TABLE OF CONTENTS

NEW BEGINNINGS
ELIZABETH L. HIRSCH, FTA ........................................... PG 3

SOMETHING OF A VALEDICTORY
STEPHEN E. BREUER, PRESIDENT, NATA ....................... PG 3

HOW TO CHOOSE AN ARCHITECT
DALE GLASSER, MA, MSW ........................................ PG 4

THE ROLE OF AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN A
NEW BUILDING PROJECT
ESTHER HERST ..................................................... PG 5

BUILDING A STRONG CONSTRUCTION TEAM
LIVIA THOMPSON .................................................. PG 8

SICK BUILDING SYNDROME AND THE SYNAGOGUE
RABBI WILLIAM BERKOWITZ ....................................... PG 10

AFTER CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE
GARY S. COHN, FTA ................................................ PG 11

NATA ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB
WARREN LIEBERMAN, FTA ......................................... PG 13

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF FTA CERTIFICATION
REPRINTED FROM THE SUMMER 1996 ISSUE
JOSEPH W. BOSTON, FTA ........................................ PG 14

THE INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT .................................................... PG 15

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New Beginnings

Elizabeth L. Hirsch, FIA, Executive Director, Congregation Beth Or, Spring House, Pennsylvania

As we anticipate the new year 5758, it is exciting for me to be taking the helm of the NATA Journal. I look forward to working with my predecessor, Gary Cohn, and the rest of our dedicated editorial board. My hope is to continue to educate and inform NATA members, temple presidents and boards and the Reform movement in all areas of synagogue management.

With this summer issue we conclude the second of a two-part series on Building and Facility Management. The emphasis in this edition is on new construction and remodeling. Everything from architectural concerns, to contracting, to raising the money, to ensuring a safe environment for workers and congregants is discussed. As our congregations grow and prosper our buildings may need to expand as well. We hope the Summer 1997 NATA Journal will be helpful in providing the information needed for a smooth transition for those considering expansion or remodeling.

Something of a Valedictory

Stephen E. Breuer, NATA President, Executive Director, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, California

"Experience is a good school, but the fees are high."  
Heinrich Heine

"Who is wise? He who learns form everybody."  
Ben Zoma, Mishna

"Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him."  
Aldous Huxley

As camp director training new counselors, I would advise them, "Let the title speak. When in doubt, do what you think a good counselor should do. For a while, you'll be a good counselor; then you'll get more experience. Then more. And in a few years, when a situation arises, you and the role will have merged. The response will come from you, not the title."

I am completing four immensely satisfying years as president of our National Association of Temple Administrators. I am in my 35th year as a synagogue professional, during which time I have served as Camp Director, Youth Director, Temple Educator and Executive Director (at times several of these concurrently). Still at the "top of my game," this moment of transition causes me to reflect on what my experiences have taught me.

All my working life, I have perceived myself as the teacher I was trained to be. I love the teaching experience, especially when it ends in the magical moment of discovery by my students. At that moment, a fact, a concept, an appreciation, a personal epiphany belongs to them. I want to share what I've learned. Thus, this essay for my colleagues who endeavor to manage that most valuable and misapprehended institution, the modern synagogue. I've learned...

* We work with human beings, regardless of title. Rabbis, Presidents and Board members are all too human. Each individual comes to every issue with private agendas, fears, foibles, ideals, neuroses, needs, and pressures which influence his or her reaction. Surprised by the emotion, hostility, surprise or confusion with which our sincerest ideas may be met, we cannot know the source of the reaction - a domestic dispute, a medical report, or a misunderstood word.

* Each synagogue is not the center of the world. Priorities are subjective. A congregation is of primary concern only to some of those who work there. To many staff, it is only a job; to volunteers, it ranks somewhere on the continuum of each one's priorities. We professionals are often so close to problems and policies, that we fail to express them in a manner that captures the attention or imagination of those with whom we work. They care as much as we, but not in the same way.

* Take care of your own soul. Our synagogues provide personnel, programs and venues to care for the spiritual needs of congregants. Recognize and seek those which meet your own needs; they may, but need not be, those which your congregation provides. Remember, we chose to participate in religious vocations because of our own predilections. Pray, meditate, escape, observe, share, give, wherever it does well for you.

* Enjoy life. There is a lot of world beyond work. Family and friends deserve daily care, not only in mo-
ments of simcha or distress. Physical health requires regular time and attention. Psychological well-being demands time for personal interests, study, entertainment, and travel. We aren’t part of a monastic tradition; endless work does not mean an honored burial in the cloistered halls we maintain. Our Jewish tradition teaches us to value LIFE - so live it and live it well. Living well is the best revenge.

These are some of the things I have learned from respected mentors, good companions, cherished friends, beloved wife and children, bright students, ambitious mentees, thoughtful books, worthy foes and treasured allies.

There is much to learn. There is much to do. We are reminded in Pirke Avot: "It is not yours to complete the task; neither are you free to desist therefrom."

* * *

Leadership of NATA will change only slightly this November., and remains in caring and competent hands. NATA officers have worked together as a great team of dedicated colleagues. Not a week has gone by without contact with my fellow officers, marked by camaraderie and personal friendship. Gary Cohn, Norm Fogel, Mark Greenstein, Fern Kamen, Alan Karpel, Terry Kraus, and Mark Weisstuch, thank you for who you are and what you do. You exemplify the best in our profession.

