

Three Couples to be Called to Bimah as Simhat Torah Honorees

by Miriam Kobliner

Audrey and Eric Itzkowitz, Morgan and Seth Kurpiel, and Louise and Yosef Soleymani will receive Temple Israel's highest religious recognition when they are called to the *bimah* at the Simhat

Torah service on Sunday, October 4. The service will begin at 9:15 A.M. and will be followed by a luncheon.

On Simhat Torah, as we mark the joyous occasion of completing the annual cycle of reading the Torah and immediately restarting it, we honor individuals, traditionally called "*hatanim*" (bridegrooms) and "*kalat*" (brides), for the final *aliyot*.

Hatan v'Kalat Torah are honored with the very last section of the Book of Deuteronomy; *Hatan v'Kalat Bereshit* are honored with reading the very beginning of the Book of Genesis, symbolizing that Torah study never ends; and *Hatan v'Kalat Maftir* are called up to read the concluding holiday portion, which is immediately followed by the reading of the *Haftarah*. During these specific readings, it is customary to hold a large *tallit* over the heads of the honorees like a wedding *chuppah*, celebrating their symbolic "marriage" to the Torah. The congregation also sings unique celebratory *piyyutim* (hymns) to escort the honorees to and from the *bimah*.

This Simhat Torah, Audrey and Eric Itzkowitz, *Hatan v'Kalat Torah* (bridegroom and bride of the Torah), will be called to the reading of the concluding verses of the Book of Deuteronomy; Seth and Morgan Kurpiel, *Hatan v'Kalat Bereshit* (bridegroom and bride of Genesis), will be called to the reading of the opening verses of the Book

of Genesis; and Yosef and Louise Soleymani, *Hatan v'Kalat Maftir* (bridegroom and bride of the *Maftir* reading), will be called upon to chant the *Haftarah* from the Book of Joshua.



Simhat Torah Honorees:
Audrey and Eric Itzkowitz (top); Seth and Morgan Kurpiel with their two sons, Benson and Riley (middle); and Louise and Yosef Soleymani (bottom).

When asked about these six honorees, Rabbi Howard Stecker commented, "this year's honorees are integral to the life of our synagogue in ways that I will have the pleasure of expanding on further at the actual service. Each of them is a person of unwavering integrity and a role model for our community. I hope everyone will join us on Simhat Torah to show them our appreciation."

Temple Israel President Rachel Geula shared her thoughts on the honorees:

"This year's Simhat Torah honorees are shining examples of what it means to be committed to Temple Israel and to Judaism. Through their volunteerism, their commitment to Temple Israel, their dedication to family, and their presence at *Shabbat* services, on committees, and attending synagogue events, all three couples have brought something special and valuable to the Temple Israel community."

The celebration of Simhat Torah will begin on the evening of Saturday, October 3. The congregation will celebrate the cycle of the reading of the Torah by joyously carrying the Torahs outside of Temple Israel (weather permitting) and dancing in front of the synagogue on Old Mill Road at 7 P.M., to be followed by *Minhah* and *Ma'ariv* in the Sanctuary.

continued on page 2

ERIC AND AUDREY ITZKOWITZ
Hatan v'Kalat Torah

Audrey and Eric Itzkowitz became members of Temple Israel more than 30 years ago, when their son, the oldest of their three children, began nursery school at Beth HaGan. What began as a connection through their young family grew into a lasting commitment to the synagogue and its community.

Audrey and Eric have relished being active parts of the Temple Israel community over the last three decades, starting with Audrey's involvement on the Parent Committee of Beth HaGan. She spearheaded the Religious School's Tikun Olam program, which included food, clothing and toy drives as well as other good works initiatives. Since then, she served on the Finance Committee as well as on the Board of Trustees, and now serves on the Executive Committee, where she is Co-Vice President of Programming and Finance. Eric has participated in various facets of synagogue life, including the Men's Club, Midnight Run, the *Shabbat* Services led by the Men's Club, and adult education classes.

Audrey began her career in investment banking and then went on to institutional money management, investing institutional retirement assets for Verizon, and is currently with National Grid. She also serves on various boards in the institutional investment field. Eric is an attorney and CPA specializing in trusts and estates, and has authored articles in the field. Eric enjoyed coaching all three of their children's baseball and basketball teams. Outside of their professional and community commitments, Audrey and Eric enjoy traveling, running, hiking, kayaking, racquet sports, and especially family time.

Audrey grew up in Brooklyn and Merrick; Eric grew up in the Bronx. Their growing family includes Jake, an attorney, and his wife Eliza, a product manager; Isabel, a school psychologist; and Daniel, a French horn player and doctoral student in music. They are also the delighted grandparents of two-year-old Simon.

All three children attended Beth HaGan, the religious school, and the Waxman Youth House and High School and became *b'nai mitzvah* at Temple Israel. Additionally, they all had meaningful experiences participating in USY Summer Programs.

