

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

# Journal

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www.jcnwj.org

April 2018  
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## Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

This past Sunday, I had the great pleasure of sitting with the Mike Weiner School of Jewish Learning families for our annual Passover *seder*. Thanks to the parents we had all the traditional foods and a beautifully set table. It was an absolute pleasure.

Midway through the *seder*, I pointed to a less traditional food on the table and asked, "Who knows why the orange is here?" A few of our parents knew the familiar story of Susannah Heschel, Professor of Jewish studies at Dartmouth College (and daughter of the late great Abraham Joshua Heschel). As the story goes, when she was presenting on Jewish Feminism to an audience in Miami Beach, a man yelled out, "A woman has as much of a place in the rabbinate as an orange has on the *seder* plate!" Because of this, Professor Heschel decided to place an orange on her *seder* plate at the next Passover. Through word of mouth, the practice spread, and has now become a common *seder* practice in liberal Jewish homes.

It's a great and inspiring story. The only problem is that it also never actually happened, which is why I then proceeded to correct them and tell the actual story. Rather than Heschel presenting on Jewish Feminism in Miami Beach, it was actually a notoriously anti-homosexual rabbi who was talking to a Hillel audience when representatives of a campus lesbian advocacy group demanded to know from him what place lesbians should have in Jewish life. His answer was that "Lesbians have as much place in Jewish life as an orange has on the *seder* plate." And so, from that anti-lesbian comment was born the modern tradition of placing an orange on the *seder* plate, to be in solidarity with our lesbian sisters.

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## Mark Your Calendar

- **Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service  
Oneg – Fesinstine, Stanton, Berk
- **Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**  
7:00 pm – Board of Trustees Meeting
- **Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service  
Oneg – Braunstein
- **Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>**  
10:00am – Bat Mitzvah - Ashley  
Braunstein
- **Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm – Book Club
- **Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>**  
7:00 pm – Shabbat Service & Bark  
Mitzvah  
Oneg – Gross, Marr, Marinich
- **Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>**  
10:30 am – Torah Study
- **Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm – Shabbat Service  
Oneg – Kahan
- **Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**  
10:00am – B'not Mitzvah - Emma & Molly  
Kahan

### Sunday School Dates:

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>

## Rabbi's Message (cont.)

No one at our Sunday School *seder* had heard this story before, so I was happy for the opportunity to set the record straight. And they were happy to learn the *real* story.

And then something completely unexpected happened...

A day or two after the *seder*, as I was doing some personal research on an unrelated Passover topic, I came across an article by Susannah Heschel from 2013. After reading it, I sat there jaw-dropped and embarrassed. I'd like to share with you what she wrote, and in the process acknowledge publically that I didn't get the story right either.



Passover was high drama in my childhood. Preparations began weeks in advance, with meticulous scrubbing, shopping and organizing. Strong emotions came out in the days before the holiday, when every crumb of *hametz* had to be removed, and we had to tread very carefully. One mistake could bring calamity. When we finally sat down for the Seder, my mother would always claim that only women understood the Exodus, having slaved away in the kitchen for weeks and then

been finally liberated when the holiday began, but too exhausted to enjoy it.

I love the Haggadah, the Hebrew text as well as all the special actions we take at the Seder; eating, drinking, reclining, discussing and debating. In my home, we immerse ourselves in the Haggadah in Hebrew and also in the centuries of commentary on each passage. While we carefully follow all the traditions, we also recognize that over the centuries, Jews have often added new customs to Passover.

At the height of the Jewish feminist movement of the 1980s, inspired by the abundant new customs expressing women's viewpoints and experiences, I started placing an orange on the Seder plate.

At an early point in the Seder, when stomachs were starting to growl, I asked each person to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit and eat the segment in recognition of gay and lesbian Jews and of widows, orphans, Jews who are adopted and all others who sometimes feel marginalized in the Jewish community.

When we eat that orange segment, we spit out the seeds to repudiate homophobia and we recognize that in a whole orange, each segment sticks together. Oranges are sweet and juicy and remind us of the fruitfulness of gay and lesbian Jews and of the homosociality that has been such an important part of Jewish experience, whether of men in yeshivas or of women in the *Ezrat Nashim*.

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## Rabbi's Message (cont.)

