

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Journal

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www.jcnwj.org

April 2014
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Rabbi's Message

This year we all will surely treasure the early signs of spring a bit more than usual. After this very cold, snowy, and long winter, it is a relief to be experiencing more temperate days and to be witnessing the shift towards the heart of spring. The snow has finally melted and the crocuses are pushing through the ground. And a sure sign of spring, the matzah and macaroons are filling the grocery shelves, as we will soon be shopping for Passover foods.

While Passover primarily marks the Exodus from Egypt, the celebration of the redemption of our ancient ancestors mingles with our embrace of spring. Of course, this season is a time of renewal. Therefore, it is no accident that Passover falls in the spring. As we feel the beauty of the season, watching the re-budding of our gardens, shaking free of the cold of winter, we sit at our Passover Seder tables and remember the gift of freedom. In that moment, we recognize all of God's blessings.

The Passover Seder includes many symbols of spring. Found on the Seder plate, the *Karpas* - the parsley, or any other greens - overtly represents springs. The *Beitzah* - burnt egg - represents the festival offering brought by our ancestors to the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. The egg also reminds us of the beginning of all life and, therefore, connects to the hope of renewal we feel in the spring. The Seder itself includes many readings which draw upon the imagery of spring.

continued on next page

Mark Your Calendar

- **Friday, April 4th**
6:15 pm Picnic Shabbat Dinner
7 pm Shabbat Music Preview
7:30 pm Shabbat Services
Oneg: Schaffer Family
- **Saturday, April 5th**
10 am Sam Schaffer's Bar Mitzvah
- **Sunday, April 6th**
9:30 am Sunday School (Music)(K/1)
9:30 am Membership Committee Meeting
at Washington Diner
10:30 am Confirmation
12:30 pm Sisterhood Luncheon
- **Monday, April 7th**
7:30 pm Board Meeting
- **Thursday, April 10th**
12 pm Rabbi's Class
- **Sunday, April 13th**
9:30 am Sunday School (K/1)(Music)
10:30 am Model Seder
10:30 am Sisterhood Meeting
- **Friday, April 18th**
7:30 pm Shabbat Services
Oneg: Chol Hamoed, Berkowitz (J&R),
and Berkowitz (J&J) Families

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

As we sit at our holiday tables and enjoy the Seder with family and friends, we can revel in the spring symbolism this year. For families with young children, the kids can embrace this spring motif by creating vernal-themed decorations like centerpieces and place cards for the Seder table. Parents and grandparents can help children understand the connection between Passover and spring. Fortunately, parents have an easy job of communicating the association between spring and Passover, as the Haggadah simply leads us through the signs and symbols discussed above. The Haggadah is the ultimate instruction manual and pedagogic guide. Parents are left with an important job, however, to engage their children and to model interest and excitement. Looking over the Haggadah in advance will help the parent feel comfortable with this task. Planning for opportunities to have the children participate (especially the four questions) is also essential.

Adults can emphasize the spring/Passover connection by lingering over Haggadah readings like Song of Songs and Psalms. We can also play games throughout the Seder with all age groups by challenging everyone to guess how many references the Haggadah has to spring and then track them throughout the night. Adults and children should also free feel to add to the four questions with some spring/Passover related questions. We can also share our personal reflections on the transformation from the bleak winter to the robust spring and how it makes us feel. Then, connect those feelings to the theme of freedom.

I hope spring and Passover will bring each of us renewed energy to embrace our blessing of freedom.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Mary Zamore

Mark Your Calendar (cont.)

- Saturday, April 19th
10:30 am Torah Study
- Sunday, April 20th
No Sunday School – Passover
- Monday, April 21st
7 pm Book Club
- Saturday, April 26th
7 pm Spring Talent Show
- Sunday, April 27th
9:30 am Sunday School
9:30 am PTO Meeting
10:30 am Yom HaShoah Service



If you haven't already done so, next time you're online visit the JCNWJ's Facebook page! This is the place to learn about events at the temple and beyond, see photos of recent events, find links to interesting articles, and more. While the temple's website is still a great place to get information about upcoming events, download forms, or find archived copies of the newsletters and past monthly messages from the Rabbi and President, our Facebook page expands our ability to communicate. You can send us a message about what you'd like to see on the page, or ask a question (Rabbi Zamore and others will see it) and get a response.

You can visit the page at www.facebook.com/jcnwj to see what it's all about! Hope you "Like" it!

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.

Have Questions About Passover?

Leading the Seder for the first time? Need new ideas to make your regular Seder more engaging? Want a recommendation for a new Haggadah? Want to learn how to navigate food choices at Passover? Feel free to reach out to Rabbi Zamore with questions, big or small! Or come the next Picnic Shabbat (April 4th) to discuss your questions with Rabbi Zamore and other congregants.

President's Message

Mitzvah is a word that is often used by Jews. Our temple requires our b'nai mitzvah students to each participate in a "Mitzvah Project." I ask, what does "mitzvah" mean and, with the upcoming holiday of Passover, how can one perform a mitzvah?

