ELUL STORIES
Sharing our stories, sharing lives, creating community

Elul is the month leading up to Rosh HaShanah. Each day during the month, a different Temple Beth Torah congregant will share a High Holiday reflection to help us prepare for this season of prayer, repentance and tzedakah.

Lessons from my grandsons
Margie Goldin

I take my Grandma responsibilities very seriously, especially since Steve and I are our grandsons' only grandparents. We have always said that mostly we consider it to be our job to create memories of all kinds. The boys are in on the idea of sharing experiences together and we have plans to take a trip around the world, one exciting place at a time, even dreaming of staying at an underwater hotel in Dubai.

But if you are going to participate in memory creation you need to be clear about what is involved. It occurs to me that memories have to start somewhere - what was said, what happened, who participated, etc. Then they have to cluster around a location, an event, a set of people, or a holiday. Because any moment or event has the potential to hold on in our thoughts and become a memory, those who were there have a responsibility to say, "remember when . . . ?" Then everyone will smile, nod in agreement and maybe add a detail. Without this verbal reliving memories cannot go on.

My outstanding Grandma Rosh Hashana moment so far took place just last year at Congregation Shir Hadash in Los Gatos CA and it is destined to solidify as a family memory. At the conclusion of the service their Rabbi invited all the kids outside to try their hand at blowing a shofar. This was followed by (or sometimes preceded by) a lot of apple in honey eating and juice drinking. When our boys got to the front of the line my older grandson got a sound to come out of the shofar. I will always cherish the moment (captured in
a cell phone picture fortunately) of the look of wonder on my grandson's face and the corresponding look of delight on the rabbi's face as they made eye contact following the success. This reminds me that every generation discovers anew the holidays, conquers challenges, and establishes temple and Jewish related relationships. Thus our traditions move forward. This year we can say, "remember when you were able to blow the shofar last year?" after services which will be modified in the future to "remember when you first blew the shofar when you were six?" This year maybe both boys will get it to make a sound. Or next. Memories don't have to be rushed.

Steve and I just celebrated our 43rd wedding anniversary. We have lived in Dix Hills for almost 39 years and have been members of the temple for over 30 years. Our son Brian lives in a group home in East Northport, has dinner out with us at least once a week and celebrates all the holidays and family occasions. He is a good traveler and comes with us to California several times a year to visit his brother, sister in law and nephews.

Would you like to share your story? It can be a High Holiday memory, a first experience or a ritual that is special to you at this time of year. Send your stories to raysusie@gmail.com. If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtny.org (media galleries/elul stories).