We have an enthusiastic Board, ever willing to volunteer for new assignments. Ralph Birnberg, Serene Blatt, Judy Blickstein, Janet Bronitsky, Bill Ferstenfeld, Myles Fox, Alan Hochberg, Monika Hamburger, Jesse Harris, Jeff Herzog, Liz Hirsch, Tom Jablonski, Marc Jacobson, Rich Katz, Keith Kraft, Doris Markoff, Alice Miller, Eli Montague, Jill Randell, Loree Resnik, Dennis Rice, Marty Schwartz, Stu Simmons, and Marcia Weinroth - you have been the kind of Board members each of us deserves in our own congregation.

Personal thanks to each and every member of NATA for your support, involvement and concern. Together, we continue to do good things, for our movement, our congregations, our selves and for one another.

* * *

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How To Choose An Architect

Dale Glasser, M.A., MSW, Director, UAHC Howard and Ida Wilkoff Department of Synagogue Management

A story from the Babylonian Talmud tells of Rabbi Hanina Ben Dosa, whose neighbor was building a house and found that the beams were not long enough to reach from wall to wall. The neighbor came to the rabbi and said "I am building a house but the beams do not reach far enough!" He said, "...May your beams reach farther." Immediately they reached the walls.

In truth, the problems which arise in many synagogue building projects are not resolved this easily. Yet, some of those problems can be easily avoided if care is taken in selecting the right architect for your project.

Many experts feel that choosing the right architect is the single most important step in the building process. The architect is responsible not only for design, but for guiding your project through all phases, often hiring or coordinating the work of other professionals who become part of the project team.

The Committee at your temple responsible for making the selection should consider the following:
- Have the goals for the renovation or building project been established and agreed upon?
- Has the decision-making process been clearly outlined?
- Are the necessary financial resources available or have fund-raising campaign strategies been planned?

Once these basic steps have been considered, the committee can think about the architect. It is important that the architect’s expertise, style and practice match the congregation’s. In this era of specialization, one important factor is whether the architect has experience in synagogue design.

Your committee will want to review resumes and photographs of completed projects, hold personal interviews, and, if possible, visit a building completed by the architect(s) under consideration. Your research should include information about the architect’s education and experience, projects completed, services the firm has available, current workload, and staff and office practice.

The size of an architectural firm is less important than the way they work. You will want to ask if the architect you meet with will supervise your project directly; do other members of the firm become involved, and if so, in what capacity; and what internal and external resources are available to the firm to assist with your project?

During the interview you will want to discover how the architect gathers information, how they will work with your stated priorities, and how they help you to make decisions. You will
want to assess not only the architect's design abilities but how your congregation's needs are addressed through the architect's style and presentation to your committee. Does the architect appear to be flexible and have good problem-solving skills; is the architect sensitive to the needs of your specific project; is attention paid to sacred space, public space, multi-use space and any other ways you envision facility usage? It is also important to be clear about your expectations.

When contacting references you will want to learn if the completed project met their goals; how were deviations from the original construction schedule and budget dealt with, and were the architect and the architect's team responsive to any issues which arose during the project.

The experts suggest that fees alone should not be the primary factor in determining which architect you select. Architects are professionals, and deserve to be treated appropriately. Be wary of those who try to dazzle you with a slick initial presentation but don't have the experience or resources to follow through. Don't ask for services for which you are unwilling to pay.

It is also important to be realistic about the project. Don't ask the architect to complete a nine-month job in three months. Understand that additional, unplanned items often arise during construction which can impact both the project schedule and budget. Talk with the architect in advance about a process for dealing with these contingencies.

The UAHC Department of Synagogue Management has an Architect's Advisory Service that provides a consultation with an experienced architect for member congregations in your area who have recently completed projects and the architects involved.

Engaging an architect to build or renovate a synagogue is one of the most significant decisions in the life of a congregation. When done with care and planning, it can be one of the most positive experiences, and one which will result in the "beams" reaching the "walls" ...even without divine intervention.


The Role of an Executive Director in a New Building Project

Esther Herst, Executive Director, Temple B'nai Torah, Mercer Island, Washington

In May 1994, I was hired to be the first-ever Executive Director of Temple B'nai Torah, a mid-size congregation in Mercer Island, Washington (a suburb of Seattle). During the interview process amidst some general vagueness about my job, there was a point upon which the interviewing committee was clear: I would have very little to do with the process of constructing our new building. Given the volunteer structure for fundraising, design review and project supervision already in place, the temple leadership did not expect the new building project to impact my life until we were ready to move in.

Early in my tenure, I discovered this expectation was totally unrealistic. A synagogue executive director has a responsibility to be intimately involved with the planning, design, fundraising and "marketing" of a new or renovated temple structure.

Temple B'nai Torah is not unlike many congregations across America. We began as a small congregation in a 6,000 square foot facility on Mercer Island. After 1985, however, with the arrival of a new Rabbi, hundreds of new families joined. By 1990 our "little temple in the woods" was no longer sufficient.

