



Mark Your Calendar!

- Friday, March 3, 6:30 p.m.
Shabbat Across America
Service with dinner to follow -
(Cantor)
- Monday, March 6, 7:30 p.m.
Board Meeting
- Saturday, March 11
10:30 a.m. Torah Study
7:00 p.m. Youth Group pizza &
Carnival set up
- Sunday, March 12
10:30 a.m. Megillah reading
Noon Carnival & Talent Show
auditions
- Friday, March 17, 7:45 p.m.
Shabbat Service -
- Saturday, March 18
9:30 p.m. Youth Group
Glo-Bowling
- Sunday, March 19
9:30 a.m. Men's Club meeting
10:45 a.m. Pirke Avot

Rabbi's Message

I live in a small town that is more rural than suburban. The town looks like a typically prosperous Somerset County community; the fact that a local immigrant population lives here goes almost unnoticed. They come from somewhere in Central or South America. You can see the men at the local train station as early as 6 a.m., waiting to be picked up for their jobs as day-laborers. The train station offers a kind of aromatic tea, unfamiliar to me, that represents one small piece of evidence that these people live among us. They live a shadow existence, painting our houses, mowing our lawns and shoveling our snow. Sometimes you see them walking home along the main streets, carrying Shop Rite bags. In my town, "home" apparently consists of illegal rooming houses. You can see them, too, at the local library, sitting at computer terminals and writing emails to their families back home. They bear the separation in order to make a better life for their children.

Recently one of these workers made a botched kidnapping attempt on a local woman. It was a terrible story, this story of a disgruntled former-employee of a lawn service who kidnapped his ex-boss's wife for the purpose of collecting a ransom. Fortunately for her, she escaped and is safe now, although who knows what the emotional impact has been for her and her family. But rather than seeing this as the act of one person, misguided or criminal or deranged, this attempted kidnapping brought previously whispered-about issues into the public domain. Local residents wrote in to the local paper saying that they are afraid to go to the

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President's Message

At the last board meeting, the day before Valentine's Day, I presented each board member present with a rose as a small gesture on my part to say thank you to these dedicated people who volunteer their time, effort and emotions to keep our community alive. After I did this, Rabbi Lewis gave an observation that I had just made Valentine's day a Jewish holiday, or at least I took a secular holiday and made it a little Jewish.

How many ways, as we live our day to day life, do we inject lessons we have learned at services and Sunday school or adult education. In my opinion, that is what Judaism is about. When we take the lessons that we have learned about performing Mitzvot and taking them to the world outside our synagogue. The world is full of many different types of people. Some of them are not as nice as we would like them to be. To be Jewish is to soften their heart. For most of the other people in the world, they are good people. Some have fallen upon hard times. For those people, we need to lend a hand and help them to get on their own two feet and be able to support themselves. And for those that we can't do that, we need to be able to help them in any way we can. These are the Jewish morals that I have learned.

There are so many ways to help people. One charity near and dear to my heart is the Special Olympics. On the 26th of February, most of my family will be participating in an outing called the Polar Bear Plunge, where we get the privilege of raising money for the Special Olympics and then jumping in the balmy 38 degree ocean in Point Pleasant Beach. In making things Jewish, maybe next year we can build a team from the temple and have a wonderful day on the beach in February.

Shalom and BRRRRRRR,
Howie

Rabbi's Message, cont.

train station in the morning because “those people” are there. They avoid walking near these illegal rooming houses because they are afraid of “them.”

I don't want to dismiss or sit in judgment on anyone else's fears but I am uneasy about how this population has suddenly become “the other.” They are spoken and written about as if they are less than human, as if their needs are not the same as the needs of their neighbors. We Jews know what this feels like, to be dehumanized. “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” pleads Shylock. People are frightened of the stranger whose ways they do not understand and so they demonize strangers as “other.” Why else would the Torah tell us how to treat the stranger, reminding us that we were strangers in the land of Egypt? We wouldn't need to be commanded to treat the stranger well if we could be relied upon to do it instinctively.