Mitzvah, in its primary meaning, refers to the commandments given in the Torah. However, we more commonly think of mitzvah as an act of human kindness. Our kids' mitzvah projects have included volunteering at local food pantries and at homeless and animal shelters, raising awareness and funds for life threatening diseases, supporting Israeli soldiers, and assisting families in need within the community where we reside or in places as far away as Africa. In addition to participating in community service projects in their hometowns or through their employment, our adult members perform mitzvahs in our Jewish community by serving on temple committees, volunteering at PTO events, and reading Torah at the High Holidays. Our contributions of time, money, and good deeds, have us walking away feeling good.

With the exception of our annual Sunday School Model Seder, Passover is not typically celebrated or commemorated at temple like other Jewish holidays. The Seder takes place in the family home. It is customary, and indeed a mitzvah, to invite guests, including strangers, to attend a Seder. Many interfaith families may not host a Seder; some may feel they lack the ability to lead one and others may physically not feel up to the task to prepare for Passover and the Seder. The ideal mitzvah would be to ask a fellow congregant if they have a Seder to attend this year and, if they do not, to invite them to join your family Seder, to together recount the story of Moses, and to enjoy the festive meal together.

My family's most memorable Seders have been those where additional chairs (and sometimes tables) have been dragged into the dining room, where we must squish together and share Haggadahs. Please let me know if you have no plans to attend a Seder this Passover or if you have room at your Seder table for an extra chair or two.

Wishing everyone memorable Passover Seders and a happy Pesach. Chag Sameach.

Mo Bauer

THINK TALENT

The Spring Talent Show will be on **April 26, 2014 at 7 pm**. We are very excited to have Brett Schaffer as our M/C. If you are interested in participating, work on your talent: singing, playing an instrument, dancing, poetry reading, etc. Children and adults, you are welcome to strut your stuff. After the show we will all celebrate with ice cream sundaes.

Please contact Helen Mattson if you are interested in being in the Talent Show.



LET MY PEOPLE GO...

To JCNWJ's Annual Model
Passover Seder

Sunday, April 13th at 10:30 am

Join our Sunday School students in
their journey through the Haggadah



Shabbat Music Preview!

Join our Student Cantor Lilah Sugarman on **Friday, April 4th at 7 pm**, for joyful singing, as she teaches some of the newer music from our Shabbat service. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our rich musical traditions.

Contributions

✧ In honor of Helen and John Mattson's grandson and Jennifer and Mike McGraw's son, Lochlan Michael McGraw

- Rona and Stan Schick
- Judy and Paul May
- Melissa and Bill Parson

✧ In memory of Elaine Hirsch

- Ruth and Howard Schutzbank
- Nancy and Bernard Robins
- Helen and John Mattson

✧ In memory of Harry Siegel

- Rhonda Jordan

✧ In memory of Sol Charloff

- Helen and John Mattson

A Message From Sisterhood

Dear Temple Family,

Thank you for participating in the Mishloach Manot fundraiser. At this time you should all have received your Mishloach Manot hamantaschen bag. Please let us know immediately if for some reason you did not receive one. A special thank you to Alison Shelofsky for her time and expertise in making this important fundraiser a success. JCNWJ and the Sisterhood are forever grateful!

Memorial Plaques

Anyone interested in purchasing a permanent bronze memorial plaque to honor a loved one in your family, please contact Lois Goldberg at DewieandLouie7@verizon.net.

JCNWJ Membership Committee

will be meeting and eating on Sunday, April 6th at 9:30 am at the Washington Diner (immediately following Sunday School drop-off). New members are always welcome. Please let Tracey Bauer know if you can attend at traceysbauer@comcast.net

MAZEL TOV

From the JCNWJ to the McGraw Family and to proud grandparents, Helen and John Mattson, on the birth of Lochlan Michael.

From the JCNWJ to the Schaffer Family on the upcoming bar mitzvah of Sam.

Yom HaShoah Speaker & Commemoration

Sunday, April 27th at 11 am

Join us as we commemorate Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, with guest speaker, Claude Hagelberg, who was a true witness to history. In an age-appropriate presentation for 4th grade and older, Mr. Hagelberg will recall his childhood in Constance, Switzerland, directly over the border from Germany. With family on either side of the border, he has a unique perspective on the war. As a middle school boy scout, Mr. Hagelberg was asked to board a train to greet survivors. Come hear directly about his compelling experience. We hope Sunday School parents and adults from our greater congregation will join us for this important program and commemoration as well.

Education/PTO

March was a very busy month for Education/PTO.

It started with a fun-filled Confirmation retreat led by Rabbi Zamore and chaperoned by Hannah Finkelstein. There were many laughs, games, bonding experiences, and yes, tons of snacks!

The Purim festivities were enjoyed by many! The day began with an entertaining skit performed by our very own Rabbi Zamore and Student Cantor Lilah, the Megillah reading, and the always unforgettable Purim Spiel (to an oldie-but-goodie, Grease) led by Debbie Fesinstine and her marvelous crew.