A plan for expansion was developed. We negotiated with the Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle based in Bellevue (a neighboring suburb) for the purchase of 3 acres of their land on which to build a new home for the congregation. At the same time, we began to lease the Day School's 18 classrooms for our rapidly growing Sunday School. We held congregational focus groups, hired an architect to create a Master Plan, and engaged a Fundraising Consultant to teach our volunteers how to raise the necessary capital funds. By the time I was hired, the project appeared well underway.

The Impact of Finances on a Building Project

Before any ground breaking could take place, certain conditions needed to be met. No congregation can begin to build without meeting its fundraising goal. In the case of Temple B'nai Torah, we had raised only about $1.5 million of our $2.5 million goal, and the Capital Campaign Committee was exhausted.

Some synagogues hire professional fundraisers or consultants when they reach a stalemate. Temple B'nai Torah chose instead to rely on volunteers. Coordinating the work of the volunteers and improving staff commitment to the project are key ways in which an Executive Director can make...
a dramatic difference. Working with the volunteers to create new strategies to both track pledges and encourage members to increase pledges are appropriate leadership roles for an Executive Director. Another obvious and critical job for the director is to hire and train (or if necessary re-train) staff to recognize the importance of the Capital Campaign to the well-being of the entire congregation. For Temple B'nai Torah hiring a new bookkeeper was a vital improvement both for the building project and for the financial health of the synagogue.

An additional role for an Executive Director can be to take on direct fundraising for a Capital Campaign. This new approach is not comfortable for every congregation, but it can mesh well with a director's membership recruitment responsibility. B'nai Torah's leadership decided that part of my job description would include one-on-one interviews between me and each prospective member. Now, when I meet with each new member and set their Fair Share membership dues, I sign them up for a Capital Campaign pledge as well. Although using a staff person to set dues and raise building pledges was a dramatic departure from temple tradition, it has paid off. In capital pledges alone, we raised more than $180,000 in commitments from incoming members during FY 1996/97. The most complicated finance-related assignment our leadership undertook was the preparation of a five-year proforma of our operating and Capital Project budgets. Each committee was charged by the Finance Committee to estimate income and expenses from 1995-1996 and through 2000-2001. Three lay leaders - a Microsoft Engineer, a real Estate Developer, and a CPA and I used this data to prepare spreadsheets and debt ratio analyses. The proforma is a living document. Each year the Finance Committee reviews and revises the assumptions made and adds one more year to the spread sheet. A task designed specifically for the building project has become a useful long-range planning tool.

To summarize, a congregation's Executive Director has one area of knowledge and expertise that links every component of the New Building Project with the temple's overall program: finances. Raising money, knowing how much is needed for operations, understanding growth patterns, planning for future years' budgets - the Executive Director is responsible for all these tasks. Each one is critical in determining how much the temple can spend on its new building, how much must be raised and from what sources, and how much must be financed.

**Other Building Project Responsibilities That May Fall to the Executive Director**

An Executive Director can also assume additional roles, many of them outside of the "standard" job description:

- **Architect's Assistant** - meeting with a volunteer Design Committee and Architects to lay out the Administrative space and to best understand how to manage a brand new building that's larger, more technologically sophisticated, and possibly in a totally different location.

- **Building Inspector and Realtor** - ensuring that the existing synagogue building is saleable, that is necessary to the financing scheme, and giving tours of the building to prospective buyers

- **Loan Negotiator** - as the person who knows the most about a congregation's finances, the Executive Director can effectively interview bank representatives and present the congregation's financing proposals.

In the case of Temple B'nai Torah, the leadership has hired a Project Manager to oversee day-to-day operations at the building site. The skills needed for that job are far beyond those traditionally found in an Executive Director. Still, by building a solid working relationship with the Project Manager, the director can head off last minute design and schedule changes that would have broader negative effects on the congregation. Ground was broken on June 1, 1997 (only two years later than originally anticipated) and we will move in by May 1998. Anyone who has ever been involved in a construction or home renovation project is aware of the complications, delays and work order changes that occur routinely. Maintaining close connections with the builders, through the Project Manager, is the best way to be prepared for these eventualities.

**The Effect of Policy Decisions in a Building Project on Temple Management**

Temple leadership must make numerous policy decisions when undertaking a building project: choosing a site, hiring an architect, creating a fundraising plan. To every extent possible, those decisions should have input from the Executive Director. This doesn't mean the director makes the decision - it means that Temple Board understands that each choice made about the new building will affect the way the Temple as a whole functions. A director's participation in the discussions can ensure that lay leadership realizes the full implications of their decisions.

Not only temple "management" is impacted by a New Building Project. Our individual congregants are affected also. The fundraising demands of a capital drive place additional pressures on a congregation's operating budget. Members may choose to lower their dues contributions in order to make building pledges. "General donations" may decrease as people make remembrance or celebration donations to a New Building Fund instead of to operating budget funds.

More than the financial impact, however, the Building Project will challenge the patience of members. Will it ever really happen? When? What will it actually look like? How much will this new building change the way we see our temple? What will it feel like to move away from a build-
ing we know so well? The Executive Director has an additional role in planning a transition process. For our temple that means being sensitive to our members' sadness at leaving our Mercer Island home, but using their happy memories to build enthusiasm for the move to Bellevue.

