, Present and Future.” On June 30th Dr. Rabbi Lance Sussman will address “The Impact of Military Service on American Jewry,” focusing in part on Rear Admiral, Rabbi, Doctor Bertram W. Korn and the legacy of American Jewish chaplains .

Our goal is to present programs that are unique and of particular interest to our community. We welcome your input, either by joining the committee (just let me know of your interest) or in your suggestions for future programs. Write to me at rabbiaron@shirhadash.org



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CONVENTION REPORT 2026

Laura Geller, First Vice-President

There were thirty-nine (or so) men and me in that HUC-JIR entering class in Jerusalem in 1971. Some were there to get out of the draft; I was there to figure out what being Jewish meant to me. That first year was hard: my friends were wives of some of the guys in my class, struggling like me with how one can be both Jewish and feminist. Though I didn't realize it at the time, so many of the guys were also struggling to figure out what being a Jewish leader might mean as their lives continued to unfold. At the Atlanta convention of NAORRR this past January, many of us got together again...and shared our journeys. My classmate Joel Oseran and I worked hard to encourage members of the class to come... and all the nudging paid off. NAORRR's Wallach Fund helped cover some of the costs of travel, hotel, and meals. I don't think any of us had a clue how powerful the reunion would be.

The *parasha* was *Vayechi*. Our class was responsible for the Shabbat services. With the help of Ramie Arian, a classmate, and his wife Merri Lovinger Arian, the former director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, several classmates shared their personal rabbinic journeys. Joel gave the *dvar torah*, reflecting on the blessings Jacob/Israel bestowed upon his sons. Joel asked: "What might a blessing have been for us at our ordination?" He answered: "There is no way that your teachers could prepare you in five years to learn about all there is to know in our rabbinic tradition. We are teachers, not miracle workers. We gave you a good start; the rest is up to you. As Yehoshua ben Perachiyah taught in *Pirkei Avot* 1:6,

עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב, וְקַנֵּה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהִנֵּחַ דָּן אֶת כָּל הַאָּדָם לְפָנֶיךָ זְכוֹת.

Keep a look out for teachers who will inspire you and continue the work we started. And then find one more. Secondly, don't try going it alone. Do whatever you can to acquire, find, make a friend or two to go with you, a friend who will be honest with you, will tell you when you are wrong as well as when you are right. And one more thing: you are going to work with some very difficult people along with some really terrific ones. But the difficult people are the ones who will soak up all your time, energy and ruin your *kishkas*. Don't judge them too harshly. Try to find their good qualities, try to find a positive way to live with them...

until they either change, leave your workplace or die. Take a moment now and remember back over our 50 years who were the rabbis we found and who were our trusted friends who blessed us along our journey. Give them a silent shout out- without them we would never have accomplished all that we did."

I concluded with a word before the final *aliya*: "In a moment those of us gathered to celebrate our fiftieth anniversary as rabbis will be called to the Torah. This *aliya* comes at a perfect moment, because it marks the end of the book of Genesis and our tradition teaches that as a book of Torah ends we say, "*Hazak, Hazak v'nithazek*" – from Strength to Strength we strengthen each other. What could be a better metaphor for the celebration of our 50th anniversaries as rabbis – as this chapter of our lives closes and we move into new adventures as the journeys of our lives continue to unfold?

The root of *HAZAK* evokes many different meanings: *Hokhmah* (wisdom), *Ziknah* (the maturity to serve others with that wisdom) and *Kadima* (the curiosity to continue to look forward.) Other meanings include to be bound to, to support, to be courageous, to encourage, to be helpful, to support.

My blessing for our class is this. "May we continue to go from strength to strength and may we renew our commitment to be bonded to each other, to encourage each other, to be helpful to each other and to support each other as we go from stage to stage...on our sacred pilgrimage."

All this was more powerful than I could have imagined. But even more powerful was the dinner gathering at the home of classmate Scott Saulson and his wife Diane Wulfsohn, where we shared stories of our years at HUC-JIR and some of the high and lows of our careers, regrets and prides. The stories shared were funny and sad, mind bending and heart opening. It could only happen at NAORRR.

