THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE
Editor’s Comments

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

When the Editorial Board and I first convened to map our tenure with the NATA Journal, we slotted the topic of “Leadership” for our final issue. After all, since Mark Weisstuch and I put together a panel for the 2002 Cleveland Convention that sparked the “Three Legged Stool,” many of us have been engaged in a rich, ongoing debate about the role of the Executive Director in synagogue leadership. Allowing the conversation to flow onto these pages seemed only natural.

Leadership in synagogues is dependent on a variety of factors that differ from place to place. The job description of the Executive Director, the expertise of the synagogue staff, the size, location and budget of the congregation, the culture of the Board and lay people, the history of the institution can all affect the leadership role of Executive Directors. Yet temple leadership can’t be so institutionally unique that it can’t be generalized. In this issue, we have approached this topic from a variety of perspectives and angles.

Our teacher and friend Dale Glasser pens the essential article on “The Three Legged Stool.” Janice Rosenblat and I apply contemporary leadership theories to our profession. Jeanne Kort and Mark Weisstuch approach leadership from different philosophical perspectives. Bill Ferstenfeld reflects upon his career as a Temple leader. Larry Glickman and incoming Journal Editor Esther Herst share their thoughts on leadership development programs.

In a 1974 article, Eugene Borowitz applied the religious model of tzimtzum, God’s contraction so that the world has room to exist, to synagogue leadership. He felt that synagogues “seek a leadership construed not primarily in terms of the accomplishment of plans but equally in terms of its humanizing effect on the people being led.” Executive Directors may be tempted to measure our achievements by quantifying our accomplishments. However our ultimate goal is not to balance budgets, but to provide balance for the spiritual lives of our congregation members. Borowitz’s reminder that Temple leadership is primarily about forming a strong Jewish community may be the core lesson from this issue.

Editing this Journal has been an opportunity and a responsibility I have cherished. I am grateful to Ed Alpert for entrusting it to my care and to the dedicated editorial board. I wish Esther Herst and her team the greatest success. Finally, I would like to thank the leadership of Congregation BJBE for supporting me to pursue this project and the many valuable tasks I undertake within NATA. What I give to both BJBE and to NATA serves to enrich my life and provide meaning to my career.

L’Shalom,

Marc
From The President

A message from Edward M. Alpert, FTA
Executive Director, Am Shalom, Glencoe, Illinois

At Sinai Moses received the Torah and handed it over to Joshua who handed it over to the elders
Who handed it over to the prophets who in turn handed it over to the men of the Great Assembly.

– Pirkei Avot 1:1

This beautiful saying from Pirkei Avot sums up one of the most important elements of being a Jew. Since our creation it has been incumbent upon each generation to pass along the traditions and lessons of our people. This issue of the NATA Journal is devoted to leadership and I could not think of a more appropriate saying to characterize the roles we all play. I have truly been fortunate to learn from so many individuals that preceded me both in congregational life, as well as within NATA. They understood the important role of imparting their knowledge to the next generation and from all of them I feel I have become a better professional. It is now our sacred responsibility to ensure that within our congregations we share our knowledge and experience to help those in both professional roles as well as those coming up the ranks among lay leadership. NATA has also benefitted in recent years from the incredible leadership of you, its members. In recently looking at an updated NATA Committee chart, I realized that dozens upon dozens of my colleagues are serving in various roles to support the organization, many for the first time. My deep thanks for your leadership and dedication in making sure NATA remains such an outstanding organization.

Speaking of leadership I would be remiss if I did not express appreciation and gratitude to Marc Swatez, FTA, the editor of the NATA Journal. This edition marks his final as editor, as he assumes the big responsibility of co-chair of our 2010 Conference in Portland. When I became president a couple of years ago my top priority was re-establishing the NATA Journal as the premier communication tool of NATA. Marc and the NATA Editorial Board have done such an incredible job in turning the Journal around and creating a publication of which we can all be proud. I cannot begin to tell you how many compliments I have received over the last few years regarding our new Journal, not only from colleagues but from people inside and outside our movement. Marc, congratulations on a job well done and thank you so much for your incredible love and dedication to the Journal. Esther Herst will be taking over as NATA Journal editor effective with the Spring 2010 edition, and I have no doubt under her good stewardship, the high quality of the NATA Journal will continue.

I’ Shalom,
Ed

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NATA PLACEMENT

The 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 professionals. 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. In addition to posting the position on the NATA Web site, this includes 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: (http://natanet.org) and the new how-to manual, “A Guide for Congregations Going into Placement for a New Executive Director,” for congregations beginning the search process. We do not match colleagues to positions. Committee members are Ruth Cohen, Betti Greenstein, Saralouise Reis and Beth Silver, Michael Liepman and Janice Rosenblatt, FTA. Kathy Small, NATA’s Association Manager, provides ongoing support to the congregations, individuals seeking positions and to the committee.

NATA CONSULTING

Representing the combined expertise and experience of our professional synagogue Executive Directors, NATA’s Consulting Service, together with the URJ Office of Synagogue Management, offers URJ member congregations experienced professionals to assess and make recommendations in a variety of areas, including finance, governance and personnel. The consulting fee is waived to URJ member congregations, which are required only to reimburse for the consultant’s expenses. For more information, please contact the following NATA Regional Reps: Robert French in the East, Jeff Manis in the South, Bekki Harris Kaplan in the Midwest, and Robin Rubin in the West. or visit NATA’s Web site (natanet.org).

