



Mark Your Calendar!

- Friday, May 2, 7:45
Shabbat Service
Oneg: Kestecher family
- Saturday, May 3, 10:00am
Bar Mitzvah, Brett Kestecher
- Sunday, May 4, 9:30am
Sunday School (K/1)
Men's Club Breakfast
10:45am Adult Ed/Pirke Avot
- Monday, May 5, 7:30pm
Board Meeting
- Saturday, May 10, 10:30am
Torah Study
- Sunday, May 11
No Sunday School
Happy Mother's Day!
- Friday, May 16, 7:45pm
Shabbat Service
Oneg: Tarlowe Family
- Saturday, May 17, 10:00am
Bar Mitzvah, Ezra Tarlowe
- Sunday, May 18
9:30am Sunday School (K/1),
Music with Cantor Kadin
PTO Meeting
10:30am Confirmation
- Saturday, May 24, 10:30am
Torah Study
- Sunday, May 25
No Sunday School
Memorial Day Weekend
- Friday, May 30, 7:45pm
Shabbat Service honoring high
school & college graduates and
the 60th anniversary of Israel
Oneg: May, Bronson,
Nathanson families

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now on our Website!**
Visit us at www.jcnwj.org

Rabbi's Message

You can't be in two places at once. That is a truism ignored by the Haggadah, which tells you that you must be in two places at once. It is a mitzvah on Pesach – in every generation, you are required to feel as if you personally had gone forth from Egypt. Somehow, you are to be sitting around your seder table in New Jersey and leaving Egypt at the same time. How can you be both here and there? The challenge is obviously not a geographic but a spiritual one. The more precise spiritual question is: How can you feel spiritually connected to people who lived in a different time and place?

The internet can help us make connections we once thought impossible. Let me tell you about two recent examples. One happened after our March newsletter went online. You may recall that I had written about a Jewish Spaniard named Don Yitzhak Abravanel, who had tried to avert the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. I wrote that I had never imagined that one day, I would stand in the Alhambra in Granada, in the very place where Ferdinand and Isabella had issued that fateful decree, and would feel the desperation of Abravanel (and added that I had lived on Rehov Abravanel in Jerusalem) and those Jewish families whose fate hinged on the cruelty of Torquemada. I also had never imagined that somewhere in cyberspace, a Portland attorney named Allan Abravanel would receive a Google Alert referencing that newsletter article and would send me the following email:

Rabbi,

I enjoyed your latest monthly message to your Congregation (the link came to me via a Google daily update on the name Abravanel). I am somewhat envious that you had the opportunity to live on Rehov Abravanel, which is also one of my favorite

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President's Message

Just when I thought I could research “everything” on the Internet via Wikipedia, I met with Ms. Sharon Halper, Regional Educator of the Union for Reform Judaism. She was extremely helpful in introducing me to the vast Jewish learning resources available on the Internet. For the audience that does not have access to the internet, I would be eager to accompany you to your local library, where such access is available, and can be done quite privately. If one goes to the local library early on a weekday, there usually are not very many other stalwarts that got up early to visit this resource. All one needs is the capability to use the equivalent of a typewriter; no other skills required. Please feel free to contact me at services or at my telephone number and/or email address listed at the bottom of my message.

First of all, let me emphasize that the information listed below is far from exhaustive. In fact, it is barely the tip of the iceberg, and undoubtedly suffers from personal selection bias on my part. Nevertheless here goes:

• www.urj.org provides a plethora of information. For example, one can click on the “10 minutes of Torah” button, and receive a weekly update, Monday-Reform Voices of Torah, Tuesday-Mishnah Day, Wednesday-Israel Connections, Thursday-Lessons from Our Traditions, Friday-Jewish World and Social Action. Click on “Torah Portion” and you can get the weekly Torah portion before

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Rabbi's Message, cont.

streets in Jerusalem. When my family and I lived in Jerusalem in 1990, we looked at Rehavia, but finally stayed in an apartment for three months on Rehov Disraeli -- he was a distant Abravanel relative, but that had nothing to do with our choice of location.

