Editor’s Comments

By Marc J. Swatez, Ph.D., FTA
Executive Director, Congregation B’nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim, Glenview, Illinois

There is no denying that "greening" is hot. It seems you can't read a publication, turn on the television, visit a supermarket, open a mailer, or check an e-mail without learning how this or that institution has gone green. When the Editorial Board was brainstorming topics for upcoming issues, we thought it appropriate to do a Succot issue with a green theme.

While researching and assembling this issue, however, we learned that though we all agree with the necessity to go green, there's no real consensus on how to go green. As we solicited NATA members to contribute articles based on their own experiences, in fact, we discovered that even the biggest temples with the most experienced professionals are still struggling to balance the short-term needs of their congregants, the medium-term needs of their budgets and facilities, and the long-term needs of our environment.

With this in mind, we sought to find points of relevancy for every congregation, regardless where they are along the greening spectrum. Larry Glickman and Bekki Kaplan's e-mail exchange discusses the first steps a synagogue might take towards greening. Abigail Spiegel picks up the topic and discusses how we might look for environmental solutions to more seriously improve our operations. Terri Kraus and her incredible lay colleagues detail the steps and goals of a “Green Audit.” Nanci Wilharber suggests some directions that synagogues might go to expand greening outside the temple walls to the work of our committees and the homes of our congregants. Livia Thompson discusses the opportunities and obligations that exist in synagogue architecture and construction. And Mark Weisstuch reminds us that greening is a mitzvah and that none of this need be accomplished outside of a traditional, Jewish context.

My goal, and the goal of the Journal Editorial Board for us all this festival season, is that we sit in the succah and imagine new ways to bring the outside in and sustain not only our environment, but also our communities and our shared heritage.

Chag Sameach,

Marc
The Light of a Candle Is Useful When It Precedes You; It Is Useless When It Trails Behind

Bahya Ben Asher, KAD HA-KEMAH

In the spring 2008 NATA Journal I shared with everyone our new mission statement. Thanks to the continued hard work of the committee that created it, I am now pleased to present NATA’s new vision statement (see inside back cover of this publication). This will indeed be the “candle that precedes us” and create the roadmap for a very bright future.

With our new mission and vision statements, we now have a strong foundation for our work. Many of our new initiatives – the Turn over in the Field Task Force, Education Think Tank and exploratory joint certification work with HUC, consideration of an organizational name and logo change, convention planning, and the NATA Journal itself – are all direct responses to what the organization now views as its mission and vision for the future. As we move forward I encourage all members of NATA to become involved in our exciting work.

My thanks and appreciation go out to the Mission Development Task Force for all of its hard work over the past couple of years. I also wish to take this moment to express my gratitude to the entire NATA Journal editorial board. The newly designed Journal came out last spring and I have a file of e-mails that I received with compliments regarding its look and content. Believe me when I say, those compliments do not belong to me but rather to the NATA Journal editorial board, which is making sure that NATA produces the highest quality publication we can.

L’Shalom,

Ed

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Shir Hadash Goes Solar

In November 2002 Congregation Shir Hadash of Los Gatos, Calif., became the first solar-powered synagogue in the western United States. Its 10kW photovoltaic (PV) system enables the congregation to use solar power to supply a portion of its electricity needs and to receive a utility bill credit for any excess electricity produced.

The congregation spent about 18 months raising funds for the installation (even the tenth-grade confirmation class pitched in by selling fluorescent light bulbs). In preparation for the solar installation, the congregation installed a new 15,600-square-foot “cool roof” made of polyurethane foam with white coating and granules. The new roof, designed to reflect the sun, reduces the building’s heat gain. Other energy changes at the congregation include installing energy-efficient hallway light ballasts and motion sensors in the classrooms.

The solar system annually reduces emissions the equivalent of driving about 32,000 miles in an average passenger car and reduces CO₂ emissions equal to the CO₂ absorbed by about four acres of trees in one year, compared to conventionally produced electric power. Since the solar installation the congregation is using approximately 45 percent less electricity from the grid.

“We’re extremely proud of Congregation Shir Hadash – through its new solar energy system it demonstrates a commitment to environmental stewardship, a vital and necessary component of tikkun olam, a cornerstone of our Jewish tradition,” said Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, President of the Union for Reform Judaism.

Executive Director Debbie Coutant received the 2002 NATA Award for Service to the Community for her leadership on this project.
NATA Placement Committee is responsible for supporting the process by which URJ congregations (and a few Conservative congregations and Jewish organizations) search for an executive director or other top-level administrative professional. The placement service also assists individuals looking for employment by providing them with information about available positions. Committee members, all of whom are executive directors working in congregations, work with congregations interested in hiring an executive director and posting the position on the NATA Web site. This may include discussing job descriptions, salary and benefits packages, and what the executive director can do for the congregation and what his or her role could be. NATA’s Web site already includes sample job descriptions and soon there should be a how-to manual for congregations beginning the search process. Salary and benefits reports should be available on the Web site by spring 2009. We do not match colleagues to positions. Committee members are Ruth Cohen, Betti Greenstein, Bob Isaacs, Fern Kamen, Hilary Leboff, Michael Liepman and Livia Thompson. Kathy Small, NATA’s Association Manager, provides ongoing support to the congregations, individuals seeking positions, and to the committee.

Greening Web Sites

Another first for NATA! The Board of Trustees of the URJ approved a Resolution on Ethical Employment Practices at its June 2008 meeting. NATA developed this resolution in collaboration with the Commission on Social Action and the Commission on Synagogue Management; it was originally submitted to the 2007 Biennial in Houston. This is the first time NATA has ever cosponsored a Biennial Resolution.

The Resolution urges congregations and all arms of the Reform Movement to, among other things:

1. Create a workplace environment that promotes a culture of support and respect for all employees;
2. Develop plans to bring their employment policies in line with existing Union recommendations for fair and equitable treatment for all employees;
3. To the greatest extent feasible
   • Provide benefits for full-time employees such as health insurance and retirement support
   • When outsourcing, seek out businesses that engage in fair and ethical employment practices.