Going From Good to Great

Registration is underway, workshops are planned, presenters are ready, meals selected, the Four Seasons is ready to reserve your room, and a fun and funny night out is waiting for us. All of this can be found in beautiful Toronto. Come join us for the 2009 NATA Convention, where friendships are renewed, education is abundant and colleague camaraderie is the lifeblood of NATA. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact Ruth Cohen at ruth@sinaidenver.org, Robin Rubin at rubin@templesolel.net or Kathy Small at nataoffice@natanet.org.
NATA SURVEY: Leadership and the Executive Director

1. How often do you meet together with your:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rabbi</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Rabbi &amp; President Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other week</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other month</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you catch them</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

2. Which committee meeting do you attend, make a report, have a role in setting the agenda, are officially assigned to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Attend</th>
<th>Make a Report</th>
<th>Play a Role in Setting the Agenda</th>
<th>Assigned as Staff Liaison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget/Finance</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House/Building/Security</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Range/Strategic Planning</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications/PR</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/Fund Raising</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Development/Leadership</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual/Worship</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Action</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery School/Early Childhood</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

3. Formal Leadership Development Program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>WORKING ON IT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your congregation have one?</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do graduates become active leaders?</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you help to select participants?</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you teach?</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you provide resources?</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it an effective program?</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Has your congregation been involved in long range planning and/or mission/vision work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Long Range Planning</th>
<th>Mission/Vision Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Has your congregation been involved in long range planning and/or mission/vision work?</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) No</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Has any transformational change taken place?</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If yes to c), where within the school?</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If yes to c), where with Education?</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If yes to c), where with Worship?</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Were you involved?</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Have you partnered with S3K, ECE, STAR, Just Congregations, local federations, etc.?</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

5. Do you read books, publications, newsletters on management and/or leadership philosophies?

6. Who do you report to?

7. Does your congregation support professional development opportunities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the Executive Director</th>
<th>WITH TIME</th>
<th>W/ FINANCIAL SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the Senior Rabbi</th>
<th>11.5%</th>
<th>88.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For other clergy</th>
<th>13.7%</th>
<th>86.3%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rethinking the Three-Legged Stool

On What Does the Congregation Stand?

By Dale Glasser, M.S., M.A., MSW

Over the last decade, both leaders of NATA and congregational leaders have given considerable thought to defining the relationship between executive directors, rabbis and presidents. One model used to describe this relationship is the three-legged stool, where the rabbi, president and executive director are all seen as integral partners in supporting the congregation and the three “legs” upon which the congregation stands.
This model is indeed one that has viability – at least in congregations where there is parity in responsibility, where the culture supports dialogue and clear expectations and where the individuals holding those positions have mutual respect for one another and regular opportunities to discuss successes and challenges.

In congregations where these conditions don’t exist, this model may be more difficult to achieve and less representative of what exists or what is desirable.

Today’s liberal Jewish congregations represent a wide spectrum of operating styles. While most share the goal of creating and sustaining well-run, spiritually fulfilling congregational communities, the ways in which congregations and their leaders strive to achieve those goals vary widely. Given these differences, what principles can guide the relationship among presidents, executive directors and rabbis that can help to define their leadership roles and provide a solid support system for the congregation, its members, leaders, mission and vision? Both our tradition and contemporary leadership literature suggest there are many.

Among the foundational elements of any congregation are the relationships it nurtures, builds and sustains. The relationships between executive directors, rabbis and presidents often serve as models for the relationships between others in the congregation.

Joseph Rost writes in his 1993 book, Leadership for the Twenty-First Century, that “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.”

The 20th century theologian Martin Buber suggested that our relationships with each other and with God define our existence. Buber’s concept of I-Thou relationships is that those relationships are ones of mutuality and reciprocity. The ultimate I-Thou relationship, according to Buber, is a human’s relationship with God. Moreover, says Buber, it’s that relationship that is the foundation for all human relationships.

Understanding the power and potential of those relationships, and working to build them into relationships of respect, appreciation and sacredness, are among the ways that executive directors can create a foundation of holiness and competency in their congregation.

In a February 2001 article published in the Harvard Business School Bulletin Online, the authors asked professors at Harvard Business School about the qualities that make a good leader. One series of ideas focused around the importance of communication. Professor Nitin Nohria suggested that “Communication is the real work of leadership.”
Professor John Kotter said that “Great communicators have an appreciation for positioning. They understand the people they’re trying to reach and what they can and can’t hear. They send their message in through an open door rather than trying to push it through a wall.” And Professor David Thomas reminded us that “What you say is only the beginning. Your behavior, your actions, and your decisions are also ways of communicating, and leaders have to learn how to create a consistent message through all of these. It’s been said many times, but leaders lead by example.”

Clearly, communication is a critical component of leadership and building relationships. Executive Directors can demonstrate leadership by applying these principles to their work. At times when feeling stymied by a situation or an individual, you might ask yourself if you’re leading by example? Are your actions

Authority and leadership are not always the same thing, but both can often be best exercised in relationships that encourage others’ strengths, create trust and confidence, and engender support for the vision, mission and activities of the enterprise in which all are engaged.
matching your words? Are you consistently frustrated because you’re focusing on the “walls” rather than the “open doors”? Providing leadership is most often related to our intentions, actions, interactions and follow-through much more than our position or any theoretical constructs about leadership.

One example from Jewish tradition was described and expounded upon by Professor Eugene Borowitz when he wrote about the concept of tzimtzum in Religious Education (November-December 1974). In his article, “Tzimtzum: A Mystic Model for Contemporary Leadership,” Professor Borowitz writes “Our hope of accomplishment in most fields rests largely in how power is organized there or what can be done to change that arrangement.” He describes a model of leadership that emanates from a kabalistic view of creation: “The Lurianic model of leadership has, as its’ first step, contraction. The leader withholds presence and power so that the followers may have some place in which to be…once room has been made for an other, even simple applications of power can prove effective. Indeed, perhaps the greatest effect one can have on someone seeking to become a person is to provide that person with a model.”

When working with our clergy, staff, and lay partners, we can often exert the greatest leadership by making room for the other. Authority and leadership are not always the same thing, but both can often be best exercised in relationships that encourage others’ strengths, create trust and confidence, and engender support for the vision, mission and activities of the enterprise in which all are engaged.