*All the best,
Allan R. Abravanel*

How amazing is it that, with the help of Google, a random comment on my part could inspire a spiritual connection with someone in Portland, Oregon? And then a month later, as if that one cyberspace connection weren't enough (*dayenu*), my older son Gideon had occasion to visit Israel on a writing assignment. He knew he would be in Jerusalem with no place to stay, so I sent him the email address of a young American who had made *aliyah* to Jerusalem. Josh Weinberg is the son of dear friends of mine from rabbinical school in Cincinnati. He was 18 months old when Gideon was born; we have pictures of them together as babies. That was the last time they had been together until the morning I looked at my computer screen and found myself staring at a photo of Gideon and Josh together in Josh's Jerusalem apartment. Josh's mother in Chicago and I both had the same impulse and ran to find the old photo album. I felt like I was in Jerusalem in 2008 and Cincinnati in 1980, all in the same moment.

We Jews have always believed in being in two places at once, even before the days of the internet. We could live in Russia or China or Spain or Ethiopia and feel that we were slaves in Egypt. No matter where we lived, our bodies could be in America or Europe, while our souls could long for Jerusalem. Hundreds of years ago, the poet Judah HaLevi wrote, "My heart is in the East and I am in the farthest West." This spiritual connection has never been more important as Israel celebrates her 60th birthday. Even those of us who have never been to Israel can feel a religious connection that transcends time and space. This year's afikomen reading from ARZA suggested that the two halves of the middle matza symbolized the Israeli half and the American half of the Jewish people:

"Both halves of the matzah are critical to the seder; both parts of the people are critical to the narrative of Jewish life. It is a serious mistake for either group to assume that the other's role is marginal, or that the distance between the two means that they are not intertwined and engaged with one another. Let the taste of the afikomen be the taste of the inter-relatedness of the two great parts of our people. That is the taste that we must savor before we can say, at the end of the night, L'shanah ha-ba-ah b'Yerushalayim, Next year in Jerusalem."

We can be in two places at once. This year on Yom Ha-Azmaut, we might be in the farthest northwest of New Jersey, but our hearts will be in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

President's Message, cont.

services. Clicking on the "Learning" button, one discovers over 30 topics including "Becoming a Jew: Q and A", "Adult B'nei Mitzvah", and "Learn to Chant Torah". If one goes to www.urj.org/books/archive, over 60 recent books, many by well-known authors, can be found.

- www.myjewishlearning.com is another interesting site. It is not always the case that a ".com" is a commercial site and that a ".org" is a non-profit site, but it is usually the case. Nevertheless, this site, if commercial, is very subtle about it. I decided to "surf" this site by clicking on the "drop-down" menu entitled "Ideas & Beliefs". On the next menu, I chose "Kabbalah & Mysticism", and of course, was overwhelmed by the choices of where to go next. I took the Atzmi "test" to determine my Kabbalah profile, but am still awaiting the "analysis" of my test. Possibly of more interest is the possibility of a.) Joining a discussion group, or b.) reading Isaac Luria's theory of creation, or c.) Obtaining a list of recommended books about Kabbalah & Mysticism.

- Want a kosher Chinese restaurant less than a day's drive? Go to www.shamash.org/kosher/. The best idea is not to be too specific, and see what you get. I got Kosher Chinese Express in South Manalapan, Lin's Kosher Chinese in Manville, Mei Garden Cuisine in Highland Park. If you are outside the United States, the same approach still works.

- Are you single, or want to introduce your children or friends to Jewish singles? www.jdate.com may be of help. Their web site claims the following, "Welcome to JDate, the premier Jewish singles community on the Net. It's no wonder that countless marriages begin right here – it seems like everyone knows someone who fell in love on JDate! Check out our Success Stories section for hundreds of success stories and you'll see why JDate is the undisputed leader in Jewish dating. As the modern alternative to traditional Jewish matchmaking, JDate is an ideal online destination for Jewish men and women to find friends, dates, and even soul mates, all within the faith. In just minutes, you can create a profile and be ready to mingle with other JDate members in your area. Our vast membership base and user-friendly interface make JDate a source of Jewish romance around the world."