NATA spearheaded discussions with the Commission on Social Action and the Commission on Synagogue Management about labor and employment practices within Reform congregations that are often inconsistent with the ethical standards in the workplace that the URJ has promoted. Thanks and credit for moving this resolution before the URJ leadership go to Rabbi Marla Feldman, Director of the Commission on Social Action; Dale Glasser, Director of the Commission on Synagogue Management; Esther Herst, FTA, NATA representative to the CSA; and Loree Resnik, FTA, NATA member of the 2007 URJ Resolutions Committee. A copy of the full resolution can be found on the NATA Web site (NATAnet.org).

See what fellow NATA members are already doing to “green” their synagogues and their congregants’ lives:

- Holding services in a smaller chapel
- Hosting a Global Warming Conference
- Encouraging Youth Group participation in recycling
- Installing a solar-powered ner tamid
- Putting a green tip in every temple bulletin and e-bulletin
- Installing bicycle racks and recycling bins throughout the temple

CHECK OUT THE RESULTS OF OUR GREENING SURVEY ON PAGE 5

www.apolloalliance.org
www.carbonfund.org
www.climatefund.org
www.coopamerica.org
www.epa.gov
www.greenbiz.ca.gov
www.greenbiz.com
www.greenbusinesstaskforce.com
www.greenproductlist.com
www.grist.org
www.livingeconomies.org
www.nrdc.org/buildinggreen
www.sustainablebusiness.com
www.thepurplebook.com
www.usgbc.org
www.usgreencommerce.org
In this excerpt from his FTA thesis, “Merging Congregations,” Harvey M. Brenner says that until now, “virtually nothing” has been written about this very sensitive subject.

“The heart of the Jewish people has always been the Beit HaMidrash; there was the source from which they drew the strength and inspiration that enabled them to overcome all difficulties and withstand all persecutions. If we want to go on living, we must restore the center to the Beit HaMidrash and make that once more the living source of Judaism.”

Ahad Ha-am (Asher Ginsberg) October 26, 1915 in a letter to B. Benas and I. Raffalowich

In the current environment of changing demographics and psychographics stemming from suburban migration, together with the disturbing trend of an overall lack of affiliation with organized Jewry, synagogues are finding themselves at financial crossroads. A viable alternative to going out of business for many cash- and member-strapped shuls may be to merge with a like-minded congregation.

Some may choose an equally diminished congregation with which to partner; or perhaps a larger, healthier one with which to merge. Sometimes different denominations merge, other times it is like entities. Geographical proximity certainly helps, but it is by no means the only determining factor.

By merging, the potential for continuation of the “blood lines,” goals, and the aspirations and dreams of the founders of one congregation can still be met (and even expanded upon) but, perhaps, in a new location or in a different format than was originally envisioned.

While there is virtually nothing written about synagogue mergers, there are hundreds of articles, books and manuals guiding the corporate and Christian church worlds toward successful mergers. Church mergers are far more prevalent, and so consequently many more treatises and papers have been put forth on the subject.

An administrator/executive director, when present, can serve as observer, participant, facilitator, resource person, mediator, cheerleader, “devil’s advocate,” orchestra conductor, or myriad other functions necessary to propel the merger forward. When used properly, this person can be an invaluable tool, guide and shepherd along the path.

The purpose of this thesis is to:
- grant insight into the merger process
- help determine what factors (if any) consistently lead to successful or failed mergers
- give first-time merger-administrators an outline to help them guide their respective congregations through the mine field that is the merger process
- demonstrate the several roles we may assume at various points in the merger process

Harvey M. Brenner, FTA, Executive Director
Temple Har Shalom, Warren, New Jersey

This article is excerpted from Brenner’s thesis, Merging Congregations: The Exploration, Facilitation and Execution of a Synagogue Merger, and the Role of the Administrator/Executive Director in the Process

The entire text, as well as supporting documents and past FTA theses, are on the NATA Web site (NATA.net.org/resources/index.php).
When we asked NATA members how “green” their temples are, the responses we got in return provided a colorful look into current synagogue practices.

When we asked NATA members how “green” their temples are, the responses we got in return provided a colorful look into current synagogue practices.

1. Have you investigated or begun any form of “greening” in your facility?
   - Yes: 94.6%
   - No: 5.4%

2. Have you performed a “green” audit?
   - Yes: 75.0%
   - No: 25.0%

3. If you have done any major construction recently, did you make an attempt to use “sustainable” materials?
   - Yes: 63.9%
   - No: 36.1%

4. Has your investment committee considered environmental issues when making investment choices?
   - Yes: 96.1%
   - No: 3.9%

5. Is “sustainability” a factor when doing routine maintenance?
   - Yes: 45.1%
   - No: 54.9%

6. Light Bulbs: Approximately what percent are:
   - Energy Efficient: 44.4%
   - Fluorescent: 48.9%
   - Traditional Bulbs: 19.0%
   - Other: 4.2%

7. Do you:
   - Recycle paper?
     - Yes: 93.1%
     - No: 6.9%
   - Recycle cans and bottles?
     - Yes: 72.2%
     - No: 27.8%
   - Use recyclable paper?
     - Yes: 66.7%
     - No: 33.3%
   - Use styrofoam?
     - Yes: 68.4%
     - No: 31.6%
   - Use green products for cleaning?
     - Yes: 50.0%
     - No: 50.0%
   - Have a “dark” night when your building is closed?
     - Yes: 56.1%
     - No: 43.9%
   - Have an active committee looking at environmental issues?
     - Yes: 49.1%
     - No: 50.9%
   - Have an environmental action plan?
     - Yes: 16.1%
     - No: 83.9%
   - Run educational programs on greening?
     - Yes: 36.8%
     - No: 63.2%
   - Encourage greening with committees and programs?
     - Yes: 72.4%
     - No: 27.6%
   - Promote greening in any temple literature?
     - Yes: 49.1%
     - No: 50.9%
Where You LEED, I Will Follow

BY LIVIA D. THOMPSON, FTA

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation photography by Steve Hall, Hedrich Blessing
Tikkun Olam and Building Green Congregational Facilities

The moral, religious and ethical responsibility to ensure that we all do more to repair the world through environmentally sound building renovation and construction has never been clearer. So it shouldn’t be a surprise that religious institutions have begun to view changes to their facilities within this framework. Concern for the environment, reducing carbon footprint and encouraging long-term sustainable living are part of their vision and their message to their own constituencies and the communities around them. Their goals include reducing pollution, limiting the use of rare resources, cutting back on energy and water waste, using local and recycled materials where possible and building for ongoing sustainability.

