

Mark Your Calendar!

- Saturday, March 6, 6:30 p.m.
Set up for Purim Carnival
Dinner and fun will be served!
- Sunday, March 7
Megillah reading, 10:30 a.m.
Purim Carnival, 12:00 p.m.
Confirmation meets
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 12, 6:30 p.m.
Shabbat Across America
Pot Luck Dinner
- Saturday, March 13, 10:00 a.m.
Bar Mitzvah
- Sunday, March 14, 10:45 a.m.
Adult Ed
- Sunday, March 21
Men's Club Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
PTO Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Confirmation meets
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Family Trip to Bridgewater JCC,
1:00-4:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 26, 6:30 p.m.
Lay-led Shabbat followed by
pot luck dinner
- Saturday, March 27, 10:30 a.m.
Torah Study
- Sunday, March 28
Religious School Model
Passover Seder

All committee members: Please be sure to send updates to your programs to our webmaster Wain Schroeder at niaw1@comcast.net

Rabbi's Message

One Friday morning last month, I watched in frustration as the snow and sleet once again foiled our plans to worship together. Another Torah portion not read and sermon not given, I thought. Yet even while I was busy grumbling to myself, I also experienced a moment of gratitude when I recalled that a conversation about wintry weather had been the final deciding factor for me in my becoming the rabbi of this congregation ten years ago. The discussion was with members of the Rabbinic Search Committee and it went something like this: "When the weather is bad, we cancel services. "We don't want people risking their lives to come to the Center. And even if the weather in Washington is clear but the weather by you is snowy, Rabbi, we want you to stay home and be safe."

You may think that it just makes sense to be concerned about the safety of rabbi and congregants alike, but I did not take it for granted. It spoke volumes to me about the character of this congregation. I had worked previously in congregations that took pride in never canceling services. What that meant, I discovered, was that the rabbi, cantor and organist were expected to brave blizzards that kept sane congregants home. One day as I skidded down a hill on my way to the temple, I asked myself, "Is it worth risking my life to get to the Temple? If our tradition values life above all else, what am I doing in my car today?" In that moment, I knew I needed to be in a congregation that valued life above worship. That is what I found in the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey.

That is not to say that Jewish life should stop because of snow. Even if we can't worship together, Shabbat and study still continue. I recently read a column describing strategies

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President's Message

As I wake early each morning to go to work, I realize that today is going to be a great. What does a great day mean to me? It means the opportunity to help other people. It can be as simple as just saying good morning to everyone I meet, or saying something nice to them and maybe getting them to smile. In my job as a computer specialist, people often call me and preface their questions with something like, "I am sorry to bother you." I always answer in the same tone, "I am here to help you." It means being as pleasant as I can to everyone that day. I received an email this week about a man who was always positive and cheerful, almost to the point where people were annoyed at him for being too cheerful. The man said that "I get to make choices every day. I can choose to be cheerful or not. I can choose how I react to any given situation." This man had a serious accident and when people visited him in the hospital, he was still the same cheerful person he had always been. One of the beauties of being a human is that we get to make conscious choices. We can choose to let our situation get us down, or we can be grateful for all of the things that we do have.

One of the things that I get to see as President is how each of you is making those choices regarding the Jewish Center. I am extremely proud of the choices that are made on a consistent basis. It reflects so well on our past leadership and all of you that I see so much good coming out of this congregation.

On the 12th of March, we have a special treat for all of you. One of Rabbi Lewis' friends, a cantorial student named Marcy Kadin, will join us for Shabbat Across America and sing a few selections. I hope that you all get a chance to hear her magnificent voice.

Shalom,
Howie Hirsch

Rabbi's Message, cont.

for parental success that included this recommendation: "Don't outsource parenting. The fact that you're not a professional athlete doesn't mean you're not the best person to teach softball." I loved the phrase, "Don't outsource parenting," and thought about the many times I have searched for an eloquent way to say, "Don't outsource being a Jew. That fact that you're not a rabbi doesn't mean you're not the best person to teach Judaism." Our busy lives force us to delegate so much these days. Coming to the Center is not the only way to live a Jewish life. You don't have to know Hebrew to pray; you don't even have to know Hebrew to sit with your child while he or she practices reading Hebrew. You don't have to be a scholar to make the your homes a source of Jewish love, learning and practice.

It doesn't take a rabbi to know when to cancel services. What's more, when the leaders of our Center cancel services, the decision is a very Jewish one. It is a decision that doesn't "outsource" Jewish decision-making; rather, it affirms the value of life both inside and outside our Temple. So on those days and nights when we are not together, say a prayer of gratitude for life and a word of appreciation for our thoughtful leadership.