The Purim Carnival that followed was a huge success. The efforts were led by PTO Chair Marci Braunstein and her Carnival Committee Co-Chairs Barrie McMullen, Pam Fitzsimmons, and Susan Santillo. Thank you to all the parents who helped with desserts, signs, activities, and setting and cleaning up.

Special thanks to the Confirmation and 6th/7th grade class helpers: AJ, Alex, Hailey, Grace, Jill F., Jill W., Jonathan, Lauren, Sabrina, Tyler, and Derek.

At the Carnival there were new activities, in addition to some old favorites. This year we even included pizza on the menu! We had awesome Tricky Tray baskets, thanks to the class and congregation participation.

We hope you join us for the remaining Shabbat Services of the school year, and we especially hope to see all of the Sunday School students at our year-end celebration for meeting the Shabbat Service attendance requirements.

Thank you!

- Gerri and Joon
Education Co-Chairs

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.



Confirmation class returns from annual retreat!



Adult Education – Thursday, April 10th at 12 pm

Join Rabbi Zamore as we continue the exploration of food, food production, and Judaism. Rabbi Zamore's book on this topic, The Sacred Table: Creating a Jewish Food Ethic, was a National Jewish Book Award Finalist. Come to one session or come to all! Please RSVP to Rabbi Zamore (RabbiZamore@comcast.net) if you plan on attending. Feel free to bring a bagged dairy lunch.

News About Our Members

Someone in your family receive an honor? Achieve some goal? Perform an outstanding mitzvah? If you'd like to let JCNWJ members know about it in the newsletter, please send the information in "ready to print" form to Mo Bauer at jcnwjprez@jcnwj.org.

Picnic Shabbat

On Friday, April 4th, Rabbi Zamore and Student Cantor Lilah will be at the temple at 6:15 pm for a "Picnic Shabbat Dinner". They welcome any congregant wishing to join them to bring their own brown bag picnic Shabbat dairy dinner for some informal pre-service time together. They will provide wine and Challah!



Money for Summer Camp 2014

<http://www.onehappycampernj.org/>

<https://bunkconnect.org/ui/Home/Index#start>

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Not just a good summer job for teens and 20 year olds! Also, an affordable way to have your kids enjoy camp!

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Confirmation

Next Confirmation class is April 6th at 10:30 am. It is never too later to join Confirmation!

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May Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles and advertisements to be included in the May Issue of the JCNWJ Journal is **April 19, 2014**. Please email articles, photographs, or news items to the Journal Editor, Abby Bauer at abbybauer@comcast.net.

Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

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.

Jewish LIFE is pleased to present:

“Second Annual A Night to Celebrate Israel”, Thursday, April 3. Our Community’s Support of Israel and Bond event. Distinguished Guest Speaker, Israel Ambassador Ido Aharoni. Invited Guest US Senator Cory Booker. Honoring Elaine Dunst, Past President of Jewish Federation; and Rutgers Hillel Student Jacob Binstein. Event will be held at Raritan Valley Country Club, Bridgewater. Fee: \$50/Adult; \$18/Student includes Dinner (Dietary Laws Observed).

The Irma Horowitz Film Series, featuring Falafel and Short Israeli films, **Thursday, April 10, 6:30pm** at the Birnbaum JCC. Films screened include *First Night*, *New Year’s Resolution*, *I’m Ready*, and *Alone*. Fee: 10/person in advance or \$15/person at the door.

Yom Hashoah Observance and Program, Sunday, April 27, 7pm. Hosted at Temple Sholom, Bridgewater. At a time of increasing financial need amongst the worldwide Holocaust Survivor community, Jewish LIFE presents a timely program featuring William R. Marks, Esq., and Ellen G. Teller of The Marks Law Firm, PC ("MLF"). They will provide a broad overview of the various compensation programs established by Germany after WWII to benefit Survivors, as well as an analysis of the current status of those -- and related -- programs. To date MLF has assisted thousands upon thousands of Survivors in the U.S. and overseas collect monies rightfully due them given their suffering during the war. The evening is free to the community.

Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman, “That Our Hearts May Grow Wise: Cultivating Wisdom as We Age”, **Wednesday, April 30, 12 Noon** at the Wilf Campus for Senior Living, Wilentz Residence Building in Somerset. Fee: \$10 includes Lunch and Program. Please contact the Oscar and Ella Wilf Campus at 732-568-1155 for information about continuing education credits for social workers. Program co-sponsored by The Wilf Campus for Senior Living and Jewish Family Service of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties.

Save the Date for the **Celebrate Israel Parade, Sunday, June 1** in New York City.

To register for Jewish LIFE Programs, please call the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 or register on line at www.ssbjcc.org.

REGISTER NOW!

2nd Annual

A Night to Celebrate Israel

Our Community's Support of Israel and Bond Event



Thursday, April 3 at 6:30pm

Raritan Valley Country Club

Bridgewater, New Jersey

Educate & Celebrate! Dinner

Distinguished Guest Speaker

Israel Ambassador Ido Aharoni

Invited Guest, US Senator Cory Booker

*Honoring Elaine Dunst, Past President of The Jewish Federation
and*

Jacob Binstein, Rutgers Hillel Student

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