This effort to “go green” runs parallel to the desire of religious communities to ensure that new or renovated facilities further religious, educational, programmatic and community needs and are economically feasible – in other words, that they take into account social, economic and environment sustainability. Congregations can successfully integrate these issues into their planning and can create wonderful spaces that reflect all three goals.

As a way of creating standards and metrics to meet these goals, and to help organize a standard definition of a “green” building more generally, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) oversees what’s come to be known as LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification – a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. Since LEED certification was introduced in 2000, the USGBC has changed the way in which architects, contractors and developers design and construct buildings. The ongoing goal of the LEED system is to support creative solutions that are appropriate for the local environment of the project, and that allow adaptation for changing technologies.

Going Green: How Two Congregations Succeeded

During the planning of their new facilities, both Congregation Beth David of San Luis Obispo, Calif., and the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (JRC) in Evanston, Ill., recognized that buildings have an enormous impact on the environment and that they could make a difference by building “green.”

Each of their projects focused on defining an environmental objective (energy savings, local resources, local plants, building to a certain level of LEED). Planners engaged the congregation and temple staff in an ongoing discussion and review throughout the process to measure success. Technical and nontechnical people were involved at every level, multiple options were considered and weighed against environmental, programmatic and economic benchmarks. Given fixed budgets, complex programmatic needs, and local environmental and site issues, the projects developed ways to conserve energy, improve lighting quality while reducing costs and energy use, select building materials that minimized environmental impact by including recycled, sustainably harvested, and low-maintenance materials. Efforts were made to improve the air quality for those using the facilities and to minimize waste.

In the end, each temple met its goals in its own way.
Congregation Beth David (www.cbdslo.org) sought to demonstrate how a synagogue can balance limited resources with an ambitious program that promotes its religious, educational and community objectives – including the desire to create a green a facility as possible. After an initial search for land and a long development process, Congregation Beth David recently completed its new synagogue – approximately 16,100 square feet on about 13 acres of a total of about 62 (most of which are wetlands). Beth David had a construction budget of approximately $4.1 million and additional costs to develop the site of about $2 million. (Already, the congregation has seen significant reduction in its operational costs since it opened 18 months ago.)

The congregation's Web site describes its new facility as:

Representing a bridge between a rich past and an unlimited future, continuing centuries of Jewish values and tradition as a house of worship, a place for study, and a center for cultural enrichment and meeting. It also embodies the Jewish doctrine of tikkun olam by using sustainable design and materials that have minimal or no environmental impact.

The synagogue illustrates that architecture has the power to influence behavior by providing the kind of physical and aesthetic space that supports the congregants in prayer, in learning and in community building. The building’s architect, the San Luis Sustainability Group, understood the interplay of the programmatic goals with the desire to integrate the facility with the landscape, the need to be inviting, intimate and accessible, to allow for changing congregational needs and new technologies and to provide a high degree of flexibility for diverse programmatic needs.

Congregation Beth David was awarded LEED certification in recognition of the new synagogue as a high-performing green building – solar heated, naturally ventilated, and solar powered, located within a large park of wetlands with permanent open space. Outside landscaping is based on native plants, which shield the buildings from traffic noise, glaring lights and wind. Inside, the building is handicap-accessible and uses nontoxic paint and carpeting, recycled newsprint insulation, straw bale walls and special acoustical walls and ceiling treatment. Each room has its own thermostat and heat and air can be programmed independently. Natural lighting is used throughout the building and includes an intricate use of sky lights, solar lights, and reflective devices in addition to many windows.

As Paul Wolff, a member of the temple’s building committee noted, Congregation Beth David “rates high on what I consider six essential qualities of a synagogue: functionality, flexibility, sustainability, dynamics, inspiration and accessibility. And on top of that, it’s beautiful.”

Across the country, the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (www.jrc-evanston.org) envisioned rebuilding its facility to become the first synagogue in the United States to achieve LEED gold or platinum designation. Its project included the demolition of the original 21,400-square-foot synagogue and construction of a new 31,600-square-foot three-story facility on the same site. The project cost was approximately $10 million in hard and soft construction costs, including approximately $650,000 in extra LEED-related costs that the congregation believes it will make up with cost savings over a 10-year period, additional fundraising and grants. In addition, the lay leadership believes that its fundraising was in part successful because the new building demonstrates the leadership’s commitment to the Jewish values of tikkun olam.

Carol Ross Barney, the JRC architect, and her team worked with the lay leadership and staff to make this project a success. Every committee in the synagogue had a chance to talk about its desires, plans, and hopes for the future; strong leadership managed information and expectations. From the beginning, a green building was very much part of the planning. However, Barney warned the congregation that she didn’t think it could achieve LEED gold or platinum at

### 5 categories of criteria leading to plain, silver, gold, or platinum LEED certification

1. Sustainable site
2. Water efficiency
3. Energy efficiency
4. Building materials including recycled materials and local resources
5. Indoor environmental quality

LEED, continued from page 7
the $200-a-square-foot construction cost it had originally budgeted. In the end, the congregation raised additional money and Barney worked with the building team to make the LEED goal, looking carefully at low-hanging fruit and discussing and weighing the impact of more expensive items.

JRC’s approach relied on:

- Using reclaimed, recycled and rapidly renewable materials, such as wood from sustainable forests, and strategies such as light harvesting and water conservation (estimated 40 percent lower water usage than a conventional building). The new building was built in part using the rubble of the old building as retaining wall; trees that were cut down were reconstituted into paneling in the new building;
- Minimizing the use of depletable resources and maximizing natural air and light. For example, 90 percent of the occupied spaces are along the exterior of the building with access to daylight;
- Reducing energy consumption by a careful system of insulation, heat reflection and digitally controlled zones for heating and cooling. Each room has its own thermostat and all of the classrooms have dimming switches and occupancy sensors;
- Landscaping that requires no irrigation, like native and drought-tolerant plant species;
- Creating a parking lot lit by solar, electrically powered lights;
- Incorporating windows made of high-efficiency, insulated, gas-filled, Low-E glass, which allows for sunlight but minimal heat collection inside the building;
- Laying floors made of polished concrete designed to look like terrazzo that eliminate the need for any adhesives that would be used to glue it in place.