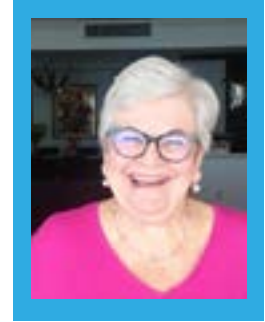
Hazak Hazak v'nitchazek.

See you in 2027 in Scottsdale.

Laura

VIEWS אלו ואלו

Gary Glickstein and Joanie Glickstein
 Co-Executive Vice Presidents of NAORRR



For the two of us, 2018 was a very good year. We turned 71.

We were both retired. Our congregation, Temple Beth Sholom of Miami Beach, Florida, had arranged a series of incredible events in our honor. They had also given us an Emeritus designation and a generous contract to go with it.

My long-time colleague, Gayle Pomerantz, had been chosen as the successor senior rabbi and we were able to sell the home we had lived in for 33 years. We left town for a year of New York living in Brooklyn.

Our children were all married and working. Our grandchildren were thriving. It was a very good year for us.

When we came back to Miami, the pandemic hit and we spent a great deal of time together. Like most of you who were retired at that time, we had an enormous amount of close-quarters hours to think about the next phase of our lives, after Covid. The last line of Mary Oliver's poem "*The Summer Day*" called out:

Tell me, what is it you plan to do
 With your one wild and precious life?
 Not long after the pandemic receded, the search committee of NAORRR reached out to us and asked if we would be interested in becoming the next Co-Executive Vice Presidents of the organization. We had attended some conventions in the past, but were never active members. Our friends encouraged us to accept only if working together would not create stress in our marriage of over 50 years.

These past four years have been incredibly gratifying, exhausting, exhilarating, and a test of our relationship. So far, so good.

The highlight of the year is the convention. Our members are so effusive in their praise and gratitude for all that we do and they express their feelings freely. Our members volunteer their time, money, and energy to make our four day gathering

so fulfilling and life affirming.

Seth Bernstein, our newly retired Data Manager, sent us a list of members who had attended as many as 18 NAORRR conventions, copying those included on the list. When Don Berlin received Seth's email he wrote, "Connection to our colleagues has been one of the most rewarding uplifting involvements defining my rabbinate. Your acknowledgment is the exclamation point."

Every year we encourage those of you who have not attended to join with us and experience the camaraderie, the warmth, the joy, of our convention. This year, Laura Geller made a focused and concerted effort to convince her classmates to attend their 50th year celebration with us. She was able to gather more 50-year classmates than we have ever seen before.

And those who came for the first time were so thankful that they had come.

Benno^z and Madeline^z Wallach provided funds to enable any member, regardless of financial ability, to attend. And this year we spent more of those funds than ever before. We hope to do that again in 2027 for the Phoenix convention.

We want you with us. The funds exist just to enable you to come. The process is confidential. And the great mitzvah that the Wallachs bestowed upon us allows us to physically be with each other, at least once a year.

The convention is hard work for us. We do experience stress and exhaustion during those weeks leading up to and continuing through the end of the convention. But in the end, this is one thing we are grateful we are doing with our "one wild and precious life."

Gary and Joanie

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LAMROT HAKOL: IN SPITE OF IT ALL

Excerpts from a D'var Torah

Delivered by Rabbi Bennett F. Miller

NAORRR National Convention January 5, 2026

Atlanta, Georgia

I don't think it is coincidental that the *parasha* which opens with today's reading is *Parashat Shemot*... We all know the story about a new ruler who has forgotten the role that immigrants have played in his country, who wishes to build cities and palaces of gold and monuments to himself, who fears that the immigrant in his country is dangerous... Samson Raphael Hirsch wrote that Pharaoh was concerned about the weakness of his government and so he wanted to find a way to rally the masses of his people by encouraging them to violence and theft against the B'nai Yisrael. Hirsch articulated the meaning and power of antisemitism before the word was even created... Nechama Leibowitz looked through a different prism. She probably ran up and down the aisle of her class as she "blames the Israelites for not protesting against Pharaoh's decision to enslave them." She screams out that the Jews were without heroes, without those who were brave enough to stand before Pharaoh and say no to his oppression. There was no resistance, no battle for their rights. As a result, Pharaoh easily did away with their freedoms and enslaved them.