These ideas are most powerful when they can be translated into the daily interactions of congregational life. Thinking intentionally about setting priorities, assigning and fulfilling responsibilities, and finding the sacred in the mundane can form the basis for maintaining congregational community, no matter the size, demographics, staffing pattern, budget or ritual customs of the congregation. For executive directors, these concepts can be made real through:

- job responsibilities that are clearly defined
- unambiguous mutual review and goal setting processes
- regular opportunities for communication with the rabbi and with the president
- earning the respect of lay leaders, clergy, staff and congregants
- opportunities for professional development
- having the necessary “tools” to adequately fulfill job responsibilities
- understanding one’s role in creating and sustaining Jewish community in the congregation
- the ability to maintain a sense of humor and not take oneself too seriously

The concepts of relationships that are influential, sacred, mutual and reciprocal; of communication that is clear, respectful, sensitive and consistent; and of leadership styles that nurture partnership, loyalty and commitment are the foundational elements of any successful congregation, and characterize the interactions of the executive directors, clergy and lay leaders who guide and shepherd those congregations. For some, these concepts are best exemplified by the notion of a three-legged stool, of the congregation being supported by the parallel relationships between the rabbi and president, executive director and rabbi and president and executive director. For others, a model suggested in Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) provides a useful framework:

Simon the Righteous was one of the last of the Great Assembly. His motto was: “The World stands on three things – the Torah, the [Temple] service, and loving acts of kindness.” (Pirke Avot 1:2).

To see the executive director as a leader who embodies, enables, and fulfills these three functions is to create a steadfast foundation upon which any congregation can stand. For, as our great teacher, Maimonides, wrote about this passage, “proper human existence could not be maintained if it were not for these three things.”

Dale Glasser serves as a Lead Specialist for the Congregational Consulting Group. In that capacity, Mr. Glasser shares supervision of a talented group of expert specialists who work to build and strengthen congregations in all areas of synagogue life.

Mr. Glasser has spoken and presented workshops throughout North America to congregational leaders, national and regional URJ Conventions, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the National Association of Temple Administrators and the leadership of Women of Reform Judaism and Men of Reform Judaism. He served as contributor and executive editor of the UAHC/NATA Temple Management Manual, and, several other Department publications on various topics. He was honored in 2005 by the National Association of Temple Administrators for 10 years of partnership with that organization; a valued partnership that continues today.
The theory of “servant leadership” was originally developed and defined by Robert Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader* as “the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served.”

In other words, servant leaders are less concerned with their own influence and devote more efforts toward taking initiative, cultivating the trust of others, and acting with an eye toward the long-term consequences of their actions. A strong sense of ethics and a reconsideration of the hierarchical position of the leader are at the heart of servant leadership. Indeed, the attributes of a servant leader (see box) might be considered a “job description” of sorts for a successful Temple executive director.

Along with the President and Senior Rabbi at the top of the synagogue leadership structure, Executive Directors must develop these skills in order to coordinate effectively the synagogue program while allowing others to take on the more traditional leadership roles. This role as facilitator and enabler of others is a transformational form of leadership based upon partnerships, collaboration, and collective action. The influence of the synagogue administrator, therefore, is not derived from their position in the hierarchy, but rather stems from their centrality to the process and the relationships that they form.

Five principles lie behind the potential influence of the servant leader. As noted by Hackman and Johnson in *Leadership: A Communication Perspective*, they are.

1. **A concern for people.** Healthy synagogues care about their congregants. Synagogues are involved in the most personal aspects of a member’s life. Births, marriages, deaths and other milestones are often celebrated within the context of the synagogue. Synagogue Executive Directors often work behind the scenes with the clergy to ensure that these events meet the spiritual and social needs of those concerned.

Creating positive relationships with congregants enhances the overall sense of belonging that each individual member will have to the congregation. Listening receptively and treating every individual in a caring, considerate and thoughtful manner reflects positively in the collective culture. By recognizing the long-term consequences of their actions, Executive Directors help shape the nature of the synagogue community.

2. **Stewardship.** Servant leaders recognize that they hold their organizations in trust for the membership. Rabbis, Presidents and Executive Directors come and go, but the congregation itself endures. Being entrusted as a steward with leadership responsibilities sets up the expectation that the leadership will effect change for the betterment of the synagogue community. Identifying and training new volunteer leaders, facilitating innovative programming opportunities and expanding social action projects are just a few ways that Executive Directors can help guide the growth of the congregation.

Executive directors cannot simply concern themselves with the day-to-day operations of the congregation; they must act for the betterment of the synagogue community.

3. **Justice.** Servant leaders have the moral responsibility to both interact with individuals equitably and promote institutional equity at the same time. Encouraging facility compliance with the American Disabilities Act, establishing equitable personnel policies and hiring practices, making available hearing devices for the elderly, reserving parking for those with special needs, and providing childcare for young families are all paths towards justice within the synagogue.

Effective communication is often the key to achieving this goal. Executive Directors who successfully communicate their messages to a broad constituency will be trusted and relied upon by the staff and the congregation, and will more effectively fill the role of servant leader.

4. **Indebtedness.** In his book *Leadership is an Art*, Max DePree outlines a long series of debts that servant leaders “owe” to their institution. He begins his list by noting that: “leaders owe their institutions vital financial health and the relationships and reputation that enable continuity of
Marc Swatez is the Executive Director of Congregation B’nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim (BJBE) in Deerfield, Illinois. He has been a temple administrator for over 10 years. Marc holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University and was previously an assistant professor at the University of Richmond’s Jepson School of Leadership Studies. He lives in Skokie, Ill., with his wife Elise and their three children, Joelle, Josh and Micah.

5. Self-Understanding. Effective servant leadership relies upon the character of the leader during the decision making process. Greenleaf asserts that “the person who is servant first, is more likely to persevere and refine a particular hypothesis on what serves another’s highest priority needs than is the person who is a leader first and who later serves out of promptings of conscience or in conformity with normative expectations.” To meet this high standard, servant leaders must have a thorough understanding of themselves and their role within the organization so they can best meet the needs of their constituents.

