



Mark Your Calendar!

- Friday, March 4, 6:30 p.m.
Shabbat Across America
- Sunday, March 13:
9:30 a.m. Men's Club Breakfast
for Confirmation Students
- Friday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.
Lay Service
- Saturday, March 5
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Torah Study
- Thursday, March 24, 7:00 p.m.:
Purim Service
- Friday, April 1, 7:45 p.m.
Shabbat Service
- Saturday, March 26, 9:30-noon
Adult Education Class

SAVE THE DATE!

- Passover Second Seder
Sunday, April 24
- Rabbi's Shabbaton
May 6-7

Rabbi's Message

One day in December on my weekly train-ride into New York, the man who sat down next to me volunteered a story about his mother. "My mother was a woman of faith," he said; "People would rent from her and leave owing her money. I would say, Mama, you didn't get paid. And she would say, I give what I can give; the payback belongs to God." I was so moved by the story that I wrote it down. I wanted to remember it.

The story came back to me when I read last week's Torah portion, Terumah. The parasha tells us that when the Mishkan – the desert sanctuary – was first built, the people just could not stop giving. They had to be told to stop. Did they give out of love for God? Were they grateful for their salvation from Egypt and the gift of Torah? Or was their experience a result of the excitement of creating their own Mishkan, something which had been denied them as slaves in Egypt?

Anyone who has ever been a part of building a synagogue will tell you how exciting it is. The problem arises when the excitement fades and the desire to give fades with it. It's like the excitement of falling in love. How do you sustain the relationship once the excitement is gone?

Those generous souls who founded our Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey gave us the gift of a paid-off building. We have never had a mortgage. Unlike most congregations, we have enjoyed the benefits of having a building supported only by comparatively low annual dues. But now our building needs attention. We all know that it is imperative to make our building handicapped-accessible. This time, our savings and our dues will not sustain us. Like our ancestors in the Sinai desert, we will have to dig deep. Like their gifts, each contribution you make will be practically and religiously significant.

I am thrilled that our Center is choosing to honor the 25th anniversary of my ordination by raising money to make our building handicapped accessible. Nothing would please me more than to open our doors to everyone who wants to enter. I thank you in advance for this great honor and look forward to celebrating with you, my spiritual family.

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis

President's Message

There are two events scheduled for the Center this spring that have me very excited. The first is that we are going to have a full blown Passover seder at the Temple on the second night of Pesach, which is a Sunday evening. Our Rabbi is going to lead the seder and it has the possibility of being a very special evening. I sincerely hope that you will be able to join us for this event.

The second is a celebration that we are planning to commemorate Rabbi Lewis's 25th year as a Rabbi. We will have a special Shabbat service that evening with a speaker who was the head of the search committee that hired Rabbi Lewis for her first Rabbinical pulpit. We will follow this with a special Oneg. We will also have a service on Saturday morning with some Torah study and more food afterwards. We are planning a commemorative booklet to honor the Rabbi. The Rabbi has requested that all funds generated as a result of this booklet be put into a fund to underwrite the building renovations.

Please be generous when asked to contribute to this fund.

Winter is almost over and the spring with renewed life and flowers will be here soon.

Shalom,

Howie Hirsch

Building update

We have encountered two problems on our way to getting the renovations completed. The first is that the finance committee has recommended that we do not proceed with the entire renovation until some funding has been secured. They feel that with the loss of income from the money in the bank that we will be spending along with the interest on the loan, we will be running a \$20,000 deficit next year, assuming all else remains the same. They have recommended that we begin work on the elevator and handicapped-accessible bathroom.

We have much work to do on the fundraising front, and we are asking everyone to be generous to the booklet for Rabbi Lewis's celebration to help us get past this hurdle. I am also in the process of getting information to apply for a grant to help pay the costs of the renovation, but this is not available as yet.

The second problem we ran into this month was that the planning board looked at our application and told me that the planning board does not have jurisdiction over this renovation and that we need to go to the board of adjustment, because we do not own one acre of property. That will be my next area to tackle. I am not getting dejected or pessimistic, and I do have a lot of patience to get through this. Hopefully this will give us time to raise extra money to fund the project so that we do not jeopardize our temple's financial health in order to improve it.



Don't miss the fun at the Purim Carnival, Sunday, March 27!

This year, the Carnival will be run by NFTY, our youth group. We will need help and donations. If you are interested, please contact Eric Weiland at the Temple.