My primary interest doesn't lie in resolving the specific issues of illegal rooming houses, although I have been tempted to volunteer my untutored aid; I am interested in Judaism's attitude toward the stranger in our midst. Just a few generations ago, it was my Uncle Charlie who was speaking with an accent while he painted houses so his family could have a better life. This great country offered him opportunities unheard of for Jews in what he referred to as “the Old Country.” Now that we are here a few generations, have we forgotten what it feels like to be a stranger? We know that the world is a dangerous place. Purim reminds us that in every generation, a new Amalek will rise up against us. We don't remember for memory's sake. Passover forces us to remember and relive the experience of oppression so that we can make sure it doesn't happen again. Because we know what it feels like, we are left with no choice but to speak up.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

Jewish Center First Ever Talent Show Extravaganza!

Come one, come all to our Talent Show!

Don't forget to sign up for the talent show. Don't worry about the Jewish theme part. I know it may be difficult for you to find the right music or song. Just pick something you're good at doing and sign up.

Auditions will be held Sunday, March 12, after Sunday School. I realize that the Purim Carnival is the same day but we have no other time to do it. I hope that we can do both. The audition will only take a few minutes and everyone will be at the Jewish Center anyway. Just remember to bring whatever materials you need.

Mrs. Mattson



**Suggested donation: \$18/adult, children 12 and under free.
Please RSVP ASAP (by 2/28) to Suzanne Moyer at the Temple**

Temple Youth Group Upcoming Events!

Sat., 3/11, 7-10 pm

Carnival set up, pizza & a movie

Sun., 3/12

Megillah Reading, 10:30 am

CARNIVAL!, Noon to 1:30

Sat., 3/18, 9:30 pm to midnight

Glo-bowling at Oakland Bowling,

Meet at the bowling alley, Rte. 31, Washington Twp.

Sun., April 2, Noon

Gather at the Jewish Center for trip to NJPAC,

1 Center St., Newark for

Stamp Out Hate Coalition Teen Conference

6:30 pm, Return from Conference

Sun., April 16, 4-5:30 pm

Meeting with Dr. Elinor Levy, folklorist

Questions? Call Bonnie Kelly at the Temple

Stamp Out Hate Conference at NJPAC

The Confirmation Class and Youth Group will be attending the 7th Annual Stamp Out Hate Coalition Teen Conference Sunday, April 2 from 2:00 – 4:40 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The conference will feature a timely new film, “Let's Get Real,” portraying real-life young people speaking about their experiences with name-calling, bullying and bias. Following a refreshment break, the teens are divided into small groups led by experienced facilitators to discuss the issues raised in the feature presentation. We will arrange for a bus to transport us to the conference. Details to follow.

Education Committee and PTO News

This year's snowstorms seem to have all fallen on Sundays, but hopefully we are over the worst of it. The children led a recent Shabbat service beautifully and now we're getting ready for Purim! The Megillah reading is **Sunday, March 12, at 10:30 a.m.** and the highlight of our year, the Carnival, begins at noon. Don't forget to dress-up in costume!

A Bat Mitzvah Project

Dear Temple Members,

I have been very busy studying for my Bat-Mitzvah in April. I have had many ideas for my mitzvah project but nothing seemed to be working out. I am involved with a community service club at school and decided to use that as part of my mitzvah project. But something was still missing. I was not directly working with a Jewish population. Then through surfing the net with the help of Mr Hirsch (and my Mom) I found a link through the Jewish Federation website where you could help temples in the New Orleans area.

I have chosen to adopt The Touro Synagogue in New Orleans. They are in need of school and office supplies and kitchen supplies and paper goods. Gift cards from local stores such as Target, Home Depot, Walmart, and Staples are also welcomed (these would be used by the temple as well as be given to their members who continue to rebuild their homes and their lives). The Synagogue is currently preparing for Passover and have especially asked for donations of chocolate chips, matzo ball mix, matzo and tam-tam crackers to be used by their students for their Passover project.

I would appreciate any donations you are able to make toward helping the members of the Touro Synagogue. There will be a box outside the lift area where your donations may be placed. My family and I will take care of mailing everything to New Orleans. Also look for a poster with more information about the Touro Synagogue. Please have all Passover donations to the Temple no later than Sunday, March 26. All other donations will be accepted until my Bat-Mitzvah on April 22, 2006.

Thank you for your help.

Last Chance for Camp Scholarships!

The Jewish Center has three camp scholarships worth \$1000 each for families to use to attend a Jewish summer camp.