JRC also rejected some greening ideas after determining they were cost-prohibitive, inefficient or in conflict with another important community concern, such as the decision to forgo a green roof, a geo-thermal heating or cooling systems, and permeable pavement in the parking lot.

“From the beginning I felt very strongly about educating the congregation that this effort is grounded in our spiritual values as Jews,” said JRC’s rabbi, Brant Rosen. “Environmentalism is not just a political issue, not just a bandwagon to jump on. It goes back to the Torah, a value we’ve inherited in our own spiritual tradition—energy efficiency, not destroying natural resources. The world does not belong to us—we’re reminded repeatedly of that in the Torah.”

Conclusion

Each congregation developed affordable, practical and beautiful green designs that demonstrated their commitment to and promoted environmental awareness to their congregants and community. Both projects also led to increasing ongoing efforts to manage operations and programs in environmentally sound ways.

Congregation Beth David and the Jewish Reconstructionist Synagogue each demonstrate that green construction is achievable and can be accomplished in a way that is financially feasible, builds community, provides a model to congregants, can lead to a beautiful and successful building project, and, perhaps most importantly of all, reflects Jewish values.

Livia D. Thompson, FTA, worked in the nonprofit sector as a lawyer before joining Central Synagogue as Executive Director in 1993. She is a graduate of Columbia University and Columbia Law School. She became a Fellow of Temple Administration in 2006. She has written numerous articles for the NATA Journal, ADL publications and Lawyers Alliance resource books, and has spoken extensively at various workshops and conventions. She is currently an officer of NATA, was on the Reform Pension Board for six years, and is a member of the CCAR's Finance Committee.
It’s (Not) Easy Being Green

A primary value of Judaism is tikkun olam – repairing the world. Therefore, we have an obligation to be at the forefront of the environmental movement.

By Abigail Spiegel
Executive Director, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, California

To fulfill the mitzvah of tikkun olam, Jewish institutions must encourage both staff and lay persons to look for new environmental solutions to improve operations at work. While providing recycling bins for paper, bottles, and cans and contracting with a waste management company that can segregate waste from recyclables is admirable, they’re only the beginning. What follows is the hard but necessary part – identifying what additional actions the congregation can take and then figuring out how to implement them so everyone feels they are a part of the solution.

Since you have to start somewhere, first assemble a “green team” or “environmental action committee” comprising staff and lay leaders to demonstrate your temple’s commitment to the environment. Charge this team with creating an Environmental Action Plan (EAP) – sort of roadmap to going green – which will help highlight areas where change is needed and provide an opportunity to take the necessary steps to manage the process and to budget.

A thoughtful, well-done EAP in which people involved feel they have a stake is the most important way to ensure that the environment is a consideration and a priority in operational decisions.

Designing an Environmental Action Plan in Five Steps

An environmental policy should consider the temple's mission and values; reflect the temple's environmental goals and objectives and provide a framework from which to operate. It should be a simple and clear policy, endorsed by the board, the clergy and senior staff. It may address minimizing environmental impacts, educating the community, reducing of use of resources and any other elements deemed important by the community. Once written, a procedures manual should be created that identifies who is responsible for implementation of the policy.

1. **Review any existing environmental practices** – In part, an environmental policy is based on the detailed information collected in an environmental audit. An audit will usually provide valuable information about items that need to be focused upon and provide the baseline information from which results can be evaluated. For guidance on this crucial first step, read “Doing A Green Audit,” page 12, or contact the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) at www.coejl.org.

2. **Identify and establish objectives and goals** – This is often one of the most challenging aspects. The environmental audit is also a key tool. When setting objectives and goals, always remember that the primary overall goal is to reduce the temple's impact on the environment. (As an example, to distinguish between an objective and a goal, an objective may be to reduce energy use and a goal may be to reduce electricity use by x percent.) Remember to compare current practices with best practices, and identify any cost implications. Also, keep in mind that some benefits from environmental improvements cannot easily be measured.

3. **Prioritize actions to be taken** – Often, many more projects will be identified than can be handled at once. In business and
manufacturing, projects with the opportunity for the greatest impact are usually made a first priority. With temples and other nonprofits, this may not be the case. As cost is often of primary concern, identifying low-cost solutions and implementing them first may be a priority. These options are sometimes easier to implement and their benefits are more readily apparent. How institutions prioritize is based on what works best for them.

4. Communicate progress to the congregation and the community at large – Creating a sustainable culture and building awareness among the staff and membership is a critical component to any environmental program. Building awareness of issues facing the environment is equally important. Since not everyone believes that there is an environmental crisis, some community members may need additional information and encouragement. It is therefore important to provide congregants with information on how they can conserve in their own lives.

The goal is not simply to focus on operations or the temple’s impact but also to help members to develop a sense of individual responsibility. Communication is a critical component. Maintaining the focus on the environment is important but also sharing information of how members can personally help the environment is something that every congregation can and should do.

Make a point to share information in your temple’s electronic newsletter or your bulletin about energy-efficient appliances and energy-efficient cars, or information about how to compost, etc. The topics that can be shared are endless. Do not forget to focus on the positive. When there are successes, make sure to inform the congregation.

5. Monitor progress – It’s essential that objectives are reviewed and that progress is monitored so that strategies can be adjusted to ensure that the target goals are being achieved. It is often said that “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.” Remember, actions that are measured get managed.

As indicated above, the environmental audit is an important element throughout the EAP process. It not only provides information but is also a tool in the monitoring process. Scheduling repeat environmental audits every few years helps to identify any adverse trends (and enables you to put the necessary steps in place to rectify them).

In larger congregations with a more “corporate” structure, the above steps are the norm. For smaller congregations that may not have the support, structure or resources, these steps may seem daunting. Don’t be dissuaded – every congregation can make a difference. The approach may be different but the importance of focusing on the environment is one that every congregation must embrace.

Regardless of how you do it, the benefit of creating a culture sensitive to environmental concerns is that once established, it will encourage the temple and its members to find new, sustainable solutions. The midrash on creation (Midrash Rabba 3:1) states “when God created the first human beings, God led them around the Garden of Eden and said: ‘Look at My works! See how beautiful they are, how excellent. For your sake I created them all. Take care not to spoil or destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you.’” If we do not act to protect our planet, who will?