The nature of synagogue life dictates that, on occasion, ethical choices will be made about issues related to staff conduct, investment opportunities, and handicap accessibility. Congregations should expect their Executive Directors to base their recommendations on their own moral compass as guided by their knowledge of basic Jewish ethics and values. Just as synagogues encourage their membership toward lifelong education, so too should Executive Directors continue to educate themselves both professionally and Jewishly and to regularly examine their assumptions. Developing the self is intrinsically connected with developing the institution, without one you cannot have the other.

Success as a servant leader is not measured by a balanced budget or staff retention. Instead, Greenleaf writes, “the best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”

This article is excerpted from Swatez’s thesis, “Serving the Congregation: The Synagogue Administrator as Servant Leader.” The entire text, as well as past FTA theses, are on the NATA Web site (natanet.org.resources/index.php).

To learn more about servant leadership, please refer to these publications, which were, in part, the basis for this article:


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Leading From The Second Chair

By Janice Rosenblatt, FTA, Executive Director, Temple Beth Ami, Rockville, Maryland

Picture your Temple’s organization chart. At the top, in most congregations, is the Board, represented by the President. The Rabbi falls directly below the Board and is often considered the head of the staff, with the senior staff on a line right below the Rabbi. You, as Executive Director, are not on top, and usually not even on the same level with the Rabbi. You are not the leader of the congregation, but you are often the second chair leader, the person behind the leader.

While you may be in a subordinate role as second chair leader, your ability to influence issues that impact the temple community is key to helping it remain not only true to its vision but realistic in its mission. You are, as Serane Blatt, FTA, Executive Director of North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, Ill., teaches, “the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage.”

But second chair leaders also may find themselves in a bind. The president or rabbi may turn to you for guidance and support regarding issues that arise, and may expect you to raise important questions, speak to higher values, and surface unresolved conflicts. And yet every time you’re in this position, you must choose whether the act of making your opinions and concerns known about an issue will create forward movement or induce potential conflict and dissent – for leadership, for the congregation, for yourself.

Even though the president or rabbi has sought your advice and counsel, by involving yourself publicly you still may be acting outside the confines of your job description. Your initiative in breaking the boundaries of your authority, even with the tacit approval of top leadership, may, in the long-term, benefit your congregation, but along the way you may face short-term resistance to both your ideas and your actions.

Understanding your role and being able to evaluate the issues you face fulfilling it will help you choose your level of involvement wisely.

Defining Issues, Determining Solutions

In their book Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading, Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky divide issues into two categories: technical and adaptive. As Executive Director in the second chair role, this important distinction speaks directly to your leadership role.

Heifetz and Linsky describe technical problems as those for which leadership has the know-how and procedures necessary to respond. Individuals, in other words, have the skills and understanding to take action immediately – action that rarely causes tension.

For instance, the issue of a budget crisis stimulates an effort to find more money. The people in authority might cut expenses, postpone some expenditures, try to raise additional income, or implement short-term borrowing. These solutions deal with the problem as a technical issue and are often easily managed.

Adaptive challenges, however, require experiments, new discoveries, adjustments from the people involved – in other words, changes in attitudes, values and behaviors. Peoples’ hearts
Janice Rosenblatt, FTA, has been Executive director of Temple Beth Ami in Rockville, MD for 18 years. She is a NATA vice president, has worked on curriculum development for and taught at the NATA Institute, has chaired conferences and committees and is currently Placement Chair. She considers herself a successful second-chair leader in her congregation.

and minds need to change, not just their preferences or routine behaviors. To address adaptive problems, people will have to learn new ways and choose between what often appear to be contradictory values.

So if you think about a budget crisis as an adaptive issue, its solution looks very different. After all, the technical response – finding more money – may temporarily resolve the conflict but does not address the underlying problems that may have brought it on in the first place.

The source of the crisis actually may be a clash of values, a difference in priorities – to grow or not, to reevaluate staff size, to merge with another congregation, etc. Solving these issues would require factions with competing priorities to acknowledge the gaps between them and work through the differences. It would require strategic trade-offs and, even, losses. The result might deeply disappoint some people, perhaps many. “Balancing the budget” could, in fact, mean redefining your synagogue’s agenda and changing the way it conducts business. Adaptive change requires strong leadership from everyone in a position to lead.

Adaptive v. Technical: Which One?
The single most common source of leadership failure is that people treat adaptive challenges as technical problems. People don’t want questions; they want answers. They do not want to sustain losses; they want to know how leadership is going to protect them from the pains of change. And, of course, leaders want to fulfill the people’s needs and expectations and be viewed as successful leaders. In doing adaptive work, you have to engage people in adjusting their expectations, rather than try to satisfy them as if the situation were solvable by a technical remedy.

When adaptive challenges are treated like technical problems, leadership opts for short-term fixes. There are strong internal pressures to focus on the technical aspects of the problem and solve it in a manner that is known and comfortable for the leaders and the congregation. Adaptive pressures force the congregation to change.

The fact is, adaptive work involves hard transitions, adjustments and loss in people’s lives. In going through the pains of adaptive change, there is no guarantee that the result will be improvement. Because of this, it usually produces resistance. Being aware of the likelihood of receiving opposition is critical to managing it when it arrives. For the Executive Director in the second chair, this can present a conflict of leadership responsibility. You must help your leadership deal with very difficult issues without taking over (or even being seen as taking over) the role of primary leader. You will succeed by reducing the extent to which you become the target of people’s frustration.

“Technical” issues are as those that leadership knows how to address. “Adaptive” challenges, however, require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments – in other words, people’s hearts and minds need to change, not just their preferences or routine behaviors.

Reading the Signs and Signals
As the Executive Director, you will be asked to provide information and guidance to your temple leadership. You will be expected to read the tone of the congregation during crises. You will be there to support your leadership through times of resistance. This is the time in which it becomes crucial for you to recognize the boundaries of your position and to focus on the work. Your synagogue president or senior Rabbi (or both), will provide you with a critical signal about the impact of your action on the congregation as a whole and leadership in particular.