**Strangely, I discovered some years ago that an urban legend was circulating: Strangers told me they placed an orange on their Seder plate because of an incident in Miami Beach in which a man angrily denounced me when I gave a lecture, saying that a woman belongs on the bimah of a synagogue no more than an orange belongs on the Seder plate.**

**That incident never happened! Instead, my custom had fallen victim to a folktale process in which my original intention was subverted. My idea of the orange was attributed to a man, and my goal of affirming lesbians and gay men was erased.**

**Moreover, the power of the custom was subverted: By now, women are on the bimah, so there is no great political courage in eating an orange, because women ought to be on the bimah.**

**For years, I have known about women whose scientific discoveries were attributed to men, or who had to publish their work under a male pseudonym. That it happened to me makes me realize all the more how important it is to recognize how deep and strong patriarchy remains, and how important it is for us to celebrate the contributions of gay and lesbian Jews, and all those who need to be liberated from marginality to centrality. And Passover is the right moment to ensure freedom for all Jews.**

<https://forward.com/opinion/172959/an-orange-on-plate-for-women-and-spit-out-seeds/>

I share Professor Heschel's correction of my misrepresentation of history not only because hers is an interesting and inspiring story from which we can all learn, but because during this season of Passover, especially, it is my prayer that each of us will strive to do all we can to liberate those who are marginalized from the periphery of life. As we celebrate our own exodus from slavery and subjugation this week, we do so with an appreciation that had we not taken such great pains to support and look after one another during our escape 3300 years ago (according to the biblical story), some of us on the more "invisible" side of society inevitably would have gone unnoticed and been left behind. This Passover, and *every* Passover, let us commit ourselves to freeing every last one of us from the lonely and awkward periphery of life. Let no one's story ever again be forgotten, stolen, or misattributed. Together, we can do it. But only if we do it together.

Chag Pesach Sameach,  
*Rabbi Dubin*

# President's Message

How can working for your temple benefit you?

This month's message will discuss how being a member of the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey has affected my professional life.

For most of my professional life, I was a computer nerd. I sat behind a desk and either coded and tested programs, or I learned how databases worked and used that information to assist programmers and systems analysts on how to best use the database and its features to make their jobs easier. To do this, I sat behind a desk and while I would talk to a lot of people (shocking, isn't it), I never really did any public speaking.

Then one day, I was asked to join the temple's finance committee. Little did I know how much that would change my life. I went from being on the committee, to becoming the Treasurer three years later. One of my duties as Treasurer was to make the Yom Kippur appeal. To say that I was frightened to do this is an understatement. To ease my fears and to hope to put the congregation at ease, I started with a joke, as I have always loved telling jokes. The joke was "According to Seinfeld, the number one fear of people is public speaking and the number two fear is death. Which means, that if you are at a funeral, more people would rather be in the casket than giving the eulogy."

I got over my fear and was able to get up in front of the congregation to do announcements and subsequent appeals, as well as presentations to the B'Nai Mitzvah students, which gave me more confidence to speak in front of crowds. About 11 years ago, I could see that my current position would be phased out shortly. At that time, a friend of mine told me about a position, where the bulk of the work was public speaking. With my new-found confidence gained from my temple background, I was able to land my current position of technical sales, where I get to travel the country (not always as glamorous as it sounds), meet with many different people and make many new relationships.

Being in a small congregation gives you the opportunity to stretch yourself by learning new skills with a very supportive group of people to help you grow. I urge you to take the opportunity to stretch yourself, get involved and make a difference in our temple and our community.

Love, Howie

## 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](mailto:Howie.ruth@hotmail.com).**

# SISTERHOOD

## NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Sisterhood would like to thank the congregation for their generous donations to the Mishloach Manot Fundraiser. By now everyone should have received their bags (please let us know if you have not). The Sisterhood donated the entire profits to the JCNWJ's general fund. The profit was \$2500.

Sisterhood members, Temple members and friends are invited to an Accessory Fundraiser on Saturday, April 28 at 7pm. Please see the flyer below and please attend. It will be a great time!! Bring a friend!!

Finally, the Sisterhood will hold their annual Mother's Day Tea on May 12 at the Shelofsky House. There will be more information to come.