Today, it is Nechama Leibowitz whose words should be ringing in our ears, in our hearts, and in our souls. Where are the heroes who are standing against the oppressors? Where are the brave and courageous souls who stand strong against the Pharaohs of our time? Not in our Congress, not among the nations of the world, not yet significantly on the streets of our cities...

On October 7, 2023, a group of High School kids from Congregation *V'ahavta* in Shoham, Israel, were scheduled to join Joan and me for Shabbat lunch. They were spending Sukkot in our community together with their Rabbi, Rinat Safania. I woke up that morning, turned on the news, only to hear about the massacre occurring in the Gaza

envelope. I said to Joan, "What will we do with these kids?" They came in, shell shocked to be sure, and we spent the afternoon debriefing, then reciting prayers for the IDF, for Israel, and singing Hatikvah. One of the kids said to me, "I don't think I can go to celebrate Simchat Torah at your Temple. It's too hard." I looked at him and said, "You must; despair is not a word in our vocabulary. You must show the congregation how Jews respond in moments like this." And those kids did just that; they danced and sang and led the entire congregation in rejoicing the Jewish story we all know so well. A few weeks later, I was in Shoham, standing with two hundred fifty members of the community, holding posters of the hostages at the main traffic circle in town, posters that declared "Bring them home, now!" The community has continued to stand at that same spot to this very day, until the last hostage is returned home.

My brother and his family live in Sydney, Australia. My sister-in-law's family came from Vienna and Sighet. Both of her parents escaped the *Shoah* and built their home and family in Sydney. On almost any given day my brother and sister-in-law do their morning walk routine at Bondi Beach, near their home. They were in Jerusalem visiting their son when the Bondi Beach massacre occurred. My brother said to me, "I'm not surprised at what happened. It's been coming for two years; government has done nothing, and the organized Jewish community has simply cowered in fear. We are starting to think it is time for our exodus, time to return to Jerusalem to stay."

In Randwick, an area next to Bondi Beach, after October 7, 2023, a family placed a large menorah on the front lawn as a symbol of hope and support for the Israeli hostages and their families. Sorala Abrams, the mother, said "We leave it up all year, because since October 7, we feel the community needs that. We got so much positive feedback for it." After the massacre on the Beach she said, "When we finally made it ...

LAMROT HAKOL (CONT'D)

home that night, our sons, our children, were crying. They said, 'Please turn off the menorah. Our home is going to become a target.' My husband and I looked at each other and said, 'No way. We are not going down like this. We do not turn off menorahs. We do not hide our kippahs. We stand proud and loud.' But our children were crying, and they begged. They said, 'Please, Mom, Dad, turn off the menorah.' So, I looked at them and said, 'As a mother, we will do as you ask; we are going to turn it off.'

Two days later, A Christian neighbor passed by. She said to me, 'Yesterday my daughter drove past your house, and the menorah was off; my daughter burst into tears. She said, 'No, Mom, they are turning off their menorahs. Evil cannot win.' When she said that, my husband called me and I said, 'No matter what, the menorah goes back on. We do not turn off menorahs. We don't stop shining light.'

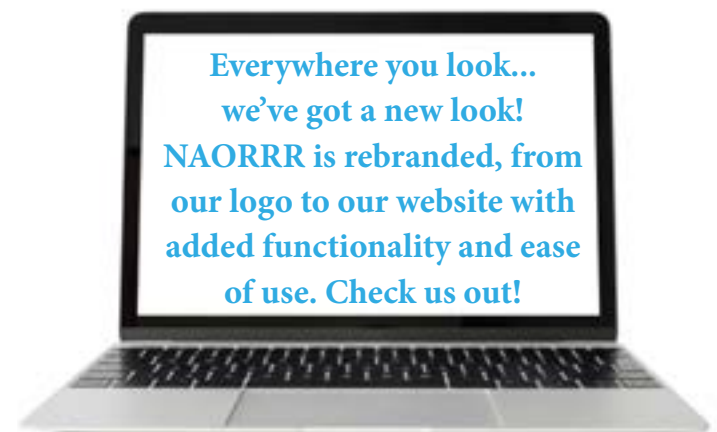
For the better part of the last two plus years, you and I, and the communities in which we live have endured antisemitism and fear, loss and pain, as few of us can recall. We are the generation of the post-Holocaust era. We are the descendants of immigrants who came from so many lands and built families and communities unlike any since the Jews of Goshen in Egypt. But today, many of us are experiencing what researchers are referring to as "Jewish Fatigue," describing the emotional state of communities that increasingly feel persecuted and pushed out of the public sphere.