We are also stepping up our program development. A new building without exciting learning, worship, and community building activities can feel empty, impersonal and disappointing. In the heat of a Capital Campaign and all of the details that go with a building project, planning new programs is often lost. It is the Executive Director's job, especially if there is no Program Director on staff, to assist the leadership in creating and implementing new programming opportunities.

The Impact of a Building Project on a Director's Life

Short answer: What life?

An Executive Director in the midst of a Building Project will likely find his or her life consumed by the project. Meetings that last past until midnight; the meetings that follow those meetings; frantic e-mail messages between key volunteers, checks that need to be written and signed immediately, ruffled feelings that must be soothed — these become common occurrences. One of the biggest challenges directors may face is how to juggle all of the pieces of their job that were delayed or derailed so that they could pick up some urgent building project responsibility. Obviously a director's home life can suffer even more.

On the more positive side, a building project is a phenomenal learning experience. From mortgage financing to architecture; from real estate to capital fundraising, each step of the Building Campaign can teach something new. It can also make one a better Executive Director. There's nothing like selling a $6 million project to congregants, prospective new members, bankers, and the broader Jewish community to strengthen one's commitment to the future of that synagogue. A building project can increase a director's understanding of the programmatic needs of members and can inspire members to become more involved in synagogue life as a whole.

I sometimes speak of the new building as "When the Messiah Comes." Every area of our temple's life has been changed by this construction project. Perhaps, once we have built it, we can refocus on the reasons we needed a new home in the first place - the need for a sacred space that will be welcoming to every Jew who chooses to attend and that will keep Temple B'nai Torah - "a comfortable place to be Jewish." Keeping that goal uppermost in mind is probably the most valuable advice I could give an Executive Director in the midst of a building campaign.

* * * * *

UAHC and NATA Team Up to Provide Synagogue Management Consulting Services

Consultation Services in the Following Areas:

- Membership
- Organizational Structure
- Finances
- Property Management
- Personnel
- Technology

Available as a benefit to all UAHC Congregations
(Payment for travel expenses of consultant only.)

For further information or to request an application contact the UAHC Department of Synagogue Management at (212) 650-4040.
Building a Strong Construction Team

Livia D. Thompson, Executive Director, Central Synagogue, New York, New York

Several weeks ago, a congregant told me how sorry he was that, because of all of the construction we were doing over the summer, I would not be able to take summer vacation this year. I immediately reassured him that I was going to be away for three weeks, and that I was confident that the construction team in place could handle things in my absence. (Of course, I will be reachable by telephone, fax and modem the entire time I am away!)

How did I get to the point when I could be planning a multi-million dollar renovation on both the Sanctuary and the Community House, including removing structural columns that hold up our Landmark Sanctuary building, and still go on vacation? Herein lies a tale of several years of effort and the development of strong relationships to create a working team of lay leadership, synagogue professionals and outside consultants.

The first order of business is to make sure that you have a knowledgeable person working with you from the beginning—to help define the project, determine how to staff it and how to move it along. While this could be an outside consultant that is hired by the Synagogue, ideally it would be your Building Committee Chair since a good chair can supply not only the technical expertise that you want but can also help bring the project to fruition through the lay structure. In my case, our current chair has been in the construction/development business for many years and has served as the building chair of a major hospital in the area.

Over the last four years, we have had all of our facilities inspected inside and out so that we have relatively complete information about the structural soundness of our buildings and have developed a priority list of major projects based on necessity, esthetic considerations and space issues. This list is periodically reviewed with the Board of Trustees so that we generally are working on one project and planning the next project for the following year. (Obviously, we are talking about major projects and not about a broken steam pipe or a leaking sink)

The most immediate issue for your project is who will be part of the construction team—staff, outside professionals and lay leadership. It is this team, and how well they function, that will determine the success or failure of the construction project. What professional and technical expertise is necessary, who will do the actual work, and who will monitor contracts, billing, scheduling and all other administrative matters? What are the logistic issues and who will: (1) communicate with lay people and staff about the effects of the construction, (2) act as liaison to all of the professionals; (3) interface with the construction staff, security and maintenance; (4) handle public relations matters?

For most major projects, it will be worth it to hire a Construction Manager (or CM) who provides administrative oversight, and acts like the "executive director" for the project. The CM will report to the Executive Director and will have regular written and oral communications with the Executive Director and the Building Committee Chair. In selecting a CM, it is obviously very important to make sure that he/she has the back-office ability to handle the work, the technical skills to understand the work, and the people skills to make the project work. The CM must be able to properly and effectively represent the synagogue to the outside world and to interact with lay people, staff and construction workers equally well. A good CM will work with the architect, engineer and other professionals, to bid the job, monitor the work (including schedule, finances, safety, logistics, etc.), and troubleshoot as necessary—always providing you with ongoing information and making sure that the Synagogue is protected. You will need to make sure that the CM knows exactly who in the Synagogue he or she should speak to about logistic issues, financial issues, administrative matters, etc., so that there is no confusion as the project progresses. Make sure, therefore, that from the beginning you and the CM are clear on the ground rules and that you are very comfortable with your relationship. At the same time, make sure your senior staff, and your administrative and maintenance office, know who the CM is, what his job is, and what their interaction will be.

