

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey



Journal



PO Box 2, 115 Youmans Avenue
Washington, NJ 07882
(908) 689-0762 www.jcnwj.org

March 2013
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Rabbi's message

I've been thinking about Purim costumes. When I was a little girl, I was always Queen Esther. My mother cut a hole in an old white sheet, pulled it over my head, and tied a sash around my waist, and I got to wear some of her costume jewelry. Voila! Who else was there to be, if you were a girl? Vashti wasn't an option because no one told us about Vashti. In the years since then, the options for costumes have exploded, regardless of your gender. I've yet to see a boy dress as Esther at our temple (did you know that cross-dressing is a tradition on Purim?), but I have seen girls wear a Haman costume.

Cantor Goldmann asked me what happens to the old Purim costumes when we are done with them. An interesting question, I thought. Some stay in my office at the temple (I think there is one gathering dust up on top of the file cabinet). Some come home with me. Some get lent to other rabbis and cantors. Some simply survive one wearing and are ready for the rag pile.

I haven't reused the costumes because I have enjoyed the surprise of wearing a different one each year. When I first came to the Center, the internet was still a wish and online costume stores had not yet come into existence. Finding a costume meant thinking ahead around Halloween time or finding a costume store that was open year 'round. There used to be one in Westfield. Generally you had to rent the costumes and return them quickly.

Now it is so easy and inexpensive to order costumes online. Over the years, the various cantors and I have been Coffee and a Donut, Ketchup and Mustard, Batman and the Joker, an Angel and a Devil, the Beatles, and more. Each year, we do our own silly spiel before we read from the Megillah. This year the Cantor was a terrific and very frightened Cowardly Lion while I was the Scarecrow who wanted a brain. The Cantor then stayed in costume for her appearance as Nala in the Center spoof of The Lion King.

Purim is always a great day for us. The building is abuzz. People are boiling hotdogs in the kitchen, running the carnival or cavorting on the bimah in the spiel. Kids are in costume (and what a great costume contest we had). People invite their friends. We continue creating our own traditions of how to respond to the familiar names in the Megillah ("You go, girl!"). It's a little bit of everything for everyone.

It won't surprise you to hear that this Purim was bittersweet for me. Someone asked me where I will be for Purim next year when I am no longer with you. The answer is that I don't know where I will be but I know what I will do. I will be thinking of these 19 wonderful years of Purim I have spent with you.

The Jewish calendar doesn't let us rest this time of year, The minute Purim ends, the planning for Pesach begins. Time moves on and so do we. May you have a hag sameach v'kasher, a sweet Pesach.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis



President's message

In this month's column, I would like to take the time to thank the entire congregation for everything you do to make this temple a special place. The adults who study Torah and pass their knowledge and ethics on to the rest of the community. The members of the PTO who enhance the Sunday School program with their enthusiasm and dedication to their children in Sunday School. The teachers of the Sunday School who through their tireless dedication help make our children able to be extraordinary in terms of their Jewish knowledge and ability to read Hebrew. The teacher's assistants, or as Mr. Weiner calls them, his colleagues, who without their help, the Sunday School would not function as well as it does. The B'nai Mitzvah students throughout the year who have been performing Mitzvah projects for at least the last dozen years. The members of the Board of Trustees, who give tirelessly of their time to ensure the future of the congregation. The members of the Sisterhood that have revitalized that organization. The Rabbinic Search Committee, which has spent countless hours to find a successor to Rabbi Lewis. The folks who clean up the kitchen after our events, as well as the ones who prepare the food for our events. The people who read Torah on the High Holidays, as well the ones who learned how to blow the shofar this year. The ones who are on the House Committee who take care of the building as well as the ones who take care of the building on their own and fix things when they see them needing fixing, as well as the ones who see what needs to be fixed. The ones who have been able to creatively come up with a way to be able to bury our loved ones, and especially in coming up with a way to allow interfaith couples to be buried in our cemetery. And everyone else whose contributions are essential in the community's well-being. I have never been involved in a community where so many of us are dedicated to a single purpose, and that is the the well-being of the congregation and the future of Judaism in the western part of New Jersey.