To protect yourself and your position, you must pay close attention to the signals of your temple leadership and the tone of the congregation. Be sure you do not overstep the boundaries of your authority. When you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what they hold dear. While your answers may be correct, you are not authorized to push anyone to address the problems. If you take them outside their comfort zones, you will face resistance and rebukes and may find yourself on the outside of the process. Focus, whenever possible, on the bigger picture. Observe what is happening around you and respond accordingly.

As Executive Directors, we can influence leadership without actually taking on the role ourselves. In a healthy relationship, leadership turn to us for guidance and support and we help (and inspire) leadership to reach greater heights, to look for creative solutions, and to establish an environment that welcomes innovation and creativity.

While always aware of our second chair position, we can guide leadership through difficult times, helping it – and our congregation – to successfully fulfill its mission.
It's Friday night, the best part of the week. The Temple's Executive Director stands at the door and kisses and greets everyone who walks in for Shabbat services. The older population is there because, well, it's where they go every Friday night. They have friends at the synagogue, it's a part of their weekly routine. Even though the service doesn't begin till 6 p.m., every week one older man in particular is there by 4:30. He's alone, and he isn't on the membership roles. But he's part of the community. The Executive Director greets him and gives him a Shabbat kiss and sometimes discovers little things about him. Turns out he's an inventor – even if he did spend 45 years in another career – and he tells the ED about some of the things he's created. It makes him feel a part of the community to talk, to connect with the ED. The younger members are there on Friday night, as well. The administrator gets to watch their children go from infants to toddlers to religious school students. The ED becomes friends with the 10-year-old boy who endlessly walks the halls during services. There is always an excuse why he isn't sitting down with his parents. The halls of the synagogue are as comfortable to the boy as his home.

This is the life (a sliver of the life, at least!) of an Executive Director. Each ED's job is different in its own way yet each is also very similar.

The Executive Director is charged with the tasks of keeping the finances of the synagogue in order and keeping the building clean and in good repair. The ED is charged with balancing budgets, making difficult decisions when budgets are out of balance, and supervising staff members and monitoring personnel files. These tasks are not unique to this profession. The Executive Director of the Jewish Community Center down the street does similar things. He deals with budgets and buildings and staff. In the secular world, the administrator of the local Alzheimer's Association works with people in need and programs for them.

Other nonprofit professionals are in the business to raise money and awareness to support a cause. In the donor environment attention is paid to the big giver, the rich family. In the synagogue attention is paid to the needs of people. Value is given to the individual, not to the size of the check. In the synagogue, the administrator is in the business to further the spiritual experiences and lives of others. Or as Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman so eloquently wrote in *The Tent-Peg Business: Some Truths About Congregations*, "If synagogues were a business, their product would be Jews."

This really is what makes the synagogue position distinctive. The synagogue is the spiritual home for its members and it is the Executive Director who's in touch with their needs, hopes and desires. While members of other types of organizations may feel emotionally connected, members of synagogues are spiritually connected.

**Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot! How different this night is from all other nights!**

- The Haggadah

Thursday morning, a congregant walks into the office of the synagogue administrator unannounced and sits down. Months ago she had called, embarrassed and hurt because she and her husband were unable to pay their dues. The family business was in chaos, the siblings were in disagreement and they had no income. Above all though, the synagogue is important to them. Should they resign? No. The synagogue is here in good times and bad. The message to her on that first meeting was "It's not about the money; it is about you, your family and what you need." With tears in her eyes she thanks the administrator for listening to her and caring.

The administrator knows which youth group member needs additional funds in order to attend an upcoming gathering. In concert with the rabbi, the ED identifies a scholarship so the youth grouper is able to attend. The Executive Director calls a member who had sent in a resignation letter. Why do you want...
Jeanne Kort, FTA has been in the field of synagogue administration for more than 13 years. She is a native of Kansas City and has lived in the area all her life. Prior to her life as a synagogue professional, Jeanne owned and operated a retail furniture store. She has served two congregations as Executive Director. She served Congregation Beth Torah for 12 years, two as religious school administrator and 10 years as Executive Director. She became Executive Director of The Temple, Congregation B’nai Jehudah in 2003. Jeanne earned her FTA in 2003. The title of her thesis was “Living a Spiritual Life While Working as a Temple Administrator.” Jeanne joined the NATA board in 2006. She was co-chair for education at the 2005 convention in Houston and was co-chair of the 2008 joint conference with NAASE. Jeanne has two sons, Ben and Elliot, and is looking forward to her marriage to Dan Adler in November and becoming the daughter-in-law of NATA past President Frank Adler.

As Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman wrote in
The Tent-Peg Business: Some Truths About Congregations, “If synagogues were a business, their product would be Jews.”

"Leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do it," notes Frances Hesselbein, former CEO of the Girl Scouts of the USA and current Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Leader to Leader Institute. In other words, leadership is much less about what you do and much more about who you are. Executive Directors are caring, compassionate people who recognize God’s image in every person with whom they come into contact. They bring their innate sense of Jewish values to the profession. In our profession, we are entrusted with the sacred stories of those we serve. We take care of the “business side” of the synagogue, of course, but that's not the most important thing we do. We listen to people and validate what they tell us. We work with clergy and lay leaders to create a holy place and a caring community. We create a spiritual, enriching and open environment to empower members to explore their spirituality without mundane encumbrances. We understand that small, everyday acts make a difference in the lives of others. We pave the road for personal Jewish journeys. As leaders, we are first and foremost there for the members and the community, not for ourselves. Our goals are fulfilled when we see others living and growing Jewishly.

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Leadership: What the Sages Say

We often turn to the Bible – the narratives dealing with Moses, Aaron, Korach, Pinhas, Joshua, for example – for lessons on leadership. But it is instructive to learn that the rabbis, in their effort to guide the dispersed and growing Jewish communities in the early centuries of the Common Era, plumbed the traditional texts to extract and compile a compendium of characteristics and precepts that could serve as a handbook for successful leadership.

The advice they offer has a very contemporary resonance and anticipates the vast repertoire of leadership theories that fill the bookshelves of today’s managers and administrators.

