

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Journal

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Rabbi's Message

The Mitzvot of Purim: Lessons for Every Day

When we think of Purim, our minds are instantly filled with joyful memories. We readily think of Purim carnivals, silly costumes, boisterous Purim plays, shouting at Haman's name, and delicious *hamantaschen*. With all of that merrymaking, it is easy to overlook that we are actually fulfilling *mitzvot*, commandments. Our tradition tells us that there are four commandments associated with this holiday. They are: reading (or hearing) the *megillah*, *Mikra Megillah*; having a festive Purim meal, *Seudat Purim*; sending Purim gifts to each other, *Mishloach Manot*; and sending gifts of food to the Poor, *Matanot l'Evyonim*. Building the framework of our holiday, these four mitzvot also create a solid model for everyday Jewish living.

The mitzvah of reading the *megillah* draws us back to Purim's primary text each year, allowing us to delve into the narrative anew and to learn continually from it. This commandment reminds us that Jewish learning never stops. Even when we think we know the story inside out, we must reread it annually from the original text. So it is with all of Jewish learning, we must return to our primary sources and read them for ourselves. At every stage of life, we will discover new insights and teachings; we will see our tradition in a new light.

continued on next page

Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, March 1st**
9:30 am Sunday School
PTO Hamantashan Baking
10:30 am Confirmation
- **Monday, March 2nd**
7:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting
- **Saturday, March 7th**
6 pm Teen "Top Chef" Event
- **Sunday, March 8th**
9:30 am Sunday School
Purim Celebration
- **Friday, March 13th**
6:30 pm Shabbat Across America
Oneg: Berkowitz (J/G), Simons,
Shelofsky, and Ostenfeld Families
- **Sunday, March 15th**
9:30 am Sunday School
- **Monday, March 16th**
12 pm Membership Committee Meeting
7 pm Book Club
- **Friday, March 20th**
7:30 pm Shabbat Service
Oneg: Kahan, Weinstein, and Leifer
Families

Mark Your Calendar (cont.)

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

Judaism is never held at arm's length to be interpreted by another. Rather, our texts are open and accessible to all. And we are so fortunate to live in a time with so many Jewish resources. Studying the *megillah*, weekly Torah portion, or any other Jewish topic is just a click away.

Seudat Purim, having a Purim meal, reminds us that our food ways connect us. Enjoying *hamantaschen* together as a community may sound like a simplistic act, but it is actually a powerful one. Eating together to express our Jewish identity is an important part of building community. Making the time for one another is the heart of community. Therefore, the *oneg* is an important extension of the Purim festivities, just as it is a vital part of all of our gatherings. Eating a cookie together can seed a relationship and build a community.

Sending Purim food gifts can be a very elaborate undertaking in some communities. While the minimalist approach to this mitzvah is probably preferable, its core lesson should be lived to the fullest extent. Jewish community does not just take place in the synagogue. At Purim we send each other festive holiday foods to ensure that every person can participate in the holiday. All year round, we must keep an eye on each other, noting when a fellow congregant has not been present in a while or appears to be burdened with worries. All year round, we must reach beyond those present, gently inviting neighbors and colleagues into our community. Notice the invitation did not say become a member. We must create low pressure opportunities for others to experience the Jewish community. Membership should organically grow out of connection.

The final mitzvah of Purim is, unfortunately, greatly overlooked. As we enjoy the indulgences of the holiday, we must share our abundance with others. Purim should be only one of many times we support the needy. As we dream of new costumes and unique *hamantaschen* recipes, we must plan to give to *tzeddukah*. Of course, the amount should reflect what is financially comfortable. However, please consider giving money or food donations to an organization like Mazon, which applies the Jewish value of feeding the hungry to both immediate hunger needs and long term hunger solutions for all peoples, or support your neighborhood feeding program.

continued on next page

- Saturday, March 21st
10:30 am Torah Study
- Sunday, March 22nd
9:30 am Sunday School
PTO Passover Seder
- Sunday, March 29th
9:30 am Sunday School
PTO Spring Craft
10:30 am Adult Education

Adult Education – Sunday, March 29 at 10:30 am (New Date)

Bible to Buber and Beyond: God in Jewish Thought

Join the monthly Sunday morning study group led by Rabbi Zamore to learn more about and to discuss "the Jewish God." How has the idea/meaning of God in Judaism changed from Biblical times to today? Come and explore together. Come to one class or come to all. Open to adults and teens.