Looking forward to spring,

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis

Upcoming Adult Education Programs

Torah Study - If line-by-line (and sometimes word-by-word) textual study interests you, come join us one Saturday morning per month, 10:30 to noon or thereabouts, on the following dates: **March 27, April 24, May 22, and June 12.** If you would like more information, call Sharon Herson.

Education Committee and PTO News

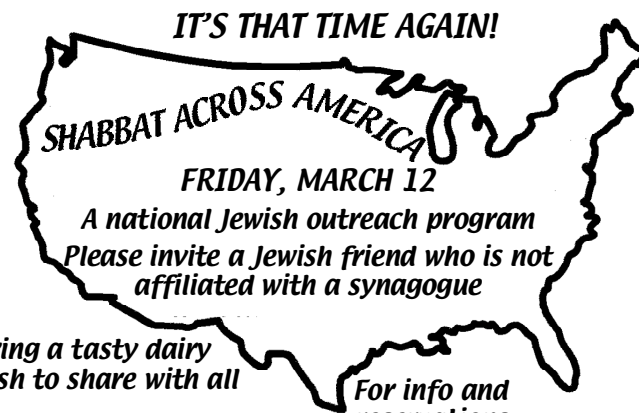
Don't miss the Purim Carnival on **Sunday, March 7** at noon. We're asking each parent to bring baked goods to be sold at the Purim bake sale. Set-up this year will be **Saturday, March 6** at 6:30 p.m. Come for fun and pizza!

Come to the Bridgewater JCC **Sunday, March 21**, 1:00-4:00pm! Sunday School and Confirmation students will be able to swim and use the gym. Cost is \$5 per person. Transportation will be the responsibility of the parents. Return response forms to Lisa Bauch by March 7.

Shoprite/A&P Vouchers

We would like to remind everyone that in addition to dues, in 2003/2004 all family memberships in the Temple are required either to purchase \$2,000 worth of A&P/ShopRite scrip or pay an additional \$100 in dues. The deadline for this obligation is April 1. Please call Sandy Seidorf to purchase scrip, or mail the \$100 to the Treasurer Paul May.

ShopRite/A&P scrip can be purchased at Sunday School/Confirmation Class on March 7, 21, April 4, 18, May 2, 16.



Bring a tasty dairy dish to share with all

SERVICE BEGINS AT
6:30PM

For info and reservations, call the Temple

Joining us for Shabbat Across America will be cantorial student Marcy Kadin. Marcy Kadin has a BM from the Hartt College of Music and an MA in voice from the College Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati. She has sung operas, oratorios and other choral works over the years and presently is a soloist with two Jewish choirs, the Zamir Chorale in New York and Shirah, a community choir of the JCC in the Palisades, both of which are conducted by Matti Lazar.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Jewish Life

Back by popular demand on



Thursday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m., Raymond Wojcik, "Nu, Music? It Ain't All Klezmer - Part 2." On Sunday, March 28 at 10 a.m. Chaim Waxman discusses "The Half Full Cup - Strengths and Weaknesses of American Jewry." Coming in April, Barbara Krasner-Khait, "Discovering Your Jewish Ancestors," on Thursday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m. The annual Community-wide Yom Hashoah observance will be held Sunday April 18 at 7 p.m. at Temple Har Shalom in Warren featuring Henry Frankel. Sunday, April 25 at 10 a.m., Star Ledger sports writer Jerry Izenberg will be the featured speaker. All programs with the exception of the Yom Hashoah observance will be held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. For information and to RSVP for all Jewish LIFE programs, please contact JCC Asst. Executive Director Laura Friedman at 908-725-6994 x213; LFriedman@ssbjcc.org.

Jewish Arts Week

The Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC will celebrate Jewish Arts Week March 15-18. The weeklong series of programs and events is open to the community. Pre-registration is required for all events.

Highlights include: the Elyah Art Gallery of Givat Shmuel, Israel, specializing in unique limited editions of lithographs of original art by well known Israeli artists; Jewish Film Night; Lunch & Learn, featuring Rabbi's discussion of Jewish Arts; Israeli Dance Workshop; Musical entertainment with a Jewish flavor featuring Bruce Fagan; Jewish American

Songwriters: An evening with Fred Miller, covering the music, anecdotes, careers and songs of great Jewish American songwriters. An all-inclusive subscription is available. To register and for information, contact JCC Adult Program Director Jan Smith at 908-725-6994 x206; JSmith@ssbjcc.org

Purim Carnival

The Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC will hold its annual Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 7, 1-4pm. Games and prizes and more are included. Come in costume! \$3/child or \$1/child plus one non-perishable food item to benefit the Food Bank Network of Somerset County. Adults are free. Additional parking and a free shuttle bus from 685 Route 202/206 in Bridgewater. For information, call Laura Friedman, Asst. Exec. Director, at 908-725-6994 x213; LFriedman@ssbjcc.org.