Individual Pathways

“Joshua was deeply concerned with Israel’s well-being, so he provided roads and highways for them.”

– Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 22b

Joshua was the general, the man of action. He was the charismatic figure who led the people back to the Land of Canaan and engineered the conquest of the land in fulfillment of God’s covenant with Abraham. As a leader, Joshua understood that the people must be guided, but must also be given the opportunity to find their own direction. His leadership responsibility included paving the “roads and highways” over which the Israelites could identify their aspirations and track the path to achieve them. Joshua intuits that empowering the people is the surest way to achieve their well-being.

Our task in the synagogue today is likewise predicated on enabling Jews to take responsibility for their spiritual lives. Every Jew has an inherent spirituality. The synagogue is the engine that catalyzes that spark and fosters and supports the individual’s journey of discovery.

Synagogue leadership means recognizing that one road does not offer answers for everyone and enabling each of our members to find their own gateways and paths that lead to enhanced Jewish meaning in their life’s journey.

Reaching People Where They Are

“After I depart from them, when you will be setting another leader over them, I beg you, set over them a leader who will put up with each and every man according to his particular disposition. So, in saying, ‘Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all Flesh, set [the right] man over the congregation,’ (Num 27:15-16) Moses asked: Will the man you set over the congregation have within himself the spirit of sixty myriads, so that he will be able to converse with each man according to his particular disposition?”

– Yalkut Shimoni, Pinchas, 776

The setting for this passage is Moses’ discourse with God about choosing his successor, in and of itself a critical stage of effective leadership. The key leadership traits that Moses highlights is, first, the recognition that the community is not homogenous (then, thereafter and always!) and, second, that each member of the community must be heard. The test of an effective leader is the capacity to listen; to engage in active hearing that is forthright, nonjudgmental and sincere.

Synagogue leaders must plumb the “disposition” of their diverse membership because the decisions emanating from leadership issues often result in the change of core synagogue values. Before we can embark on the decision-making process – where we will need to synthesize opinions, prioritize options, negotiate and persuade – we must be certain we have a clear understanding of the minds of our constituents. Anyone who thinks making changes in the synagogue is easy should try changing someone’s sanctuary seat. Better to hear them out first!
Reciprocity

“This is the generation and those who seek its welfare.” (Psalms 24:6) R Judah [II] the Patriarch and the sages differed about this matter. According to one opinion, the character of a generation is determined by its leader. According to the other opinion, the character of its leader is determined by its generation.”

– Talmud Bavli, Arakhin 17a

I take a bit of liberty with this teaching in reading “generation” as congregation/community. Leaders and communities are interdependent. We know that the destiny of a community is shaped by the skill, energy and vision of its leaders. But it is no less true that the community – eager or lethargic, open-minded or fixated, receptive or stubborn – will either encourage its leaders to expand their work or it will deplete them. Leadership is a process of mutual influencing; there is a streaming circle connecting leaders and their communities – it can be beneficial or vicious. The success of one is locked into the commitment of the other.

This notion of reciprocity also informs the perspective of leaders. It’s not enough to say, “I believe I can do...” The leader adds “... and I can’t do it myself.” Synagogue leadership is essentially a “we” activity, not the chore of a single person.

The Servant Leader

“Rabban Gamaliel, in appointing two rabbis to posts of authority, said to them: You apparently suppose that I am about to bestow rulership upon you. What I am bestowing you is servitude, as is said, ‘And they spoke unto him, saying: If thou wilt be a servant unto this people.’ (1 Kings 12:7) The verse teaches you that he who is appointed over a community becomes the servant of the community.”

– Talmud Bavli, Horayot10a-b; Yalkut Shimoni 1 Kings 197

We think of leaders as those who push their followers. The servant leader model shifts the axis of what it means to lead. The energy source that animates leadership comes from the community; instead of a top-down momentum, Servant Leaders pick up their cues from the conditions, needs, and aspirations of the community. They are the animator and steward of the visions of others. This approach to leadership underscores the centrality of certain behavior characteristics of leaders: listening, empathy, awareness, persuasion, commitment to the growth of the people. Such leaders consider success not the forging of loyal followers, but rather the creation of a community of leaders. >>
Beware the Nut Tree

“I went down into the garden of nuts.” (Song of Songs 6:11) Resh Lakish said: The nut tree is smooth. Anyone who would climb to its top without considering how to do it is sure to fall to his death, thus taking his punishment from the tree. So, too, he who would exercise authority over a community in Israel without considering how to do it is sure to fall and take his punishment from the hands of the community.”

– Song of Songs Rabbah 6:11, 1

The urgent lesson offered in this teaching is that leadership entails risk. Successful leaders have a plan, they are prepared. Certainly, spontaneity, impulsiveness and taking a leap of faith are essential ingredients of the creative process that open boxes and take us out of the world we know and carry us into the world of potentialities. But the process of realizing the dream demands that leaders be thoughtful and strategic. Conviction alone is insufficient. The “punishment” for failing to work out the logistical details is that the whole enterprise will crash and, worse yet, the leaders will lose the confidence of the community.

Prepare Leaders for Disappointment

“They [the elders of Israel] unto the Tent of Meeting.” (Num 11:16) God said to Moses: ‘Take them by persuasive words. First speak to them of praise: ’Happy are you that you were appointed.’ Then speak to them words of Israel’s discredit: ‘You are to know that they are litigious and contrary. So you are taking this responsibility upon yourselves with the understanding that they may curse you and throw stones at you.’”

– Sifra Numbers 92

The language here sounds all too contemporary. Though our leaders may not be literally pilloried by stones, the vicarious stone throwing in the parking lot may be just as damaging and hurtful. How wise and prudent of the Sifra to offer a sobering commentary on leadership that underscores the mercurial nature of the community. Leaders must be cautioned that they will need an abundant supply of patience, perseverance and thick skin. Those “litigious and contrary” voices, albeit a minority, thankfully, are often loud and deflating. They can derail even the most cogent projects and they can frustrate leaders to the point of wanting to abandon the cause. The Sifra has Moses, the paragon of resilience under community pressure, urge that leaders steel themselves to the carping of their people.