Next Class: April 26
at 9:30 am



Membership Committee will be meeting
at Ernie & Doms on Route 31 in
Washington on **Monday, March 16th** at
noon.

Kaddish for March 13th

Since there will be no formal Shabbat Service on March 13th when we celebrate Shabbat Across America, the March 13th Yahrzeit list will be read at the March 20th service. If you have any concerns or questions about the March 13th Yahrzeits, please contact Rabbi Zamore.

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

These four Purim mitzvot teach us the best lesson of all – living our commandments can be fun, draw us closer together, and help others. Certainly, a winning combination!

Wishing each of you a Purim filled with joy!

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Mary Zamore

If you, a family member or temple friend is ill or facing a life challenge, please know that Rabbi Zamore is here to help.

Please contact in confidence Rabbi Zamore at zamorem@comcast.net or call her at (908) 317-0417.

Contributions

- ✧ In appreciation of the honor of reading from the Torah
- Rene Marinich
- ✧ In memory of Rebecca Goldenthal
- Bernie Robins
- ✧ In memory of Edward Lewis
- Ellen J. Lewis
- ✧ In memory of Lonnie Bier
- Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles
- ✧ In memory of Rose Shutzbank
- Ruth Shutzbank
- ✧ In memory of Elaine Hirsch and Jessica Hirsch
- Iris and Howie Hirsch

TEEN TOP CHEF EVENT

WHO: JCNWJ Teens in Grades 8-12

WHAT: Top Chef Pizza Making, Games, Hot Cocoa Tasting, and Havdallah with Student Cantor Lilah

WHERE: JCNWJ

WHEN: Saturday, March 7th from 6:00-8:30 pm

WHY: Have fun, eat delicious homemade food, hang out with friends, and welcome in the new week!



Please RSVP to Student Cantor Lilah Sugarman at lilahsugarman@gmail.com.

Education/PTO

The Education Committee and the PTO are vital to the success of our Sunday School and rely on parent participation. We are in need of parent volunteers for the upcoming school year. The PTO can be run by co-chairs, and the Education Committee is always in need of new members. We encourage current parents or JCNWJ members who have expertise in the area of education to get involved. Your input is valuable!

If you are interested in being a substitute for our Sunday School, we can always add to our current list. Please let me know if you have an interest!

Gerri Klein
Religious School Chair

The Choir



Please contact Student Cantor Lilah Sugarman at lilahsugarman@gmail.com if you would like to join our growing choir.

Confirmation Trip to NYC

It was an amazing trip of learning, Jewish experiences and the fun of being together. We started our day walking around the Lower East Side and seeing the Romaniote Synagogue, Congregation Kehila Kedosha Janina. This synagogue is virtually unchanged since being built in 1927 by Romaniote Jews from Janina, Greece. In 2004, it was designated a landmark by the City of New York. Differences between Greek Romaniote Jews and the Greek Sephardic Jews who fled from Spain to escape the Inquisition are that the two groups speak different languages and have distinct customs. We then enjoyed an engaging tour of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum led by an educator and historical interpreter. During our tour, we learned the story of Victoria, a teenager who emigrated from Greece in 1916. Working in a sweat shop, she lived with about 10-12 relatives in about 400 square feet and shared a single toilet with about 25 people. Her story helped us understand the challenges of adapting to American culture and the sacrifices our ancestors made for us. We also learned a great deal about the difference between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews.