All Ladies of the congregation and their guests are invited to bring gently used accessories to display, try on and exchange

Simcha room at JCNWJ

JCNWJ use of the Proceeds TBD

Finger Foods will be served

Bring your own wine or soft drink

Saturday April 28 7pm

Register to save your spot before Saturday April 21st

Send \$18 per person payable to JCNWJ Sisterhood and indicate in memo line "Accessory FUNdraiser"

To: Ruth Schutzbank  
25 Stewartsville Rd  
Stewartsville, NJ 08886

# Updates & Events

## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

### Upcoming Dates:

April 8<sup>th</sup>  
April 15<sup>th</sup>  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>  
April 29<sup>th</sup>

## TORAH STUDY

Torah Study continues in the Book of Deuteronomy. Please join us at any or all of the following upcoming meetings at 10:30am in the Simcha Room:

April 14<sup>th</sup>                      May 19<sup>th</sup>

June 9<sup>th</sup>

## BOOK CLUB

The next Book Club meeting will be held on Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at Ruth Schutzbank's house. We will be reading the Pulitzer Prize winning novel **Underground Railroad** by **Colson Whitehead**.

Anyone interested is welcome to join in. Please contact Rita Berkowitz at [berk721@aol.com](mailto:berk721@aol.com) if you have any questions.

## DONATIONS

In Loving Memory of Harry Siegel  
– Rhonda Jordan

In Memory of Edward Lewis  
– Rabbi Emeritus Ellen Lewis

In Memory of Theodore Jay  
– Rabbi Emeritus Ellen Lewis

Melissa and William Parson  
on the Yahrzeit for Jessica Hirsch  
– Iris and Howard Hirsch

On the Yahrzeit for Sid Goldstein  
– Iris and Howard Hirsch

On the Yahrzeit of Arthur Tarlowe  
– Laura and Paul Tarlowe

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund  
– Debbie and Sandy Kahan

## FOOD DRIVE

Our local food pantries are in dire need of supplies. Donations are down and the need for food is greater than ever. The Jewish Center is collecting non-perishable items such as canned soup, pasta, and cereal on an ongoing basis to help out those in need.

# Updates & Events

## ISRAEL TRIP

**Congregational trip to Israel!**

**June 24 – July 6, 2018**

**Relive the history of our people in the place where it all happened!**

Join us for a life changing, life enriching experience in Israel - the heartland of the Bible. Visit the places you have been hearing about, enjoy exciting and adventurous hiking and water experiences, all while visiting historic landmarks and sites of interest.

Visit the trip website at <http://www.arzaworld.com/Jewish-Center-of-Northwest-New-Jersey-Trip-to-Israel-Led-by-Rabbi-Andy-Dubin.aspx> to view:

- Promotional flyer (accenting the trip highlights) to share with extended friends and family you wish to invite.
- Detailed day-by-day trip itinerary.
- Registration process “how-to” document outlining important details as well as screen shots of what to expect and how to do each step of the process.

Looking forward to sharing this incredible opportunity with our synagogue family!

Sincerely, Lynne Kowski & Roy Loomis

P.S. if you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to email both Lynne ([Lynne.Kowski@raritanval.edu](mailto:Lynne.Kowski@raritanval.edu)) and Roy ([rloomis@cherrybrook.com](mailto:rloomis@cherrybrook.com))

## WEBSITE

Members Only!


The JCNWJ website has a section for temple members only. Here you'll find the latest membership list and other documents not for public consumption.

To access, go to [www.jcnwj.org/members/](http://www.jcnwj.org/members/) and enter the user name jcnwjmember and password. Forgot the password? E-mail [website@jcnwj.org](mailto:website@jcnwj.org).

### 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](mailto:berk721@aol.com)) or Ruth Schutzbank ([Howie.ruth@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

# Updates & Events



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ד ה ו  
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פ צ ק ר ש ת ף

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*Adult Hebrew Crash Course*  
a course for *EVERYONE* (especially travellers)

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*Seven Sundays: 9:45 - 10:45 at JCNWJ*

March 25, April 8 & 22 -- Reading the Aleph Bet  
April 29, May 6 & 20, June 3 -- Basic Hebrew Conversation

## MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg continues at the JCNWJ. Contact Rhonda Jordan at [helpmerhonda171@yahoo.com](mailto:helpmerhonda171@yahoo.com) if interested!



# Updates & Events

April 20, 2018  
Shabbat Achrei Mot-Kedoshim  
7:00 PM



*Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey*

115 Youmans Avenue, Washington, New Jersey 07882 (908) 689-0762



Bark/Meow

## Mitzvah

יודע צדיק, נפש בהמתו

*A righteous person knows  
the soul of an animal*

-- Proverbs 12:10



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Please visit our website at [www.lsaclaw.com](http://www.lsaclaw.com).

The logo for Fliegauf Jewelers, featuring the name 'Fliegauf' in a cursive script and 'JEWELERS' in a smaller, sans-serif font below it, all within a yellow oval shape.

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