The Itzkowitz family feels as welcomed by Temple Israel now as they did when they first attended Tot *Shabbat* three decades ago, then led by Ronnie Katz, z"l. They are excited to make many more memories with this wonderful community!

SETH AND MORGAN KURPIEL
Hatan v'Kalat Bereshit

Morgan and Seth Kurpiel have been members of Temple Israel of Great Neck for 13 years. They have two children, Riley, 16, and Benson, 13, who attended religious school and the Youth House program, and became *bar mitzvahs* at Temple Israel. Riley, currently a junior at Great Neck South High School, was

a Men's Club Youth of the Year honoree. Benson is an eighth grader at Great Neck South Middle School.

Taking an active role on Temple Israel's Green Team, Morgan helps lead Temple Israel to make environmentally-conscious choices, including tree planting and the use of environmentally-responsible products for *kiddush*.

Seth has been involved on the Religious School Education Committee and the New Member Welcoming Committee. He initiated both the Temple Israel ski trip and the outdoor Friday night services at Steppingstone Park, and has been involved in several other events. Seth is a member of the Men's Club and has volunteered his time alongside Morgan, Riley and Benson with the Hatzilu organization, which packages and delivers food to those in need. Seth has also enjoyed playing softball on the Temple Israel team.

Morgan is a registered nurse and has worked at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center for most of her career. A graduate of Binghamton University's nursing program, Morgan recently earned a Master of Science in Nutrition degree from Stony Brook University. She has taken ballet classes her entire life, enjoys the outdoors, and has a love for all animals.

Seth, an actuary who worked at various insurance companies and consulting firms, grew up on Staten Island and attended the University of Connecticut. He loves running, skiing, snowboarding, basketball, softball and rooting for the New York Mets (much to the chagrin of Morgan, a Yankees fan). He is an Eagle Scout and has volunteered in many leadership positions in both the local Cub Scouts and Scouts in Great Neck's Troop 10.

Morgan and Seth love traveling with their children, creating new adventures together, and emphasizing the importance of *Tikkun Olam*.

In April 2025, Seth suffered a severe spinal cord injury and is very grateful to the entire Temple Israel community for their unwavering support throughout his recovery journey.

Morgan and Seth are grateful to be a part of such a loving and supportive synagogue community, and are so thankful to be honored this Simhat Torah along with the other honorees.

YOSEF AND LOUISE SOLEYMANI
Hatan v'Kalat Maftir

Born in Iran, Louise and Yosef Soleymani came to the United States in June 1965, shortly after their marriage. Following Yosef's graduation from medical school in Tehran, he completed his internship and pediatric residency in New York, followed by a fellowship in allergy, asthma, and immunology.

In 1972, Louise and Yosef moved to Great Neck and joined Temple Israel. For more than 54 years, Dr. Soleymani has been a devoted weekly participant in synagogue life. He has taught a number of congregants to chant Torah and *Haftarah* using

Persian and Sephardic melodies, and he has shared these sacred traditions through his own readings and the Sephardic-Persian melodies he offers at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. Congregants who have attended the concluding service in the Grand Ballroom over the past 20 years will be familiar with Yosef Soleymani leading the Yom Kippur *Neela*. Two years ago, he also added *Adon Haselikhout*.

In March 2026, Dr. Soleymani led Friday evening services for the Persian New Year and helped teach *Shabbat* prayers to interested congregants. He was also part of the search committee for a new cantor, which resulted in Temple Israel's hiring of Cantor Luis Cattán.

Dr. Soleymani served as the Chief of Pediatric Allergy at Beth Israel Hospital in New York and as an Assistant Professor of Pediatric Allergy at SUNY Stony Brook. He also became a Fellow of the American Academy and College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. Over a distinguished career, Dr. Soleymani made important contributions to his specialty through his clinical work, leadership, and publications.

For 50 years, Dr. Soleymani maintained a highly respected and successful allergy and asthma practice on Long Island. He was a founding member and later president of the Long Island Allergy and Asthma Society. In 2003, he also helped found the Sephardic American Medical Society. For more than 23 years, he has supported its work through regular physicians' meetings, serving first as president and now as chairman.

Throughout the years, Louise has provided loving guidance and support to their family. Together, she and Yosef are the proud parents of Stephen, Eddie, and Nancy, all of whom became *b'nai mitzvah* at Temple Israel. Their children are now married and have families of their own. ■

Sukkot service followed by a festive Shabbat dinner in the Sukkah

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2ND

6:20 P.M. SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY
7:00 P.M. DINNER IN THE SUKKAH

Temple Israel Members:
\$36 per person • \$25 per child (5 – 12 years old)
Under 5 years old: no charge

Non-Members:
\$45 per adult • \$25 per child (5 – 12 years old)
Under 5 years old: no charge

RSVP by September 30th
People who RSVP by noon on September 25th
will get priority seating in the Sukkah

Simhat Torah at Temple Israel

On Simhat Torah,
we will take time to remember, pray
and – yes – dance in our never-ending support for
the State of Israel and our pride in being
part of the eternal Jewish people.