After a quick bus trip, we continued our Jewish adventure at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park. After a warm welcome from their staff, we enjoyed lunch at the museum café. It must be one of NYC's best views. We sat and looked at an expansive view of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and the museum's Garden of Stones. The latter is Andy Goldsworthy's living memorial garden. A stunning garden of trees growing from stones, it was planted by the artist, Holocaust survivors, and their families. Our visit at the museum continued with a docent led two-hour tour of the main exhibit, documenting life before, during, and after the Shoah. Our volunteer guide was passionate and engaging. He helped us connect to our Jewish knowledge in order to expand our understanding of this dark time in Jewish history. While it was a lot to absorb at one time, the docent did an admirable job of keeping it age appropriate, so we all could learn without being overwhelmed. After the tour, we sat in a quiet niche in the museum and processed our experience. We ended with standing in a circle and reciting *Kaddish* together in order to remember the six million lost. Each student received a voucher to return to the museum with a friend and adult for a great discounted price. It was clear we each have much more to learn and remember.

On our way home, we stopped off at Molly's Cupcakes for a treat. We could understand why they won *Cupcake Wars*!



Hamantashan Recipe

Ingredients:

- Δ 4 eggs
- Δ 1 cup of oil
- Δ 1 ¼ cups sugar
- Δ 2 tsps vanilla
- Δ 3 tsps baking powder
- Δ 1/2 tsp salt
- Δ 5 cups flour



Fillings:

Levkar, prune butter, apricot jam (warm slightly before filling), poppyseed filling

Instructions:

Beat eggs, beat in oil, sugar, vanilla. Mix thoroughly. Knead until smooth enough to roll on floured board. Roll out. Cut dough into 3"-4" rounds using cookie cutter or drinking glass. Place desired filling on each round (about 1 tsp.) Pinch together sides of lower half of circles to form triangles. Place hamantashan on lightly greased baking sheet or pan and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until brown.

From the Membership Committee

Know of a Jewish neighbor, friend or colleague who is unaffiliated with any synagogue? Please invite them to join us as members through June **at no cost** as part of the Jewish Center's Purim Membership Special. Children are welcome to attend our Mike Weiner School of Jewish Learning **tuition-free** through the end of our Sunday School year (space provided). Simply print out the invitation form included within this edition of the Journal and present it to any individual or family whom you believe might enjoy all that the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey has to offer. The Purim Membership Special expires April 15th, so please don't delay in sharing news of this offer.

Interested In...

Purchasing simcha leaves for our tree of life to honor a birth, a milestone birthday or anniversary, graduation, significant success, bar/bat mitzvah or confirmation? Contact Debbi Knobelman.

Purchasing memorial plaques to honor a loved one's memory? Contact Lois Goldberg.

Purchasing a Cemetery Plot in Easton Cemetery? Contact Paul May.

A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee

Please let us know when someone has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or Howie.ruth@hotmail.com.

April Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles and advertisements to be included in the April Issue of the JCNWJ Journal is **March 19, 2015**. Please email articles, photographs, or news items to the Journal Editor, Abby Bauer at abbybauer@comcast.net.

Happy Purim!



On **March 13th** tens of thousands of Jews across America will come together to eat, drink, relax, dance, enjoy, debate and celebrate at the 19th Annual Shabbat Across America.

Join the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey as it takes part in a historical Jewish event to celebrate that which unifies Jews ~ Shabbat! Everyone is invited – singles, couples, families, all ages – to bring your neighbors, your friends, your co-workers – and let's celebrate together.

March 13th at 6:30 pm ~ Candle Blessing and Pot Luck Dinner (“like Bubbe used to make”) followed by a “pitch perfect” performance of Israeli and traditional Hebrew music as well as contemporary pop by the Muhlenberg Chaimonics, Muhlenberg College’s premier cross-cultural a cappella group.