Abigail G. Spiegel is the Executive Director of Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles. She is in her fifth year as a Temple Administrator. Abigail has senior member status with NATA. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband Adam and their four children, Sydney, Maxwell, Sascha and Harry.
To assess the impact of your environmental programs and policies, you must first audit your temple’s operations. By measuring and understanding your current practices, you can best target the areas of waste to most effectively reduce your environmental impact. Once you establish a baseline, you can work with temple staff and administrators to implement policies and procedures to enhance or supplement current practices. One of the greatest benefits of running a more efficient, less wasteful organization is that it often directly translates to financial savings in energy, waste and water bills. While the initial audit is essential, it is equally important to conduct follow-up audits and annual reviews.

Every audit requires a series of phases: First, the detective work - find records to see how much your temple has been spending on these items. Second, the resourcefulness work - determine if there is a local agency or nonprofit that can assist your efforts or what incentives are available through your local utilities for improvement. Third, the tedious work - count current practices.

Each of the following five key areas to a standard audit includes these three critical phases.

1. RECYCLING AND WASTE:
Most temples generate a significant amount of waste through lifecycle events in addition to standard daily operations. The recycling and waste audit will help you identify what your current practices are in order to target changes where possible. The waste audit generally requires the following actions:

   • Identify what materials are currently generated (e.g., trash, recyclables, compostable materials, etc.)
   • Quantify how much of each type of waste is being generated (this information could be derived by measuring how often each type of container is emptied per week, or the information might be on your waste bill in tonnage per month)
   • If you have recycling and compost bins, spot check the amount of misplaced items in each container at the end of an average week (this will help inform the type of policies or operations you might need to implement)
   • Document how each material is being managed (e.g., review waste policies and operations plans, etc.)
   • Document what waste-reduction actions are currently being taken (this will also help tell you if these practices are operating ideally or if they require modifications)
   • Determine if your waste collection agency offers financial incentives for reducing waste (if the reduction in waste is significant, you could realize financial savings from reduced garbage fees)
   • Implement policies and procedures to reduce the waste

2. ENERGY USE:
Typically, your local energy provider will conduct a free energy audit of your facility’s energy use and provide you with specific improvement suggestions and possible incentives. Make sure to review bills annually to ensure savings are being captured and schedule free audits every few years to identify additional opportunities to improve energy savings as new technologies and programs become available. The energy audit generally requires the following actions:

   • Review your bill to determine energy usage and usage rates for your facility
   • Identify what types of lights are installed throughout your temple (compact fluorescent, incandescent, tube fluorescent) and what version of these lights you have (lighting technology has advanced significantly in the last decade; having the most up-to-date technology will help you save energy and money on your utility bill)
   • Identify other areas of energy use (exit signs, HVAC, refrigerators, etc.)
   • Implement policies and operations to improve energy conservation

3. WATER USE:
You would be amazed by how much water is wasted in a typical flush of a toilet or average use of the sink. Similar to an energy audit, your local water department may provide free water-use audits and incentives to save you even more money. Make sure to review your bills and options annually to ensure savings are being realized and to identify additional ways to reduce your water use. The water audit generally requires the following actions:
FALL 2008

Does your synagogue provide ride services? How much travel (air, rail, and road) is required of senior staff throughout the year? How far do your employees travel to commute to work? How do they commute to work (single-occupancy commute or car-pooling; biking, public transportation or walking)? Make ballpark estimates of your congregation commute based on a zip code analysis. Calculate the annual mileage associated with each. Consider ways in which to make reductions in each area.

For more on performing a green audit, contact the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) at www.coejl.org.

Charlene Schachter and Lara Etenson are the co-Chairs of Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco’s Environment Committee and experienced in the arena of Green Audits. Terry Kraus is the Director of Membership Services for Congregation Emanu-El of San Francisco. Her position includes managing the social justice projects of the congregation. Prior to that she was the Executive Director of Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, CA for 3 years and served as the Executive Director of Temple Sed in Paradise Valley, AZ for 13 years. In 1994 Terry was awarded the NATa Service to the Community Award for her work in hunger projects, and in 1999 she was awarded the Myron Schoen Service to Judaism Award by NATA for her work with MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, on whose board she served for ten years.

### 4. POLLUTION PREVENTION:
Pollution-prevention efforts involve all areas of a temple’s operations. Assess your facility to identify all hazardous materials in the work site and determine if those items get used regularly. Consider using environmentally friendly versions of products like cleaning agents, building materials, pesticides, fertilizers, toners, backup generators, etc. Identify current usage and disposal patterns for grease, oil, and solvents, excess paints, spent fluorescent tubes (light bulbs), used toner cartridges, electronic equipment such as computers, cell phones, pagers and batteries. Develop policies and procedures to reduce these sources of pollution.

### 5. TRANSPORTATION:
Does your synagogue provide ride services? How much travel (air, rail, and road) is required of senior staff throughout the year? How far do your employees travel to commute to work? How do they commute to work (single-occupancy commute or car-pooling; biking, public transportation or walking)? Make ballpark estimates of your congregation commute based on a zip code analysis. Calculate the annual mileage associated with each. Consider ways in which to make reductions in each area.

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### REDUCE WASTE
- **Make it easy to recycle:** Set up a recycling (and composting) system by placing bins in convenient locations that are clearly marked.
- **Make it harder to throw waste in the trash:** Make your trash bins smaller and placed off to the side.
- **Set Defaults:** Encourage two-sided printing and copying. Ensure that printers can print double-sided.
- **Minimize clutter:** Use electronic files rather than paper ones.
- **Reduce marketing materials:** Design marketing materials that you fold and mail.
- **Close the loop:** Purchase 100 percent post-consumer waste paper for use in printers and copiers.
- **Eliminate disposable items:** Use permanent ware (mugs, dishes, utensils, towels, coffee filters, etc.) and use refillable containers.

### REDUCE ENERGY USE

**HVAC**
- **Regular maintenance:** Schedule regular check ups on your HVAC and keep a log.
- **Minimize heat loss:** Insulate hot water pipes, hot water heaters and storage tanks.
- **Tighten your building envelope:** Replace inefficient or broken windows with energy-efficient double-pane windows. Increase weatherization on windows and doors to minimize heat loss.