Correction from last newsletter: We also have three discounted spots for children at the NJ "Y" Camps in Milford, PA, for the 4-week period, July 24 - August 17. The camp will sponsor a child for \$1,000 and the Temple will match the \$1,000. YOU PAY NOTHING! You don't want to pass up this special opportunity. The form is available for download from our website,

www.jcnwj.org, under the forms section. Applications must be in by March 3. Any questions, please speak to Howie. Scholarships from the temple are available one per family - one time only.

Adult Programs

Torah Study: Meeting dates: Saturday mornings — March 11, April 15, May 13, June–Aug. TBA. Starting time is 10:30 a.m., ending time about 12:30-1:00 p.m.

Pirke Avot: This collection of very short texts, The Sayings of the Elders, provides an endless source of both wisdom and controversy. Upcoming dates: March 19, April 30. Let Rabbi Lewis know if you plan to attend.

Cancellations 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.

Support the Jewish Center with Scrip

Lynne Kowski is available every Sunday at the Temple that Sunday School meets at 11:45 a.m.

Donations

Laurie Post and Steve Goldner in memory of Gertrude Post and Adolph Goldner
In memory of Sidney Goldstein, father of Iris Hirsch, from Eric Edelstein and from Rona and Stanley Schick

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



Jewish LIFE presents A Night of Learning on Saturday, March 4th, at 7 p.m. This community-wide evening of study will bring Rabbis from across the Jewish LIFE family to share wit, wisdom and insights in areas of their interest and passion. This program will offer the opportunity for everyone to study and learn with many of the rabbis who are dedicated to Jewish LIFE's mission to bring meaningful and exciting

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 _____

Make check payable to Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey and mail to:
JCNWJ, c/o Paul May, 57 Philhower Road, Lebanon 08833.

learning to our community. The evening will include the chance to socialize, a joint celebration of Havdalah, marking the end of Shabbat, and two study sessions with the rabbis. Please RSVP to JCC Assistant Executive Director Laura Friedman at 908-725-6994 x213; LFriedman@ssbjcc.org.

OHRTIKVAH JEWISH HEALING CENTER

Creating a Joyful Sound: Kabbalah Kirtan, Sunday, March 5, 4:00 p.m., JCC, 775 Talamini Road, Bridgewater. Ohr Tikvah Jewish Healing Center and the JCC will present a musical program of Kabbalah Kirtan that blends call-and-response chanting of Hebrew text with live music featuring the beautiful voice of Susan Deikman and harmonium and drums. \$10. Call 908-725-6994 to let us know you are coming. Tickets at the door.

African Drumming Just for the Fun of It, Sunday, March 19, 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. JCC, 775 Talamini Road, Bridgewater. \$5. Playing African drum or creating music with a rain stick is a great way to release stress and have fun. Percussionist David Malchman shows us how to create joyful music together as a community. Men, women & teens are welcome.

Spiritual and Emotional Strength for Parents of Children with Chronic Illness or Disability, Sunday, March 26, 2006 - 2:00 to 3:30 p.m., Flemington Jewish Community Center, 40 East Main Street, Flemington. Rabbi Evan Jaffe, spiritual leader of Flemington Jewish Community Center and clinical social worker, along with a clinician who works with parents of children with chronic illness or disability, will address some of the

issues that arise for parents who have children with such special needs, and provide practical strategies and spiritual resources to help parents feel less alone and overwhelmed.

Ohr Tikvah Jewish Healing Center is an agency of the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties. Call Ohr Tikvah at 908-725-6994 for more information or to register for programs. www.ohrtikvahjhc.org

BERMAN CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

www.lehigh.edu/~inber/programs.html

Fitting Memorials: Postwar American Jews Remember the Holocaust - Wednesday, March 15, 4:15 p.m., 102 Maginnes Hall. Lecture by Hasia Diner, Professor of American Jewish History, NYU. Dr. Diner will discuss the many opportunities Jews in the US found in the years following World War II to engage with the Holocaust. Sponsored by the Berman Center and Lucius N. Littauer Foundation. Call 610-758-3352.

Turn Left at the End of the World - Sunday, March 19, 7:00 p.m., Whitaker Lab Auditorium. Wildly popular in Israel, this charming comic drama features two Jewish immigrant families - one Indian, the other Moroccan - who become unlikely neighbors in the Israeli desert. \$9 at the door. Call 610-435-3571.

From Your Newsletter Editor

The deadline for the next newsletter will be the 18th of the month. .