Torah-based Leadership

“When R Haggai appointed community leaders, he would have them carry a Torah scroll, by way of saying that every sort of authority bestowed is bestowed with Torah’s authorization, as Torah said, ‘By me kings reign, by me rulers rule.’ (Proverbs 8:15-16)”

– Jerusalem Talmud, Peah 8:6, 21a

Rabbi Haggai’s explication of the Proverbs’ text and the practice he instituted based on it are instructive for synagogue leaders. Not long ago, in preparation for our annual audit, one of the accountants asked if we had an ethics policy. My impulsive, facetious response was, “Sure we do, we keep it in the ark.” Many congregations have created rituals for the installation of officers and trustees that involve holding and passing a Torah. How would the tenor of a board meeting be affected if the president presided while holding a Torah? More significantly, perhaps, is how would our decisionmaking be affected if the issues we debated were guided and informed by the study and application of the ethical and moral precepts of our tradition? Implicit in Rabbi Haggai’s symbolic gesture is the responsibility for continuous learning and study as the essential platform for effective synagogue leadership.

The Rewards

“Rabbi Eleazar said: Any leader who guides a community gently will merit guiding it in the world-to-come.”

– Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 92a

The world to come may very well take root in this world. When leadership works . . .

• our visions are achieved, the world is forever altered
• we experience a paradigm shift
• we see the world with different eyes
• we emerge transformed
• our lives are invested with spirituality and meaning
• our communities flourish with new vitality
• we pray deeply, we study perceptively, we act on the world positively
• we all become leaders
• the world to come is a world populated by leaders

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.
Our professional titles over the years have changed – an indication of our growing responsibilities and leadership in the synagogues we serve.

As a member of NATA and as an Executive Director for 40 years, I have had a unique opportunity to witness a great deal of change in our profession, in our responsibilities, and in our role as a significant member of today’s synagogue leadership team.

Established in 1941 as the National Association of Temple Secretaries (NATS), the name perfectly reflected its membership’s workplace titles – including mine in my first position in 1969. Back then temple leadership had little or no expectation that the Executive Secretary would participate in executive committee or nominating committee meetings. For the most part, the Executive Secretary had limited input in temple decisions.

The Association changed its name to the National Association of Temple Administrators in 1959 when it became apparent that we were not “secretaries” at all. Since we were engaged in the administration of temples and synagogues, many of us began to carry the new title of Temple Administrator.

And so, in accepting a new job in 1972, I found myself with both a new title and new responsibilities. Temple Administrators, for the most part, were now expected to attend all leadership meetings to provide resources and information about the temple’s operation. The synagogue leadership made decisions and created policy using the information provided by the Temple Administrator. This was a giant step forward for our profession and for the development of more efficient and more effective management of our synagogues.

Today, the majority of NATAs’ membership are called Executive Director. This title, too, signifies a major change in our roles within our temples – as well as a change in how our synagogues are managed overall.

The expectation from synagogue leaders today is that, despite the difference in titles that may exist from temple to temple, the person in this “executive director” role possesses expertise in finance, development, business management, human resources management, and communication at the same level that one would have expected from those filling similar management positions in the private sector. And thus a new partnership exists in synagogues that is known as the “three-legged stool,” which requires the full participation, input and expertise of the three main players: lay leadership, clergy, and the Executive Director.

Effective and sound leadership in today’s synagogues requires us to be full participating members of the decision-making process. In the complex world that we live and operate in, today’s synagogue leaders consistently turn to their professional leadership to perform their duties at the highest levels of knowledge and skill.

NATA, recognizing that Executive Directors/Temple Administrators have become a key component in the management of synagogues, recently changed its own name to reflect this status. While we are still NATA, we are now the National Association for Temple Administration “Serving the Reform Movement.”

Many of us were privileged to begin our careers and to be mentored and influenced by a number of NATS and NATA’s founders. Given how our roles and careers have evolved over the decades, I feel a need to acknowledge them here: Irving Katz, FTA, Dr. Max Feder, FTA, Henry Fruhauf, FTA, Barry Kugel, FTA, Frank Adler, FTA, Frank Simons, FTA, Henry Ziegler, FTA, David Mitchell, FTA, Julian Feldman, FTA, Shirley Chernela, FTA and Myron Schoen, FTA.

The path to becoming influential leaders of our synagogues was paved by these wonderful talented and insightful people.

Bill has been a NATA member for 40 years. He is a Past President of NATA and during his years of membership has served as a member of the URJ Executive Board and Board of Trustees, URJ Commission on Synagogue Management, Board of Certification of Temple Administrators, URJ Biennial Program Committee and Pennsylvania Regional Board Member. In addition he chaired the first NATA/NAASE (then NASA) joint convention in 1984 and the 1987 NATA Convention. He has participated in NATA, URJ Biennial and Regional workshops and was a Senior Class Lecturer at the Reconstructionist Seminary. Currently he serves as an Honorary NATA Board Member and on NATA’s Scholarship Committee. He is a recipient of the Service to NATA Award and a Citation of Religious Leadership from the URJ.
Noticing a shortage of people with formal leadership training, Executive Directors Larry Glickman and Esther Herst worked with their temples’ leadership to create leadership development programs.

Here’s how these programs work.

LARRY: When I arrived at Temple Chai in Long Grove, Illinois, in June 2006, I was disappointed to find that in a congregation of more than 950 households we had trouble fully populating our board. The members of our board of trustees were incredibly dedicated to the congregation, and to the tasks at hand, but we just had a difficult time finding qualified, interested people to serve.

With the blessing of the senior rabbi, the president and the administrative vice president and the help of two past presidents, I began to look into this issue. We all agreed that there were indeed some holes we needed to fill, and we convened a committee of people throughout our community to address how we develop new leaders for our congregation.