I often think about the following when deciding important issues at the temple. What would the founding fathers of our congregation think about this issue? If we keep that as the overriding "Mission Statement" of our temple, it makes many of the tough decisions much easier. At the board meetings, we have open and frank discussions about the issues that abound in the synagogue, but we treat each other with love and respect in disagreement. Presiding over a group who truly cares about the present as well as the future has been one of the most important parts of my life and I thank every one of you for allowing me to be a part of your lives.

Shalom, Howie



Mark your Calendar

Sunday, March 3	9:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Sunday School Board Meeting
Friday, March 8	6:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Shabbat Across America Dinner Shabbat Service Oneg: Heller, Smith, Hudis, Yanow families
Sunday, March 10	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	Sunday School Music / K1 Congregational Meeting Confirmation Sisterhood Meeting
Saturday, March 16	10:30 a.m.	Torah Study
Sunday, March 17	9:30 a.m. 10:45 a.m.	Sunday School Adult Education
Friday, March 22	7:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service Oneg: Marr, Gross, Rosenblum, Marinich families
Sunday, March 24	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School K/1 Model Seder
Sunday March 31		No Sunday School
Friday, April 5	7:00 p.m.	Shabbat Services Oneg: Kowski, Parson, Perfetti, Needleman families
Sunday, April 7	11:00 a.m.	Yom HaShoah Commemoration, Led by Cantor Goldmann

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE RITUAL COMMITTEE

Honoring Family Members and Friends

If you would like to honor a loved one, whether family member or friend, living or deceased, there are a number of ways to do so within the tradition of tzedakah to the synagogue. You may purchase a memorial plaque for the memorial board (\$325), a pew plaque (\$250), a leaf on the simcha tree (\$180), a prayer book dedication (\$36), or a donation card (for any occasion, \$5 and up).

If you have a professional activity that you want the congregation to know about, please let us know in time to make the newsletter deadline for that month.

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA observed by the Jewish Center on Friday, March 8, 2013. Pot-luck dinner to be served at 6:00 p.m. (dairy) followed by Shabbat Service and Oneg. If you plan to attend the dinner, please RSVP to Jeanne Berkowitz at berkowitz18013@yahoo.com by March 1st with the number of people attending and the dish you intend to bring.

Save the Date - Sunday, April 7, 2013 ,Yom HaShoah Program led by Cantor Elizabeth Goldmann. Details to follow.

Education/PTO

On March 10th the Confirmation class meets at 10:30 a.m. On March 17th the Hebrew School students will get creative with a Passover/Spring craft project, and on March 24th we will have our Model Passover seder. There is no Hebrew School on March 31st as we celebrate Passover with our families.

At 6:00 p.m., before services on Friday night, March 22nd, the Hebrew School families are invited to a Shabbat Dinner hosted by the 6th-7th grade B'nai Mitzvah class. If you haven't already done so, please RSVP to Jennifer Rosenblum by March 8th. Hope you can make it!

Marsha Gross – Education Chair



Sisterhood News

The Mishloach Manot Committee would like to thank the congregation for their awesome participation in the Purim Fundraiser. You truly contributed in the spirit of the Purim mitzvah. At this time everyone from the temple should have received their hamantaschen box. If by some chance, you have not received your box, please contact Alison at shelofsky@comcast.net as soon as possible so that I can rectify the situation. Once again, thanks for your generous participation.

Alison Shelofsky



Contributions



In memory of Rose Schutzbank
Ruth and Howard Schutzbank

In memory of Edward Lewis and Theodore Jay
Rabbi Ellen Lewis

In memory of Arthur Tarlowe
Laura and Paul Tarlowe

In memory of Henry and Helen Steinhardt
Larry Steinhardt

Jewish Family Services

Hello Everyone,

Recently Jim Aversen and I paid a visit to the office of Jewish Family Services of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties in Somerville, N.J. Our objective was to learn about this agency and its services. Although our Temple is within the area which the JFS serves, few are aware of the services they provide and/or how to access them. We are hoping to create an awareness of the JFS and to promote what it has to offer to our Temple members.

Did you know ?