Once the CM is chosen, the CM can assist the Chair and the Executive Director in choosing the rest of the professional team. Generally, this will include an architect who will develop the plan itself based on the general information provided, an engineer who will take the architect's plan and make sure that it is structurally sound, and various experts—such as sound, lighting, kitchen people—who handle special issues. While you should seek guidance from the CM as to suitable candidates, it is important that you and your chair feel comfortable with the candidates and are confident that they will be able to translate the needs of the synagogue into the finished project. Any final decisions as to hiring and firing, therefore, should be clearly in the synagogue's hands. Independently, you and the chair should also select an attorney who will review contracts and provide legal counsel on an as-needed basis and communicate your plans to your insurance broker so that they can act as advisors on the insurance/risk/liability issues that arise with construction.
Once the professional team is assembled, it is likely that you will start to have regular meetings to monitor the progress and to make sure that you and the chair have all of the information that you need. The CM should come to each meeting with schedule and expenses information, as well as a list of hot items that need to be resolved. Once the professional team has done the necessary preliminary work and the construction documents are ready, the CM (in coordination with the architect and engineer) will handle the bidding process to find the appropriate contractors for the job. Depending on the project, there may be one general contractor who has the responsibility for hiring whatever subcontractors he needs to complete the work successfully, or it may make more sense to hire each trade separately. The synagogue would then act as the General Contractor. Since there are cost, insurance, risk and liability issues associated with each choice, you should consult with your lawyer and insurance broker before proceeding. You may also want to bring candidates to a building committee to be interviewed, or at least seek guidance from committee members before making any final decisions.

During the actual work, meetings with the contractor, CM, and building chair may take place weekly or even more frequently. You may find that your building super, your controller and/or other staff should be present for all or some of these meetings. In some instances, you may choose to hire a construction assistant to make sure that you can hand over some of the details that have to be internally coordinated to one skilled person. Periodic reports to the Board of Trustees and communications with congregants and staff about what is going on is also crucial.

With some luck and a lot of work, this final team will be responsible for bringing in the work on time, on budget, and exactly as planned. And you will be able to take that vacation after all . . . .

Notes

1. This article assumes that the lay leadership is in basic agreement with the work being proposed, and that there is adequate funding or the possibility of funding.

2. For example, if the chair and I identify a problem, the next step is to have a committee meeting to explain the issues involved. The chair and I develop the agenda, decide who needs to be present at the meeting (i.e. architect, construction person, etc.), and figure out if we need to call any lay leaders ahead of time to make the meeting go more smoothly. After the meeting, assuming that the committee approved the recommended work, we then work together to prepare a presentation for the Board of Trustees and coordinate any necessary "pre-meetings" with key officers. In addition, as a developer, the chair is also very aware of funding issues and has been instrumental in working through different funding options.

3. As we developed this guide book to our buildings, we also created a tentative dollar estimate for each project and established a priority level. This was then tied into our capital campaign so that we have pushed the projects that had priority and those projects which we thought had the greatest appeal.

4. We have forced all of our projects into a tight summer only schedule. While it makes the logistic issues horrendous, it allows us to minimize the dislocation of our congregants during the busy time of the year.

5. The issue of how you get to the point of having a defined construction project deserves its own article. In my case, over the last few years we have hired consultants to review the interior and exterior of our two buildings and provide us with a "state of the building" report, listing significant items which will need to be addressed, time tables, danger level, etc. These consultants then helped us create a priority list, with dollar costs attached, which we brought to the Board of Trustees for approval. This article begins after that approval, and there is some basic understanding of the work to be done.

6. The CM can be a company or an individual. If it is a company, it is very important to make sure that the company cannot change staff during the project without your prior approval since personal relationships are crucial to the success of the team.

7. Each synagogue will have its own process for approvals of contracts, and it is important to know who is an acceptable signator for the construction contracts and what needs to go back to the Board of Trustees once the basic budget has been approved.

8. We have made it a policy not to hire any congregant or any company related to a congregant for construction work. This way, we can be sure that we have a strictly business relationship, and can hire and fire as necessary for the project.

* * * *
Sick Building Syndrome and the Synagogue

Rabbi William L. Berkowitz, Temple B'rith Shalom, Prescott, Arizona

You've just completed the most successful fundraising campaign in your congregation's history. The new building was dedicated with fanfare and celebration. Everyone agrees the place looks great. And then the phone calls start...

Dozens of Religious School students are complaining of headaches. A surprising number of adults feel sick when they are in the new facility. Your synagogue staff is missing more days due to illness. The cantor even seems to be coming down with laryngitis.

Sick Building Syndrome is the name for a mysterious problem that has appeared in the last decade in more and more construction projects. The Federal Court Building in Boston, the Environmental Protection Agency Office in Washington, and scores of office buildings around the country cause symptoms of illness in their occupants. Headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, mood swings, muscle aches, and frequent respiratory infections are some of the symptoms reported. Not everyone feels sick in a "sick building." At the EPA, only 25% of the employees felt ill at work. But just imagine if 25% of your congregants felt ill in your physical plant! Clearly this is a problem it is better to avoid.