ESTHER: I felt a similar vacuum at both Temple B’nai Torah and now at Temple Beth Am in Seattle. In both cases, the clergy and lay leadership recognized the need for targeted leadership development. And in both cases, they chose to leave much of creation of the classes and coordination to me. I usually had one board member as a partner and together we planned the curriculum, chose guest speakers, and identified and invited participants.

LARRY: Our committee met a few times and realized that in order to be an effective leader, there first must be education. We wanted new people on our board, but even more, we wanted these new people to be educated and prepared to lead our congregation. How do the finances of our congregation work? How are meetings at Temple Chai run? How did Temple Chai begin, and what are our goals? And even before we could educate prospective board members, we needed to make sure our current board members had the benefits of the same education.

So in the spring of 2006, with the help of an outside consultant, we led our board in a variety of leadership development sessions. While we couldn't conduct a yearlong leadership development program for them, we shared some conceptual information about theories of effective leadership, the history of our congregation, and perhaps most importantly, the opportunity to get to know one another in new ways that could foster a closer working atmosphere.

ESTHER: In our first year, we initiated a board training module that ran concurrently with our leadership development class. Each board meeting began with dinner and a one-hour education or skills-oriented program. The topics included Finances 101, how to recruit and recognize volunteers, and identifying and understanding the difference between policy and implementation.
LARRY: We presented information that congregants ought to know upon joining the board. We began each session with some “getting to know you” time. We always tried to have food, we always had an agenda, and we always finished on time. We honored the participants at our annual Leadership Shabbat in June.

However, we recognized that there was still a lot of information missing. With feedback from our participants, we planned our next year by keeping all the original programming and adding a class on membership recruitment and retention and another simply called “Religion and Money, The Finances of Temple Chai.”

ESTHER: I’ve now run four variations of a leadership development series, each building on the experience and feedback of the previous one. The first program was about 10 monthly sessions. After that, we cut the sessions to eight and ran them every other week, because we found that participants didn’t want to commit to a full year of meetings. Also, we saw that the group built more effective relationships and remembered the previous session better if the sessions were closer together. Subsequent programs had five sessions, which wasn’t really enough, and our most recent had seven meetings over three months.

LARRY: All of our classes, except for the class about the URJ, are taught by Temple Chai congregants. A founding member and past presidents reminisce about the history of Temple Chai. Our senior rabbi spends an evening talking about the spirituality of leadership. Our administrative vice president and parliamentarian share how meetings are run and how we use Robert’s Rules of Order.

ESTHER: We usually invited one outside expert to present on governance and our URJ regional director always did a superb session on ethical decision-making. Otherwise, our rabbis and past leaders shared the teaching responsibilities with me. We began each session with food, a d’var torah (we encouraged participants to volunteer for this), and everyone had a binder with readings and “homework” that were relevant to the upcoming topic. >>
Larry Glickman is honored to be serving as the Executive Director of Temple Chai in Long Grove, Ill. Larry came to Temple Chai in 2006 after serving as Executive Director of Congregation Beth Shalom, a Reconstructionist synagogue in Naperville, and Congregation Kol Ami, a Reform synagogue in downtown Chicago.

Larry began his career in the Jewish community as the advisor of Congregation B’nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim youth group and as the Principal of the BJBE religious high school program. During this time, Larry became Executive Director of the Czech Torah Network and wrote "Religion and Rock & Roll," a high school curriculum for the Community Foundation for Jewish Education.

Throughout his career as a temple administrator, Larry has been involved in the National Association of Temple Administration and currently serves as the President of The Chicago Association of Temple Administrators.

Larry lives in Buffalo Grove, Ill. with his wife Lynn, an educational administrator, and his daughters, Eliana and Sophie.

Esther Herst, FTA, is the Executive Director of Temple Beth Am in Seattle. She has been a Temple Director for 15 years and served six years on the Board of NATA. Esther represents NATA on the URJ Commission on Social Action and is the liaison between NATA and the Religious Action Center of the URJ.

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**TEMPLE BETH AM’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM INCLUDED A STRONG CURRICULUM:**

- Your Own Jewish Journeys & the History of Temple Beth Am
- Governance – What is unique about leading a synagogue?
- Ethical Decision-Making – What are the values and Judaic approaches that can guide our congregation’s decisions and practices?
- Tikkun Olam & Life-long Learning
- Values-Based Budgeting – What makes a synagogue budget different from that of any other small business or nonprofit organization?
- Leadership/Stewardship/Volunteerism
- Next Steps in Synagogue Life – What commitment can we each make to Temple Beth Am based on what we’ve learned?

**LARRY:** As we head into the third year of our leadership development program, I am incredibly proud to see all of the new leaders on our board, our fully populated board, who came through the leadership development program. Each year the class forms a tight bond, and that sense of connection and community serves them well as they get more involved.

As this program becomes a fixture, I look forward to involving lay leadership in the management of these classes. As executive director, I’ve really enjoyed watching the program develop. It’s now time to see how the program can become enhanced through the participation and support of other leaders.

**ESTHER:** I feel much the same way. Organizing the leadership development programs has been among the most satisfying responsibilities of my years as a temple executive director. The outcomes have varied – I can’t say that every participant became a board member or even a committee chair. I do know that everyone who came to the classes developed a stronger and more meaningful relationship to the temple community and to their own Judaism. They increased their personal involvement and they encouraged other members to do so.

I often started our first session with words from Elie Wiesel: “To be part of a community, to shape it, and to strengthen it is the most urgent, the most vital obligation facing the Jewish individual.” Finding the congregants for whom this resonates and helping them become true leaders can be the most meaningful contribution we make to our synagogues’ futures.

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The National Association for Temple Administration (NATA) is an active professional network of Reform Jewish Synagogue Executive Directors committed to Judaic principles of ethics and integrity.

NATA’s mission is to support its members by:

· providing educational and training activities and standards,
· providing its individual members and their URJ congregations with access to NATA resources,
· advocating for and promoting the profession of Temple Administration,
· serving as the professional partner with the Union for Reform Judaism.

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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 since 1988.

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