**Lighting**
- **Upgrade your lighting:** Replace magnetic ballasts with electronic ballasts (to save energy and money); install second-generation T-8 or T-5 lamps that are more efficient than traditional T12 or standard T8 bulbs.
- **Target your lighting:** Use "task" lighting with energy-efficient bulbs rather than lighting an entire area.
- **Improve your exit signs:** Use LED or electroluminescent exit signs.

- **Make it easy to turn off the lights:** Install lighting controls such as occupancy sensors in spaces of variable occupancy (restrooms, offices, etc.).
- **Take advantage of daylight:** Use daylight dimmers that turn off automatically when there is sufficient light, keep shades open, and maintain trees to minimize blockage of the sun into windows.

### REDUCE WATER USE
- **Stay informed:** Understand your water bill and review it monthly for indications of leaks or other problems.
- **Upgrade your toilets:** Ensure that all toilets are a maximum of 1.6 gpf, replace inefficient toilets (>3.5 gpf) with high-efficiency ones (<1.2 gpf).
- **Automate:** Use rain shut off devises as part of your irrigation system.
- **Make it easy to save:** Install low-flow, self-closing faucets.

### REDUCE POLLUTION
- **Prevent pollution from the onset:** Buy recycled and low-VOC paints when available.
- **Clean with green products:** Use low-toxic cleaners and properly dispose of leftover and expired materials (check with your local municipal solid waste agency for drop-off times and locations).

### REDUCE EMISSIONS
- **Offer bike parking:**
- **Turn off your engines:** Implement a no-idle policy for all vehicles—especially if you have a preschool or school at your temple.
- **Incentivize public transportation and carpooling:** Offer options to employees to carpool or use public transportation.
- **Work from home:** Offer telecommuting opportunities and flexible schedules so workers can avoid heavy traffic commutes.
- **Join a car-share:** Provide car share memberships (such as City Share or Zip Car) and encourage your employees to use the hybrid cars available through these services for business work.
“This is the way of the devout and those who seek good deeds... they never destroy even a grain of mustard, and are upset at any destruction they see.”

– Rabbi Aaron Halevi of Barcelona, Sefer HaKhinukh, 529.

It’s about the land. Fundamentally, the Jewish view of greening begins with the land and humanity’s relation to it. The starting point, without being disingenuous about it, is Creation and the fact that God created the land and “owns” it. When mankind enters the picture he is enjoined to: “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule (some translate it as “dominate”) the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on the earth.” (Gen 1:28)

This commandment—master it and rule—might seem to give mankind license to freely exploit the abundance of nature. However, the sages are quick to point out that dominion should not be conceived as rampant and completely self-serving. Rashi, the 11th century commentator on the Bible and Talmud, links the Hebrew word for “dominate” with the word for “fall” (yirdu/yerdu) and emphasizes that dominion can only be achieved by doing good work. Maimonides adds the caveat that dominion comes about as a product of sacred action. The key though is mankind’s need for responsible relationship to the environment.

In fact, the Torah itself makes the direct connection between human behavior and the condition of the earth. In the “blessings and curses” segment of Leviticus, the tokhekha, the rebuke, virtually in the first breath we are instructed, “If you follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments, I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill. Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. For the Lord’s anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the Lord is assigning you.”

This passage invokes a kind of multifaceted, Buberian mode of relation. Our actions, the choices we make, affect our relation with God, our fellow men and with nature. A dynamic interdependency prevails. If we do not act dutifully and lovingly, we will pollute the land, damage the lives of animals and our innocent neighbors and insult God. The passage portrays a grim picture of the ineluctable consequences of serving other gods—expulsion, natural catastrophe, endless human suffering. To avoid such a natural disaster for human beings—Adam—as well as the earth—
adamah—(a formulation suggested by Arthur Waskow) we must guard against the lure of “other gods,” read: self-indulgence, self-interest, unbridled economic advancement and so on. The false gods referred to in the text, are, indeed, the source of great moral challenges for us in modernity.

Our relation to the land is further defined in the Torah’s insistence, as we noted earlier, that the land belongs to God. The Psalmist (24:1) explicitly enunciates this crucial concept: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that it holds.” We are tenants; our rights of usage are delimited and circumscribed. This is a principle we often forget, one which actually runs counter to the view we hold of ourselves.

We see ourselves as the absolute proprietors of our property and we see the land as the instrument for expanding our wealth. Since we believe we “own” the land, we think we can use it in whatever way we choose.

Judaism reminds us, however, that our ownership is temporary. The most cogent expression of this limitation is the concept of the sabbatical years (schmita) and the jubilee. Leviticus 25:3-4 sets forth the temporal cycle of property tenure: “Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. But in the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath of complete rest, a Sabbath of the Lord, you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.” So if you think you are the sole proprietor of your land, think again, we are told. The produce of the land in its seventh year is available to all—your slaves, laborers, the poor, etc. Granted, there are practical problems in adhering to this principle, as was demonstrated in the lively debates among Orthodox rabbis in Israel who tried to steer a course between biblical mandate and potential economic destabilization when the schmita year occurred last year. But the message of the sabbatical year edict is clear. Human ownership of the land is not permanent. We are trustees and our stewardship must be tempered by restraint and self-control.

Another central tenet of the biblical ecological perspective is derived from an injunction in Deuteronomy 20:19-20 proscribing acts of vandalism during wartime: “When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them.” The Jewish general is enjoined not to cut down the woods of Birnam as a battle strategy. Even in war – or one might say, especially in war – when wanton destruction is so prevalent, we are warned not to damage nature. We are reminded that nature must not be subverted to the needs of war and destruction, so all the more so must it be preserved in our peacetime usage. The prohibition in this text, referred to as bal Tashhit, has been enlarged upon by the Rabbis as the basis for many Halakhic principles bearing on humankind’s treatment of the natural world, particularly as it pertains to agriculture. The ordinances they establish premised on their interpretation of bal Tashhit seek to balance the demands of private economic interest against the biblical obligations to act responsibly in preserving nature’s integrity and avoid despoliation.

Judaism tells us, then, how mankind must understand its relation to nature: that our physical and moral survival is dependent on preserving the ecosystem of which we are a part; that we are custodians of nature’s abundance, in effect, partners with God, not sole proprietors; and that treatment of the natural world we inhabit should be guided by self-restraint and humility—that our behavior when it comes to nature should be eco-centric, not ego-centric.