The causes of "sick building syndrome" are probably a combination of high concentrations of chemicals and low circulation of fresh air. Hundreds of volatile organic compounds (VOC's) are found in new carpet, fresh paint, adhesives, insulation, upholstery, wood finishes, and even rest room supplies. Most of these VOC's out-gas (evaporate) in the first few months, but a small residue is present for up to ten years. Having windows that open to the outdoors and an air circulation system that exchanges sufficient fresh air are the best way to avoid complaints, especially in the critical first year. Selecting materials with lower VOC content is most effective, and even more so in areas where young children gather. Many behavioral problems in school children have been traced to sick building syndrome.

There is much variability in individuals' sensitivity to chemicals. One small segment of the general population suffers from a poorly understood illness known as Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), which may be linked to Gulf War Syndrome and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The first time someone with MCS calls to tell you they get sick at temple, you'll be tempted to write them off as crazy: but in truth, they can be your best guide to avoiding and resolving sick building conditions. Like the canaries that miners took into the coal mines, people with MCS are an accurate early warning system who can alert you to unhealthy situations in your building. They may not even be able to tolerate entering your synagogue (particularly if pesticides are applied), but they have a valuable contribution to make, and they deserve your trust.

A few churches and at least one synagogue have modified their buildings to make them accessible for chemically-sensitive worshippers. Safer construction methods can cost 5% more than standard, but it is far cheaper than trying to cure a sick building. The careful selection of readily available, low-volatility materials is a small price to pay to safeguard the well-being of synagogue staff, members, and school children.

William L. Berkowitz is the rabbi of Temple B'rith Shalom in Prescott, Arizona, the first congregation in the UAHC to create an accessible worship space for chemically-sensitive congregants. He'll answer questions at (520) 708-0018 or via e-mail at WIBerkowitz@compuserve.com.

NATA Placement Service

310 East 20th Street, Suite 6-K
New York, New York 10021

Henry Fruhauf, FTA (212) 861-5728
After Construction is Complete

Gary S. Cohn, FTA, The Congregation Emanu-El, San Francisco, California

A tremendous amount of energy is placed in the construction of new facilities. It starts with the need for new or renovated space. First are the dreams and plans of the congregation. Second comes the continuous efforts of the rabbis, board of directors, finance committee, fundraising committee, building committee, architects, contractor and maybe a construction manager. There are endless meetings and when it is all complete it is time to dedicate and celebrate. The long process from start to finish can take as many as three years. Meetings are over, the construction is complete, the work is done.

Not so fast, until you have documented everything so that answers are at your fingertips for the next project or preventive maintenance, the building is not finished.

Closure

The final meeting with your architect and general contractor has one purpose, to bring closure to the building process. The agenda for this meeting is a simple one: To review the final project, from the inside out. This meeting should include a discussion of: 1) the “as built” blueprints, 2) all guarantees and warranties related to the project and 3) a full disclosure of project documentation.

The temple should first review the “As Built Drawings” These are the revised blueprints which include all the changes made during construction. There is no way to underestimate the importance of these final drawings. When you have to open up a wall five years later, you will be glad the “as built” blueprints are in hand. These blueprints show the final construction exactly. From the structural steel to the wiring in the walls, from the boilers to the load bearing walls, these drawings are the only road map you will have when future construction or renovation is needed.

During our major building renovation, which began in 1989 and ended in 1992, we experienced several problems with the original blueprints of the 1920’s. When we opened the auditorium ceiling to install three separate bands of new lighting, we discovered that the anticipated electrical connections were found about 18 inches from their location on the blueprints. Additionally, instead of three electrical connections, only two were there. The result was a three-week delay, resulting in new drawings and a cost increase of $30,000.

No project is ever built to the original blueprints. Changes are constantly being made. During our project there were more than two hundred change orders. It is essential that the final blueprints incorporate these. While there are always more change orders in a renovation, final blueprints are no less important for new construction.

Warranties and Guarantees

The second area of review is that of warranties and guarantees. What are the warranties and guarantees governing the construction? This information will give you the background necessary to monitor your finished project, project preventive maintenance costs and resolve problems when they arise.

An important example of understanding one’s warranties is the paint job on the sanctuary and temple house building at Temple Emanu-El. Two years after a new paint job was completed, some problems arose; paint was peeling on one side of the building and a substantial amount of dirt was clinging to the building as a whole. Repainting the affected area resolved the first problem. The paint manufac-

turer covered all costs related to the problem under the negotiated five year warranty. The second problem was ours to live with. Why? The contractor and painting subcontractor had discussed the potential “sticking” problem prior to the building committee’s decision on the type of paint. The paint used on the exterior was a special rubber-based paint with specific waterproofing properties. The building committee was advised to add a latex-based final coat to the building to minimize the potential problem related to the “stickiness” of the primary base paint. The committee elected to save money and not add that final coat. Since the contractors had documented the suggestion very well, there was little we could fall back on for our own mistake.

The warranties and guarantees should answer many questions about the building project. What is the life expectancy of a certain product, part or construction? How will the manufacturer respond if a problem arises? What courses of action are available to the temple? Will the general contractor stand behind the temple in enforcing warranties and guarantees? What are the preventive maintenance schedules? Will the warranty be enforceable if you do not comply with the suggested maintenance schedules? These questions should be fully understood and documented prior to the final sign off by the general contractor and the architect.