Jewish Family Services offers Career Counseling Services

Jewish Family Services offers Family & Child Services

Jewish Family Services offers Emergency Assistance

Jewish Family Services offers Senior Support

Jewish Family Services provides Information and Referral Services

Jewish Family Services provides Family Life Education and Support

Jewish Family Services offers volunteer opportunities

Other possibilities include speakers on topics of interest for both Sunday School and Adult Education.

Both Jim and I are hoping to initiate a relationship with JFS to bring their services to the Warren County area and our Temple.

If you would like information on any of these topics, you can contact the JFS directly; see number and e-mail address below. You can also contact me with any questions you may have. If I don't have the answer I will find it for you. Should anyone need transportation to the Somerville office, please contact me. (Jeannie Berkowitz, 484-767-3744, or berkowitz18013@yahoo.com.) Pamphlets will be placed in the entrance of the Temple.

Jeannie Berkowitz

Jim Aversen



JFS is a non-profit, non-sectarian social service agency whose mission is to preserve and strengthen the quality of individual, Family and community life based on Jewish values.

Betty and Arthur Roswell

Mental Health Counseling Center

Holocaust Survivors Assistance

Refugee Assistance

Special Needs Programs

Family Mentoring

Senior Support Services

Family Life Education

Information and Referral

Emergency Assistance

AmeriCorps

Ohr Tikvah

Career Services

For more information contact:

Jewish Family Service of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties

150-A West High Street, Somerville, NJ 08876

908-725-7799

Admin@JewishFamilySvc.Org

www.JewishFamilySvc.Org

Upcoming Jewish LIFE Special Events include:

Robert Rosenthal, From **Plagues to Miracle, Thursday, March 7, 7 p.m. at the Birnbaum JCC. \$8/ person in advance or \$10 at the door. Call the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 to register.**

Step Up For Israel Film Series: Speak Up for Israel, Wednesday, March 13 at Or Chadash, Flemington and Thursday, March 14, 7 p.m. at the Birnbaum JCC. Learn how you can speak up on Israel's behalf. Panel discussion to follow film. Free to all. To register, please call program location: Or Chadash at 908-806-2122 or the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

RESCHEDULED!!!! Peninnah Schram & Gerard Edery, The Minstrel and the Storyteller, Saturday, March 16, 7 p.m. Hosted by Temple Beth-E , Hillsborough. Fee: \$18/person in advance or \$22 at the door. Call Temple Beth-El to register at 908-722-7799 to register.

Delia Ephron, best-selling author of The Lion is In, Wednesday, March 20, 12 Noon at the Birnbaum JCC. Fee includes lunch and program: \$18/in advance or \$22 at the door. Co-sponsored by Brandeis National Committee, Somerset Chapter, Temple Beth-El , Hillsborough Sisterhood; Temple Beth El, Somerset Sisterhood; Temple Sholom Sisterhood. Call the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 to register.

Step Up For Israel Film Series: Israel Inside, Wednesday, April 10, 7:30 pm at Or Chadash, Flemington or Thursday, April 11, 7:00 pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Experience Israel's dynamic, innovative and humanitarian society. Free to all. To register, please call program location: Or Chadash at 908-806-2122 or the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

**Community-Wide Yom HaShoah Program, Sunday, April 7, 7pm at Congregation Kneseth Israel, Bound Brook.
Program details to be announced soon. Free to the community.**

Doni Zasloff Thomas, Get Cooking! A Jewish American Family Cookbook, Thursday, April 11, 6pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Fee: \$8/person in advance or \$10 at the door.

Save the Date...Coming in May:

A Night to Celebrate Israel & Bond Event, Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 pm at Raritan Valley Country Club, Bridgewater. Israeli Dancing & Music, Activities, Guest Speaker & more! Honoring Rabbi Evan Jaffe, Flemington JCC and Raffi Mark, Rutgers Hillel Student President. Couvert: \$50/adult and \$18/teen. Dietary Laws Observed.

April Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles, advertisements and photos to be included in the April issue is March 19, 2013. Please email articles, ideas or news items to Journal Editor, Barbara Simons at bjbs@comcast.net

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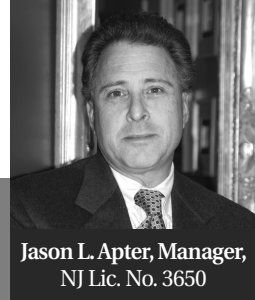
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