2nd Night Passover Seder

Join us for a special night as our Temple celebrates a second night Pesach seder together on, Sunday, April 24. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Barbara Meltz at the Temple.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!



Adult Education

Here are schedules for Torah Study and the Rabbi's class for first half of 2005.

Torah Study, Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
March 5, April 9, May 14, June 11

Rabbi Lewis's Adult Education Class,
Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.-noon
(9:30-10:45 Pirke Avot; 10:45-noon MishkanT'filah)
March 26, April 2, April 16, April 30, May 21

Education Committee and PTO News

Confirmation Students - The annual retreat is finally here! Have a great time, Friday, March 11-Sunday, March 13.

Purim Service will be **Thursday, March 24 at 7:00pm.** Students are expected to attend. We're looking forward to the annual Purim Carnival, Sunday, March 27. This year, our own NFTY youth group will be running it. Don't miss it!

Cantor's Committee

Cantor Karen Neff joins us one weekend a month and graces us at services with her beautiful voice. Please join me in making her feel welcome. We need hosts for various dinners and/or lunches as well as help with transportation. Please call Joanne Weiss at the Temple.

RABBI'S SHABBATON

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the ordination of our wonderful rabbi, Ellen Jay Lewis. In honor of this milestone and to recognize her ten years of service to our Center, the Board has designated the Shabbat of May 6-7, 2005, as the Rabbi's Shabbaton. This special Shabbat will include distinguished guest speakers, music, and delicious food. Also, as part of the celebration, a congratulatory Journal will be published. In accordance with Rabbi Lewis's wishes, all proceeds will be used toward the renovation of our synagogue. We ask you to be generous with your contributions to this Journal and ask that you invite your friends and acquaintances to participate. Mark your calendars and watch for your invitation, which includes the details. Let's all help to make this a memorable occasion for Rabbi Lewis and a success for our Congregation!

Cancelleds Due to Weather

Should bad weather be an issue on a Friday evening and services need to be canceled, a message will be left on the Center's answering machine by 5:30 p.m. Should bad weather be an issue on Sunday morning and Sunday School needs to be canceled, a message will be left on the Center's answering machine by 7:30 a.m. We will also use the snow chain.

Shoprite/A&P Vouchers

Shop Rite scrip and A&P gift cards are available at the Temple on the following dates: March 13, April 10, May 1, 15.

Contact Sandy Seidorf at the Temple for any questions or special delivery.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Jewish LIFE

Jewish LIFE presents at the JCC....



- Rachel Fish, "A Student Activist Reflects on the Zayed Campaign," Wednesday, March 2 at 7 p.m.
- Martin Samuel Cohen, "Politics and Piety in Second Temple Jerusalem" on Sunday, March 6 at 10 a.m.

Coming in April....

- Carol Rittner, R.S.M., "Pius XII: The Catholic Church and the Holocaust," Sunday, April 3 at 10 a.m.

All programs will be held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. For further information and to register,

contact JCC Asst. Executive Director Laura Friedman at 908-725-6994 x213; LFriedman@ssbjcc.org.

Need \$\$ for College? Call the Jewish Vocational Service at 973-674-6330. Obtain information about interest-free loans for undergraduate, graduate, vocational or technical education from the Scholarship Loan Program. Deadline: May 15, 2005.

Donations

Rona and Stanley Schick in memory of Faye Hiller

Mazel Tov to Stan & Pearl Ehrlich on the engagement of their daughter Jennifer to Isadore Fattore.

The Jewish Center mourns the loss of Tillie Ratzman, one of our founders

From Your Newsletter Editor

The deadline for the next newsletter will be March 18.

All committee members: Please send updates to your programs to Wain Schroeder at niaw1@comcast.net for Web posting.

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JFS is a nonprofit, nondiscriminatory social service agency working to preserve and strengthen the quality of individual, family and community life based on Jewish values

2005 Consultation ON CONSCIENCE

Sunday, March 13 - Tuesday, March 15, 2005



Register Now!

Join Jewish leaders and activists in Washington, D.C., to learn from key policy and government leaders about the issues that shape our lives, to explore the connection between Jewish texts and current events, and to build strong social action and advocacy skills to use in your congregation.

For more information or to register online visit the Religious Action Center's website at www.rac.org. For any additional questions you may have about the conference, please contact the RAC at 202.387.2800 or at consultation@rac.org.



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