Project Documentation

The final area of discussion with the architect and general contractor is a review of all the project documentation other than the blueprints. If the blueprints are the Torah of the building project, then the building project documentation is the Talmud.

These notebooks and vendors lists are the main source for information. Which vendor do you call? Where do
you find the exact replacement carpet you need? Who knows how things work such as the boiler timers or the ventilation ducts?

I can only begin to explain how important these documents are; they are the collective memory of the project. Along with the final “as built” blueprints, anyone can step in, research an issue and resolve a problem. If any of this information is somehow locked in the “head” of a building chair, you are at total risk. The red flags should go up and the alarm should be sounding. It is obvious why nothing should be left to memory. Unfortunately, the time is not always taken to document properly.

In our project, the general contractor made sure to hold this meeting as it was part of their final procedure before asking for retention payments. The relationship between the architect and the general contractor was also critical to this final meeting. Their team work set a tone for our future relationships.

Two years after the project was complete, the city cited us for disabled access code violations related to the project. Although the city had “signed off” on all occupancy permits, they came back after the fact with some serious issues. The general contractor stood by our side, at no charge, to answer the city’s questions. While the architect did charge us for additional hours, documentation from meetings with city inspectors and internal contractors helped in bringing a satisfactory resolution to the problems.

Five years after the project was completed, we needed to look at new painting bids for a part of the building. We could not easily find the information, even though it was there. The general contractor provided us with a list of possible painting contractors and the specifications we should consider in our bid request. The strength of our relationship with our building partners has paid off many times over.

**Conclusions**

The three areas covered in this article are some of the most important ones in the life of a synagogue building. Yet for many congregations, large and small, they are three of the most neglected. We pride ourselves on the beauty of our sanctuaries. Sometimes however, we take them for granted, not for lack of love and commitment but for a lack of time or a ranking of priorities.

Rabbi Tarfon said... “You are not required to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to abstain from it.” So the lesson of this article is “as built” blueprints, guarantees and warranties and project documentation are the real foundations upon which we construct our buildings.

There is one last area which I will touch upon briefly. By no means however is the brevity of this paragraph a statement about its relative importance to the rest of the article.

**Why certain decisions were made.**

Questions arise around size of rooms, which rooms were built, colors, furniture, dedications, donor plaques, etc. Where blueprints, warranties and guarantees, and project documentation are the basic components of our buildings, the reasons why decisions were made a certain way is the essence of our congregations. Years from now, someone will ask, why did we do it this way? What was the rational? Understanding these answers will give you insight into how leadership viewed the synagogue in the past and will assist you in making decisions for the future.

An excellent way to assure future decisions are made properly is to keep a record of all committee and board meetings and decisions made regarding the project.

We must remember that when all is said and done, when the scaffolding is removed and the construction workers leave for the last time, what we have given ourselves is sacred space. A place to do God’s work.

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**FINANCE, BUDGETING AND INVESTING**

If you are interested in writing or submitting an article, please contact

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Deadline: January 1, 1998
NATA on the World Wide Web
Warren Lieberman, FTA, Temple Beth-el, San Antonio, Texas

Everyday millions of people turn on their computers and take a trip on the Information Superhighway. They can instantly visit millions of sites on their trip. This trip is not a physical one; it is an educational, entertaining and interactive journey.

Recently, NATA added a stop on the Information Superhighway. This stop, or web site, is provided by the Union’s participation in a consortium of Jewish organizations known as Shamash. Shamash provides the technical support and equipment that allow NATA’s web site to exist on the World Wide Web (www).

The mission of NATA is to stimulate interest in Temple Administration, provide educational opportunities to NATA members, and to enable members to better serve their congregations. NATA’s mission is also to disseminate information to NATA members and UAHC congregations. The web site, like this Journal, is a means toward accomplishing that mission.

Information about NATA, the consulting service it provides, conventions, educational opportunities, FTA certification, and the NATA Journal are contained on the web site. This information is currently provided by separate segments of NATA’s membership. The web site provides a single source for these various informational sources.

The web site will continue to grow as more information becomes available. Suggestions from members who use the site are being evaluated and added as they are approved and developed. For instance, a more detailed convention page will be generated as the plans for the Dallas convention become more solidified. Suggestions for the NATA page can be submitted to Gary Cohn, Warren Lieberman, or Eli Montague.

Like many other web sites it provides “links” to other web sites. There are two major link categories. One is Judaic, and the other is a general interest area. The major Judaic link is to the UAHC’s web site. This section is growing, as fellow administrators contact us and suggest other web sites of interest. Several web sites are collections of hundreds of Judaic links. Any one of the major link sites can contain hundreds of links to sites that provide Judaic content of superb quality. The sites include torah study, Israel, Hebrew language, music, literature and news, to name a few.

The general area link section contains several categories, such as business, finance, nonprofit and academic news, technology and government. This section continues to grow as sites are added every week. Both link sections are designed to be sources of practical information dealing with a variety of topics.

If you haven’t logged in yet, look NATA up at http://www.shamash.org/uahc/nata.

Used Prayerbook Exchange

Temple Beth Shalom (Prescott, Arizona) is offering Matchmaking for buyers and sellers of used prayerbooks. Communities that are adopting new prayerbooks can find a central exchange for their used books.