So what do we do? As temple administrators, we indeed spend much of our time on doing, we exercise the principle asserted in Pirke Avot (The Ethics of Our Fathers) 1:17 that “action is the principle thing.” As leaders in our communities it is incumbent on us, therefore, to translate the biblical prescriptions about caring for nature into specific and concrete actions, making “greening” a high priority on our Jewish agenda. It begins with raising awareness through study and understanding how deeply rooted ecological imperatives are in the ethos of the Bible and our tradition. Then turning awareness into practice—in shul and at home; as a community and as individuals—recognizing that tikkun olam, in addition to calling for moral rectitude and ethical behavior, is a principle that literally means fixing the planet.

Mark W. Weisstuch is Administrative Vice President at Congregation Emanu-El in New York, where he has labored in the urban vineyards of the Lord for nearly 23 years. He also pursues his abiding interest in teaching, a vestige of his prior professional incarnation, by offering courses in synagogue management, synagogue governance, Jewish history, the history of the Holocaust and, most recently, The Dead Sea Scrolls. Mark has a Ph.D. in theatre history from City University of New York.
As Jews, we have an obligation to both respect the teachings of our ancestors and educate the generations that follow us. By enlightening your synagogue's congregants, staff, and committee members on how to bring “greening” into their lives, you are upholding such tradition while fulfilling the Torah’s values and following its guiding forces. For it is written in Genesis 2:15, humans were put on the earth “to work it and guard it,” which can be understood to mean that humans are to use the earth, but carefully respect and protect it at the same time. Even though “green” has become the latest buzzword, it appears that the Torah and our ancestors were implementing this trend long ago.

The fact is, when congregants see staff members or lay leaders placing value on greening, it’s natural that they, too, will see its value and begin to follow suit. Seeing a staff member put a plastic water bottle into a recycle bin, for instance, gives congregants “permission” to do it, as well. When a committee chairperson asks committee members to bring their own copy of the agenda to a meeting or writes the agenda on a white board instead of distributing it, that chairperson is conveying a green message. Modeling green behavior works. And, naturally, if the rabbi and clergy staff promote “greening” from the bima, it adds credibility to the temple's efforts.

It’s also easy to incorporate greening into committee life at the synagogue. E-mail reports a few days before a meeting so that copies do not have to be made for the meeting. If you serve refreshments, request organic fruit or vegetables, fair-trade coffee, and reusable cake plates and silverware, if possible; if you serve coffee, use the coffee grounds to nourish the soil of the plants in your Mitzvah garden – or any garden on the synagogue grounds. In the winter, ask committee members to bring sweaters if the thermostat is going to be set at 68 degrees. And, of course, lights should be turned off when the committee leaves the room and throughout the entire temple at closing time.

It would be highly appropriate for a board member to report to the board or to the entire congregation via newsletter on the success of conservation methods. Has the electric bill remained steady, even if it did not decrease? Has the amount of recyclable items increased and is it now time to order a second recycling bin? When people are given positive feedback, more likely than not they will continue to shift habits to create more green ways of acting. To truly engrain these habits into congregants’ lives and have them bring the actions into their own homes, temple staff and leaders must constantly reinforce the action.

Nanci B. Wilharber graduated from University of Connecticut with a B.A. in economics, from the University of New Haven with an MBA in international business, and received her FTA in November 2006. Nanci has been the Executive Director of Temple Emanuel of Tempe since 2003. Prior to being employed at Temple Emanuel, Nanci worked at Hillel at Arizona State University, and before that, spent 12 years in the nursing home industry.
• **Adult Education Committee:** Show the movie “An Inconvenient Truth.” Have a discussion following the movie to discuss the impact of global warming on the temple’s city and state. Invite a representative of the local utility company to lecture on solar energy and the tax benefits of installing solar panels on one’s home. Have a discussion about hybrid cars with testimonials from congregants who own them.

• **Early Education Committee:** Educate our youngest children and teach “green” habits that will grow with them. Create curriculum to teach them to recycle and be aware of the environment. Plant seeds, study a bird’s nest, capture rainwater for watering a garden.

• **Religious School Committee:** Offer “green” education to religious school students. Create a curriculum that teaches Jewish values about the environment and how all children have an impact and an obligation to bring that knowledge home to help their family to lead a more “green” life. Ask Bar and Bat Mitzvah students to bring “greening” into their simcha by collecting used sports gear or items for pet shelters (old blankets, towels, crates). Incorporate outdoor activities for the students such as “Hike Mount Sinai” for Passover. Help the students gain an appreciation for nature and the outdoors and what everyone stands to lose if these precious commodities are not valued and preserved.

• **Youth Committee (Youth Groups):** Create programs in which the teens can do a mitzvah and help the environment. Clean a park, paint garbage pails, collect food and used clothing for a shelter.

• **Budget Committee:** Discuss with the board how attention to details such as utilities usage will directly affect the temple’s bottom line. Have a fundraiser at Chanukah whereby the temple sells energy-saving bulbs and recruits congregants to change out all of their bulbs at home. Swap out the temple bulbs as well and alert the congregation about the change.

• **Judaica Shop Committee:** Sell items made of recycled materials or items with less waste and packaging. Allow people to trade in old books or sell on consignment so that their used books do not end up in a landfill but may be enjoyed by others.

• **Membership Committee:** Put membership documents online so that people can complete them and e-mail them back to the temple. Condense forms and other literature into a smaller format for “snail” mailing.

• **Outreach Committee:** Send articles and short documents via e-mail. Forward on URJ Outreach forum e-mails to inspire and excite those looking to bring Judaism into their lives. Educate on how “greening” is a very Jewish tenet and teach how the Torah views saving and valuing the environment.

• **Publicity Committee:** Send press releases via e-mail instead of printing and mailing. Use digital photos that can be sent via e-mail, as well. Upload photos of programs to the temple’s Web site so everyone can see what cool programs the temple offers. Create an online version of the monthly newsletter.

• **Ritual Committee:** Initiate change to a solar-run Ner Tamid – many beautiful Nerot Tamid are now available. Turn “newspaper into prayerbooks” by acquiring a paper recycle bin that pays per ton and donate the proceeds to the Prayerbook Fund.