Maybe Nechama Leibowitz was right! And maybe our generation is no different than the generation that became enslaved. Or maybe, those who are suffering from "Jewish fatigue" are waiting for us, the retired but not tired, those of us who know that the only way to respond to fear is through assertive and aggressive resilience and determination. You and I are of the generation that fought for equal rights for all in America. We are the ones who learned from our Rabbis how to ride the freedom buses, stand shoulder to shoulder with our neighbors, and demand better from our politicians and governments. You and I are of the generation which need not be concerned if we

will keep our jobs, if our congregations will be unhappy with us because we choose to speak out with a loud and powerful moral voice. We can and should bring the wisdom that we have acquired from the generations before us, demanding of the current generation to stand tall, become menorahs, beacons of light for us, for the immigrants among us, for the undocumented who live in fear, for all who cherish freedom. That is the legacy bequeathed to us and I pray we will pass it on with conviction and pride to the generations that follow us.

I sometimes wonder, when the story of these days is inscribed in the history books, what will be written about us, our generations? Will we be like the generations during Pharaoh's time or like a different, courageous generation?

I hope that from these days together you and I will be inspired by our Israeli colleagues to continue to be strong, despite the emotional fatigue that they must all feel. We can learn from Yael and Rinat and Yael and Lana that, *lamrot hakol*, in spite of everything, we will never give up our determination to bring light to a darkened world, to bring *Tikvah* wherever there is despair, and to declare loudly and proudly: *AM YISRAEL CHAI ... V'KAYAM!*



REFLECTIONS ON ETGAR

by Joan Friedman

I have known about the facts of slavery and its aftermath in this country for decades. As a child, I was fascinated by the weekly photos in *Life* magazine of civil rights marchers and the violent attacks on them. As a young teen, I read *Black Like Me*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, *The Invisible Man*, and sang Phil Ochs' dark "Here's to the State of Mississippi." I've read Eric Foner's magisterial work on Reconstruction, Isabel Wilkerson on the Great Migration, and much more. I'm a member of our local NAACP. I marched for George Floyd in 2020. I get it, right?

No, I never really got it – until I visited the Equal Justice Initiative's National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a memorial to the uniquely American form of racial terror called lynching.

The first film my Holocaust course students always had to watch was *Image Before My Eyes*, the 1979 documentary about Jewish life in interwar Poland. I wanted them to be aware that six million Jews were six million individual human beings who lived and loved and worked and played and made music and did all the things that human beings do. They were not just anonymous impersonal victims. I wanted to engage my students' hearts with the humanity of the history in which they were about to engage their heads.

Our visit to the lynching memorial engaged my heart as never before. Yes, I had seen photos. Yes, I knew that many of these photos were actually souvenir postcards. Yes, I knew that a Black person could be murdered for the most trivial of reasons as a way of maintaining the racial hierarchy. But seeing block after block after block, each representing a single county, each engraved with the names of up to twenty individuals, with dates of death – sometimes, obviously, whole families, murdered on the same day – engaged my heart in a way it had never been engaged before. And then there was the long corridor lined with just a selection of instances: this person, murdered for walking behind his white boss's wife; this one, murdered for asking a white co-worker to return his shovel; this one, murdered for not tipping his hat to a white man; this one, murdered for no apparent reason at all...

For the first time, I felt the pain of those crimes as intensely as I feel the pain of the crimes of the *Shoah*. It came over me and I had to stop and sit down and weep. I saw with new eyes, and now I cannot forget what I saw.



Visiting Alabama

by Seth Bernstein

Marsha and I are grateful we joined NAORRR's and Etgar's Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery tour. In Birmingham, we listened to Sarah Collins Rudolph and husband, George, recounting her survival story from September 15, 1963. Four young girls were murdered by a bomb planted by KKK members at the 16th Street Baptist Church. Sarah survived, but not her sister, Addy. In the blast, Sarah was blinded in one eye, and she still carries her trauma. Sarah became known as the "fifth child".