Get in touch with other congregations, Hillels, and chaplaincies seeking or offering used copies of:

• Gates of Prayer (all versions)
• Gates of Repentance (pre-1996)
• Union Prayer Book (I & II)
• Other CCAR publications

Contact Temple Beth Shalom’s Used Prayerbook Exchange at:
(520) 708-0018 (voice mail) (520) 747-4424 (fax)
or Rabbi William Berkowitz via e-mail: W.Berkowitz@compuserve.com

The Used Prayerbook Exchange is approved by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

For new prayerbooks, call the CCAR PRESS at 1-800-935-CCAR.
**The Nuts And Bolts Of FTA Certification**

Reprinted from the Summer 1996 NATA Journal

Joseph W. Boston, FTA, Director of Administration, The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah, Kansas City, Missouri

- **What is a Fellow in Temple Administration?**

  The FTA is a Certification program governed by representatives from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the National Association of Temple Administrators. The FTA Certification program was established to identify administrators who strive to develop and enhance their competency with the tools needed to steer the synagogue through the complexities of modern organizational life.

- **What are the requirements to achieve an FTA?**

  A candidate for the FTA will complete the following management exams, each of 90-minutes duration:

  - **Synagogue Finance**
    budgeting, endowments, fund raising

  - **Techniques and Tools of Management**
    building maintenance and supervision, office management, personnel, cemetery

  - **Communications and Human Relations**
    synagogue governance, leadership, membership, public relations, programming

  A candidate will complete two 90-minute exams in Jewish subject matter:

  - **Jewish History**
    general Jewish history, history of the Reform movement, American Jewish history

  - **Reform Jewish Practices and Liturgy**
    customs, ceremonies, holidays

  A candidate will demonstrate a reading knowledge of prayer book Hebrew when asked to read several prayers from the liturgy of the Sabbath.

  A candidate will complete an eight-to ten-page thesis on an approved topic of one's choice related to synagogue management.

  A candidate will have completed a prescribed period of service as a full-time temple administrator, the length of which is based on the educational background of the candidate as described in the FTA explanatory brochure.

- **What is a Senior Member?**

  Senior Member status denotes that an administrator has embarked on the Certification process and has completed a portion of the requirements toward FTA Certification.

  A full-time temple administrator who has completed the three management exams and has satisfied the applicable service time requirement is eligible for Senior Member status.

  Senior Member status is required for nomination to NATA office or Board positions, as well as participation in the Placement Service Committee and the Consulting Service Committee.

- **How do I start the Certification process?**

  Complete and submit the certification application form enclosed with a $45 application fee to Mark Weisstuch, FTA, Secretary of the Board of Certification, Congregation Emanuel, 1 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021.

- **When can I take the exams?**

  There are several options for taking the exams: at the annual NATA convention, at the NATA Summer Institute, at your congregation, upon prior arrangement with the Secretary of the Board of Certification and the designation of a specific proctor (e.g., your rabbi, cantor, or educator).

- **Can I take the exams before completing my service time requirement?**

  Yes, you can. If you are relatively new to the field, you can still begin taking the Certification exams. If you have successfully completed the three management exams before completing your service time requirement, you will be designated a “Senior-in-waiting,” and you will automatically become a Senior Member when you have satisfied your service time requirement.

- **How do I prepare for the exams?**

  Once you have submitted an application for Certification, you will receive a packet of material which includes a bibliography of suggested reading and study outlines.

  You can prepare on your own or you can attend the NATA Summer Institute.

- **When and where are the NATA Summer Institutes held?**

  The Institutes are held in June every two years and alternate on the campuses of the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles and Cincinnati.

  The Institutes run for five days (Sunday through Thursday) and consist of approximately 11 workshops which cover every area addressed in the full spectrum of exams, with the exception of Hebrew reading preparation. The last day is devoted to exams.

  The registration cost for the Institute is approximately $450, and includes tuition, room, breakfasts and lunches. NATA subsidizes 50% of the
registration cost for Regular NATA members.

- **Must I decide my thesis topic when I submit my application for Certification?**
  No. You can decide on a topic at any time in the process.
  The process of selecting a thesis topic is described in a flyer which is part of the material you will receive upon applying for Certification. Essentially, it involves submitting an abstract of the subject, stating the goal of the paper and the methodology to be used, along with an outline and listing of resources which will be used. The proposal is reviewed by the Board of Certification, and comments are returned to you before you proceed.

- **Can I prepare for the exams and then take an exam at the 1997 NATA Convention in Dallas?**
  Yes. Beginning (last year) with the Kansas City Convention, a special series of courses will be offered at each convention which will be followed by the exam which addresses that material. In this way, over a period of three years, taking one exam each year, you will be able to complete the three management exams which will qualify you for Senior Membership.

- **How do I sign up for the Senior Management Course at the 1997 Convention?**
  To sign up for the course, simply complete the appropriate section on the Convention Registration Form.
  To sign up for the exam, you need to do three things in advance: (a) complete the appropriate section on the enclosed convention registration form, (b) complete the enclosed application for certification as an FTA, and (c) return the completed application for certification with your $45 fee payment to Dr. Mark Weisstuch, c/o Temple Emanu-El, 1 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021.