Saturday, October 3rd
Shemini Atzeret/Leil Simhat Torah

9:15 a.m.

Shemini Atzeret Services including Yizkor (followed by
kiddush in the Sukkah weather permitting)

Leil Simhat Torah

5:30 p.m.

Young Family Simhat Torah Celebration in Blue Room

6:30 p.m.

Festival Minhah in the Sanctuary

6:50 p.m.

Festival Ma'ariv in the Sanctuary

7:00 p.m.

Dancing in the Streets with the Torah on Old Mill Road
(followed by refreshments)

*Note: portions of Old Mill Road — including our parking lot
— will be closed off for this part of the celebration*

Sunday, October 4th
Simhat Torah

9:15 a.m.

Shaharit Morning Service with Hakafoth in the Sanctuary
(including dancing and Simhat Torah honorees)

12:15 p.m.

Following services, join us for a luncheon
in the Grand Ballroom

6:25 p.m.

Shabbat Minhah, Ma'ariv and Havdalah in the Sanctuary

7:13 p.m.

Holiday ends



THE WOMEN'S
LEARNING COMMUNITY OF
TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK

Women of Temple Israel, join us for Kol Isha this year...

In weekly classes led by Rahel Musleah, we will explore and learn to lead the Shabbat Musaf service. While Musaf originated in ancient times, its contemporary meaning encourages us to mark sacred time with intentionality.

All women welcome
No Hebrew literacy required

Wednesday evenings at 7 P.M.
from September 9th - October 7th*
Starting October 11th, we will meet on
Sunday mornings from 10 A.M. to 11 A.M.
through April

TEMPLE ISRAEL LIBRARY

*Since the holidays affect our Sunday schedule, we will meet on Wednesday evenings through October 7



Temple Israel Players presents

THE BIG REVEAL of OUR SPRING MUSICAL plus AUDITION PREP

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28th • 6:30 P.M. to 9 P.M.

and mark your calendars for the performances:

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 10, 2027 and SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 11, 2027

Join other Temple Israel members
on a visit to the

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Washington, D.C.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2026

Former Temple Israel member and USHMM staff member Amy Katz Kardon will take our group on a private tour of the museum.

Take the train with other Temple Israel members or travel on your own.
(Make your own travel arrangements.)

More details are on our website: tign.org



Saturday
October 3rd
7 P.M.

outside on Old Mill Road
followed by refreshments

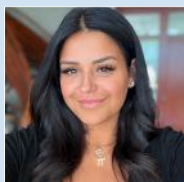
NOTE: portions of Old Mill Road — including our parking lot — will be closed off for this part of the celebration

Before dancing in the street, join us for:

6:30 p.m. – Festival Minhah • Sanctuary

6:50 p.m. – Festival Ma'ariv • Sanctuary

Please join us as Instagram sensation ASHLEY ELIAHU



leads a

COOKING DEMONSTRATION OF DELICIOUS SALADS & DIPS

followed by a festive tasting & wine

Ashley will prepare matbucha, hummus and more

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27TH
7:30 P.M.

The food will be parve

Temple Israel Members: \$54 per adult
Non-Members: \$65 per adult

Pre-registration is required
RSVP by Friday, October 23rd

Temple Israel of Great Neck

Voice

Miriam Kobliner, Editor & Creative Director

Editorial Committee:

Susan Brustein, Rachel Geula, Miriam Kobliner, Jamey Kohn, Marc Langsner,
Paul Schwartz, Rabbi Daniel Schweber, Deborah Volk

Editorial Assistance provided by: Angela Jones, Ken Kobliner, Rob Panzer

Editor Emeritus: Marc Katz

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK
108 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
P: 516.482.7800 | F: 516.482.7352
info@tign.org | www.tign.org

Temple Israel Voice (USPS #078-740) is published monthly by
Temple Israel of Great Neck at 108 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
Periodicals postage paid at Great Neck, NY 11021
Postmaster: Send address changes to:
Temple Israel Voice, 108 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
Subscription: \$5.00 per annum

TEMPLE ISRAEL STAFF

Howard Stecker, Senior Rabbi
Daniel Schweber, Associate Rabbi
Luis Cattani, Cantor
Mordecai Waxman*, Rabbi Emeritus
Raphael Frieder, Cantor Emeritus
Jamey Kohn, Executive Director
Connie Reichman, Director of Education
Yve Fouladi, Director, Beth HaGan

OFFICERS

Rachel Geula, President
Andrew Bloom, Vice President
Susan Brustein, Vice President
Lisa Goodwin, Vice President
Audrey Kent Itzkowitz, Vice President
Ron Klempner, Vice President
Marc Langsner, Vice President
Deborah Volk, Vice President
Irving H. Lurie*, Honorary President (Temple Israel's first president)
*Deceased