Visit the "Made in Israel" Marketplace from 11am-4pm. The Marketplace will feature many vendors selling products made in Israel. Admission to the Marketplace is free.

The JCC will be running a one-day membership special on Sunday, March 7. New members who join on that day can save up to \$200 when the JCC waives the Joiner Fee (some restrictions apply). Tours will be available. Call the JCC office at 908-725-6994 for membership rates and information.

Renaissance Group

The annual meeting of the URJ-NJ/WHV Council Renaissance Coalition will be held on Sunday, March 28, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Temple Beth Tikvah in Wayne. The Renaissance movement started in 1990 to meet the changing social, education, and lifestyle needs of "empty nesters." Renaissance programs offer older congregants an opportunity to explore new interests and friendships within their congregation. If you would like to learn more about the Renaissance program and possibly bring it to the Jewish Center, please let Howie know, and respond by March 22 to Barbara Kaufman, Renaissance Coalition Coordinator at 201-385-8433.

Calling all Bikers

This March 21-25, the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism is sponsoring its first annual bike ride in Israel - a five-day, 220-mile trek from Nahariya, Israel's northernmost seashore town, to Jerusalem. Riders are welcome-but you can also adopt a rider, thus helping raise funds for the educational programs in Israel. Visit www.riding4reform.org, or contact the IMPJ at riding4reform@impj.org.

HATZLACHA.COM

www.hatzlacha.com is an employment and career job site that aims to efficiently match up corporate and non corporate employers with job seekers of the Jewish work force. HATZLACHA.COM maintains a database with more than 10,000 job ads. Browse and search by job category or location to match specific professional skills and personal characteristics, with a database of several thousand job seekers, and prospective employees who signed up to receive automated suitable e-alerts of new job opportunities within predefined categories.

Berman Center Spring 2004 Programs

LECTURE BY "THE GOD SQUAD"

Msgr. Thomas Hartman and Rabbi Marc Gellman will discuss "Religion and Violence in the Contemporary World." Open to the public free of charge. No tickets required. Sponsored by the Kenner Lecute, the Berman Center for Jewish Studies, and Lehigh's Hillel and Newman Centers. Wednesday, March 3, 7:30 p.m., Packard Lab Auditorium, Lehigh University

SYMPOSIUM ON JEWISH WRITING:

"IMAGINING JEWS: CONTEMPORARY EXPLORATIONS"
A group of Jewish writers and poets reflect on Jewish memory and identity — past, present and future. Participants include Melvin Bukiet, Lawrence Langer, and Irena Klepfisz in a session on "Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust"; Ilan Stavans, Ruth Knafo Setton, and Faridh Goldin on "Multicultural Jews"; and Gerald Stern, Allicia Ostriker, and Dara Horn on "Rethinking Jewish Identity. Sunday, March 21, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Lehigh University. Registration is required.

Visit the Berman Center's website at www.lehigh.edu/~inber/symposium.html for more information or call 610-758-3352.

Donations

Pauline Ehrlich - In appreciation of the High Holiday services
Rhonda Jordan - In memory of Jean Siegel

The congregation congratulates Suzanne Marr on her recent engagement!

From Your Newsletter Editor

We're looking for a new newsletter editor beginning this fall. Contact Howie or Lisa if interested.

The deadline for April's issue will be March 18.

JEWISH CENTER OF NORTHWEST JERSEY

Name	_____	Email	_____
Address	_____	I/We would like to make a contribution of	_____
	_____	In honor of	_____
	_____	In memory of	_____
Phone	_____	Please contact me/us about membership	_____

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Purim Carnival - Sunday March 7 1-4pm
Made in Israel "Shuk" 11am-4pm

We offer:

A Family Membership to the JCC
is less than \$60/month

- Indoor Pool
- Youth & Adult Sports Leagues
- Fully Equipped Health & Fitness Center
- Free Fitness Classes for Members
(Select Classes Only)
- Sauna and Steam Room
- Personal Training
- Blaustein Early Childhood Center
- Youth/Teen Programs
- Jewish LIFE/Cultural Programs
- Vacation Day Programs
- Senior programs
- Camp Talamini-Ruach
- Summer Swim Club
- **NEW!** JCC Dance School



**Shimon and Sara Birnbaum
Jewish Community Center**
775 Talamini Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807
(908)725-6994 • Fax: (908) 725-9753



Allen Menkin, M.D., F.A.A.P
Reform Mohel

Board Certified Pediatrician
245 Main Street, Chester, NJ 07930
(908) 879-3100

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