To RSVP please contact Jeanne Berkowitz at (484) 767-3744 or berkowitz18013@yahoo.com

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A Gift for You



The Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Purim Special

**You are cordially invited join the
Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey
As a Guest Member with Free Tuition at our
Mike Weiner School of Jewish Learning
through June 2015***

To:

From (member):

If interested, please complete and return this form.
A membership committee member will contact you.

Membership Committee

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

P.O. Box 2

Washington, New Jersey 07882

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail address:

Purim Celebration is March 8th at noon ~ All are welcome

www.jcnwj.org

*Free membership and School tuition (space permitting) offer expires April 15, 2015



Join Jewish LIFE on **Wednesday, March 4** (rescheduled date) at **12 Noon** for the return engagement of author **Iris Krasnow**, discussing her new book, ***Sex After...Women Share How Intimacy Changes as Life Changes***. This book is filled with advice and the voices of 150 women and offers an honest, candid and intimate guide. Program and luncheon hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. (Fee: \$18 in advance or \$22 day of event). *This program is co-sponsored by the Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Sisterhood, the Temple Sholom Sisterhood and the Brandeis National Committee, Somerset Chapter.* **Rebecca Alexander**, author of ***Not Fade Away, a Memoir of Senses Lost & Found***, on **Wednesday, March 11 at 12 Noon**. This memoir details how Rebecca is slowly losing her sight and hearing and yet continues to live life to the fullest. Program and Luncheon hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. (Fee: \$18/person in advance or \$22/person day of event.) Temple Sholom, Bridgewater will host **Originals by an Original: the Artistic World of Mordechai Rosenstein** on **Thursday, March 12 at 7pm**. Artist reception and presentation followed by "Paint with the Artist". (Free to the community.) The Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Film Series will be showing ***The Wonders*** on **Saturday, March 14 at 7pm**. (To register contact Temple Beth-El or e-mail bakerec@comcast.net.) The film, ***Three Minutes in Poland, Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film***, will be shown on **Thursday, March 19, 7pm**, followed by a discussion with Glenn Kurtz, whose family is featured in the film. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. (Fee: \$8/person in advance or \$10/person day of event. **The 3rd Annual Night to Celebrate Israel** will be held on **Thursday, March 27, 6:30pm** at Raritan Valley Country Club in Bridgewater. **Distinguished guest speaker Ambassador Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel**. The event will honor Rabbi Ron Isaacs, spiritual leader of Temple Sholom who is retiring after 40 years, and Aviv Alter, a Rutgers Hillel Student, for their dedication to their communities and the State of Israel. (Fee: \$18/Student and \$50/Adult.)

Coming up in April...The Irma Horowitz Film Series on Thursday, April 30, 6:30pm at the Birnbaum JCC. The evening features a Falafel Dinner and Israeli Short Films presented by the Ma'Alah School of Television Film and the Arts in Jerusalem. Films shown include: ***And Thou Shalt Love, Fair Fight, A Woman Laughed*** and ***Memory Game***. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater (Fee: \$12/person in advance or \$15/person day of event). The Jewish Film Series presents ***No Place on Earth, Monday, April 13 at 7pm***. The film will be followed by a discussion led by **Chris Nicola**, the explorer who discovered the caves featured in the film. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. (Fee: \$5/person.) The community wide Yom Hashoah Remembrance Day is Wednesday, April 15. Details to come. The Jewish Film Series presents ***Restoration (Boker Tov Adon Fidelman) Saturday, April 18, 7pm***. Hosted by Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough. (To register contact Temple Beth-El or e-mail bakerec@comcast.net.)

To register for programs unless otherwise noted, please contact the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 or register on line at www.ssbjcc.org.

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Kindly take note of the ads at the end of our Journal and whenever possible, support these establishments with your patronage. It's also a good idea to mention that you saw their Temple Ad. If there are any businesses that you use regularly that might be interested in taking an ad in the Journal, please contact Rita Berkowitz (berk721@aol.com) or Ruth Schutzbank (Howie.ruth@hotmail.com). You can also go to our homepage, print out an advertising form and give it directly to them to mail in.