• **Social Action Committee:** Create a Mitzvah garden using organic materials and, upon harvest, donate the crops to a local food bank or congregant family who may be in need.
FROM: Larry  
TO: Bekki  
SUBJECT: Greening

Hey Bek,

So, my rabbi came to me today and told me he wanted our synagogue to go “green.” Assuming he didn’t want the entire staff to dress like Kermit the Frog, I asked him exactly what he wanted us to do. I received a long list, but the highlights are daunting!

• all light bulbs to be converted to CF light bulbs
• no more paper plates or cups for our Oneg Shabbat
• only environmentally sound soaps and cleaning products
• a solar powered eternal light on our ark

I don’t even know where to start. Any ideas?

FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Hey Larry,

Trust me. I feel the pressure, too. This past winter one of the greenest synagogues in the country, the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, right down the street from me here in Evanston did a remodel in our neighborhood – its building and operations are truly impressive (ed. note: see page 6 for more). My hat goes off to Bryna and her congregation. While the environment has always been an important issue at Beth Emet, now more than ever we have become aware as a congregation that we need to significantly lesson our carbon footprint. As professionals we need to lead by example and find ways to be good stewards of the earth. After all, our environmental decisions not only have an economic impact on the congregation’s finances but they have local and global implications, as well.

FROM: Larry  
TO: Bekki  
SUBJECT: Greening

Bekki,

I don’t think anyone would argue with you about the benefits of going green. Ecologically, economically, ethically, morally...it’s all there!

FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Larry,

You’re right, it is all there. Just replacing one compact fluorescent light bulb for an incandescent one will save, over the ten-year life of the bulb, the burning of 500 pounds of coal! And it will save you between $30 to $50. Imagine the impact if we would encourage even one-third of our congregants to replace bulbs in their homes! Then think about ways we could have a similar impact on water and wood and clean air and the problem of waste. The list goes on and on! We need to inspire our leadership and congregants to renew their commitment to act ecologically responsible; what better way than by using our buildings and grounds as an example. Seriously, I think your rabbi is right on!
FROM: Larry  
TO: Bekki  
SUBJECT: Greening

Bekki,  
The good news is that we have already replaced our light bulbs, that part was easy. We are all being as careful as we can about keeping lights turned off, keeping the thermostat at a reasonable temperature, and some of our employees have now begun to carpool. Hey, just to do my own “greening” project, I even had a salad the other day! But making a real environmental impact takes a lot more work, a lot more money, and a lot more attention. Seriously, where do I start?

FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Larry,  
Ultimately the question becomes how do we live our values, and as leadership you need to come up with a game plan to “attack” this and be thoughtful in how to proceed. So start there.

FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Larry,  
You’re right, it can seem overwhelming, but it doesn’t have to be overwhelming. By stepping back and thinking about the environmental impact of worship, education, our facilities, the appropriate questions to ask will become obvious to you. For instance, what can we do to educate our members? What can we do as a congregation to serve as an example? Do we know what impact our program places upon the environment and, if not, can we do an inventory to find out?

FROM: Larry  
TO: Bekki  
SUBJECT: Greening

Bekki,  
Those are great questions. I can really see how the answers (after lots of discussion) would lead to other, more focused questions that would, in turn, give us the momentum we need to start to draw up the type of plan you suggest and take action.

>>
FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Larry,
You’re right! I hadn’t really thought about it like that. After all, once you know what your impact is and understand the resources and determination you have to effect change, you can start to really drill down. I can imagine you’d want to identify how you can cut down your energy use, what the environmental impact is of the paper and wood products you use, how you may be able to reduce the use of water in your facility, and what type of cleaning products your maintenance staff uses and what alternatives may be feasible. And don’t forget food choices, the quality of your indoor air and the congestion and energy use caused by idling cars in the parking lot. The list goes on and on.

FROM: Larry  
TO: Bekki  
SUBJECT: Greening

Bekki,
Good thoughts, all, to be sure. Among all the pastoral calls that need to be made, the congregants we need to meet, the budgets we need to create and the worship we need to manage, how can we possibly fit all this in? Where do we start? Calgon, take me away!!! (Unless, of course, Calgon is not environmentally friendly.)

FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Larry,
Stay calm! And don’t take this upon yourself. Engage your leadership, engage the congregation. This is a great opportunity to make the synagogue a meaningful place in which your congregants can learn about greening immediately and even apply those lessons to their day-to-day lives.

FROM: Larry  
TO: Bekki  
SUBJECT: Greening

Bekki,
This is good. I’m getting the bug…the Green Bug! So I will suggest to our rabbi that he put together an environmental committee. This committee will work with our catering committee, our interiors committee and our building and grounds committee to develop short- and long-term goals that make sense for our congregation. Using available expertise backed by a strong organization should do the trick!

FROM: Bekki  
TO: Larry  
SUBJECT: Greening

Larry,
One of the keys to our successes in many things that we do is to build from the ground up. If you really want to become a “green” synagogue, then there also needs to be a groundswell (composted, of course) from the bottom up for this to have staying power. Give ideas and motivate from the top, but it will not gain traction until you have someone or some group be “Meshugah b’dvar” - literally crazy for the idea. Follow Obama’s lead…. It’s all grassroots, baby! Keep hope alive!
NATA’s New Vision Statement

Guided by a commitment to Reform Judaism and Jewish Values, NATA strives to elevate the individual and the profession of the Temple Executive Director.

NATA will visibly and credibly achieve excellence by nurturing relationships and strengthening members’ skills.

Our Tenets

NATA will:

• Meet the needs of our members, whose success within their congregations is our primary purpose and mission;
• Maintain and enhance our cooperative relationships with the URJ, HUC, other URJ affiliates and fellow professional organizations to better serve Reform Judaism;
• Develop best practices in temple administration and function;
• Cultivate and develop strong leaders within NATA;
• Integrate Derech Eretz and other Jewish ethics into our approach to synagogue management.

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THE NATA NATIONAL OFFICE

The NATA National Office is headquartered in Ridgefield, Washington, adjacent to the Columbia River and about 15 minutes north of Portland, Oregon. The office is managed by Kathy Small of Small and Associates, which prides itself on providing top-quality customer service to the NATA membership. The national office provides the day-to-day administration of membership, convention, education and placement services, as well as support to the NATA Executive Team and Board of Directors. Kathy Small has been managing the NATA office for the past 10 years.

NATA National Office | P.O. Box 936 | Ridgefield, WA 98642
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