Years ago, CLAL published a Seder reading, "The Fifth Child". It begins... "we remember a fifth child, who did not survive the *Shoah* to ask a question. Therefore, we ask for that child—Why?" Sarah Collins, like many *Shoah* survivors, asks: Why? Not only were innocent girls murdered, but why hasn't the State taken responsibility for her disability and why are apologies and restitution nonexistent?

Travelling to Selma, Selma appeared economically depressed. Near the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge, we heard an account of "Bloody Sunday" of March 7, 1965, and of course, the historic march on March 21. My cousin, Nathan Levin, z"l, was a college student who "marched with Martin". He was prepared, but after Bloody Sunday, he was convinced that he would be killed in Selma. He completed the march but died two years later from a sudden liver disease. When we walked the bridge I recalled Nathan who joined Rabbi Heschel in praying with his feet. Bryan Stevenson's Foundation's museums have transformed Montgomery. We wended through a walking museum with lynching "coffins" above, at, and below eye level. Each coffin's state and county are replete with names of lynched victims and the "unknowns". We visited the new cavernous Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration with exhibits on slavery, mass incarceration, lynching, and racial injustice. Our tour ended with a tour of a sculpture garden with a current addition of a swinging inverted lynching tree. Like everything in the universe, this lynching pendulum is in perpetual motion. As a Hoosier, I was struck by the paucity of recorded northern lynchings. The only Indiana county with documented lynchings is Vigo. However, my attorney brother, Howard, says for decades an oak lynching tree has been next to the Scott County Courthouse in southern Indiana. I left Alabama pondering if George Floyd's homicide demonstrated that lynchings can be horizontal, why can't they be stopped?

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2026 MEMBERSHIP FORM
(January 1-December 31, 2026)

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To Multiple-time Attendees at NAORRR Conventions Erev Shabbat Shemot 5786

Dear Friends,

Those who attended the recent NAORRR Convention are aware that I have stepped down after seven years as Data Manager. I am grateful to Gary and Joanie Glickstein with whom I have served, and to Irvin Ehrlich, my predecessor, for having paved the way for me.

There are many lists and Excel Spreadsheets that I have kept up to date. One of them is a record of all the NAORRR members who have attended the annual convention for the past 25 years. I am writing to you because in my own mind we should recognize and thank you for making it into what I would call the "Chai Club of Convention Attendance and Participation." While you may or may not have attended this year or even recently, in the past 25 years you have attended 18 or more conventions. I think that is a remarkable achievement in so many ways. Yes, due to health and the ability to navigate airports, but also due to one's desire to attend and to remain active participants in NAORRR. (By the way, Dick and Diane Steinbrink are the winners: 24 and 22 conventions, respectively.)

According to NAORRR's records, the following Rabbis and Spouses have attended 18 or more conventions in the past 25 years. As expressed in this week's Torah

portion: "These are the names..."

Hank Bamberger, Don Berlin, Sion and Helaine David, Stephen and Karen Franklin, Jon Haddon, Ralph and Brenda Kingsley, David Kline, Jim and Jane Perman, Shirley Shacknai Freedman, Bart and Jane Shallat, Sam and Lynn Stahl, Dick and Diane Steinbrink, Frank and Beth Waldorf, and Sue Weiss.


I send my prayers and best wishes to you all and hope this will be a good year for each of you as well as for NAORRR that continues to strengthen the bonds between us all.

Shabbat Shalom, u'v'Chol Tuv,

Seth Bernstein,
Silver Spring, MD

*Excerpt of Don Berlin's response:
Connection to our colleagues has been one of the most rewarding and uplifting involvements defining my rabbinate. Your acknowledgment is the exclamation point.*

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**Wishing our
NAORRR family
a very Happy Passover!**



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Thank You for Your Generous Support

We acknowledge with deep appreciation the contributions of the following individuals and institutional donors to NAORRR's Annual Campaign. These funds allow us to continue offering our membership opportunities for learning, gathering at conventions, and providing financial assistance when needed. INDIVIDUAL DONORS since April 1, 2025 (as of 3/5/26) We apologize for any inadvertent omissions. Please notify us at naorrrglickstein@gmail.com

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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute
of Religion
Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel,
Elkins Park
Temple Kol Ami, West Bloomfield
IHO Norman Roman
The Temple, Atlanta IMO Alvin Sugarman
The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah,
Overland Park

*(April 1, 2025-March 5, 2026)