I would be cautious about providing too much personal information on the Internet. However, the sites I have mentioned above, especially the Union for Reform Judaism site, are extremely reputable. It is comforting to know that we are still "...a people of the Book", however the Internet has simply made the Book much larger. If anyone has any personal sites they recommend, please let me know and I will include them in a future message. Please contact me at arvesen@att.net or by phone at 917-941-4332.

Shalom,
Jim Arvesen

May 30 Shabbat

On May 30, we will honor graduates of high school and college, and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Please join us for this special Shabbat.

Religious School/PTO Events

May 4th we will be celebrating Yom HaAtzmaut with an Israeli breakfast. We will also be playing an all-school (including parents) big game which should be fun for everyone! There is no Sunday School on May 11th (Mother's Day) or May 25th (Memorial Day). Our next PTO meeting is scheduled for May 18th.

Looking ahead... Our last day of Sunday School is June 8th, which is the Confirmation Service (all school participates) and the Closing Assembly.

*Marsha Gross and Karen Finkelstein
(Education co-chairs)*

Pirke Avot

The Wisdom of the Fathers, taught by Rabbi Ellen Jay Lewis. Lively group discussion always.

SUNDAY MORNINGS, 10:45 a.m.–noon

May 4 – changed from May 18 (noon)

Torah Study Group Changes Meetings

Torah study dates have changed (again). They are as follows: May 10 and 24; June 7 and 21.

Yom HaShoah Commemoration at JCNWJ

“There was once a great city, a cosmopolitan center of commerce and culture. Its port welcomed immigrants fleeing terror and want; its dense, bustling streets presented a kaleidoscopic variety of native dress and hummed with the sound of the world's languages. Built on the twin pillars of tolerance and trade, the city was a beacon of pluralism, whose daily existence contradicted the modern siren songs of nationalism and ethnic hatred. This great city is not New York but Salonika, ‘the Pearl of the Mediterranean.’ Located on Greece's northeast coast, along the Aegean Sea, Salonika (today officially known by the Greek name Thessaloniki) was once one of the most Jewish cities in the world.” [*Jewish Daily Forward*, 18 January, 2002]

With these words, Dr. Mathilde Benveniste began her presentation on the history of her native city and its inhabitants. In rapt attention for a full hour, the congregational audience listened as she interwove the distant and more recent past with the history of her

family. More than 95 percent of Thessaloniki's Jews of perished in the Holocaust, including most members of Mathilde's immediate family. But her father and mother, as well as her infant brother and paternal grandmother, survived because her father heeded a timely warning from a Greek friend who had witnessed the first roundup of Jews for transport. It was clear, the friend told him, that the people being herded into cattle cars were not going to a so-called Jewish State near Krakow, Poland (the populace had no news sources from the outside world--all radios having been forbidden to them from the earliest days of the German occupation). Detaching the identifying yellow Star of David from the clothing to which it was sewn, the family moved from central city to the outskirts, where they would not be recognized, where they were able to barter possessions for food and services (including medical), and where they were not betrayed by their Greek landlord.

Colorful images, including old postcards showing daily life before the war--when Jews were prosperous and secure, and working in occupations that included fisherman, stevedore (the port of Thessaloniki was closed on Shabbat for many years under the Ottoman Empire since the port's owners, as well as all the workers were Jews), scholar, doctor, etc.--were an unforgettable part of the presentation. A buffet lunch followed, during which Dr. Benveniste was available for conversation and questions, enjoyed by all.

Thanks to Debbie and Glenn Knobelman, Edythe Herson, Helen Mattson, and Joanne Weiss for their contributions to the delicious lunch, as well as for set up and clean up; to Debby Fesinstine and Karen Finkelstein for help setting up; and to David Weiss for technical assistance.

—Sharon Herson

The American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece, together with The Jewish Museum (NY), are organizing a trip to Greece this September: Greece through Jewish Eyes, September 11-23, 2008. For information, go to <http://afjmg.org/> and click on the link 2008 Trip to Greece.

Book Club

The book club will take a hiatus and will begin again in September. If anyone wants to meet before then, please contact Risa Smith.

Donations

In appreciation to the congregation
Klaire Katz, Marsha Gross' mom
In honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Brett Kestecher
Helen and John Mattson
In honor of the Talent Show participants
Helen and John Mattson
In memory of Rhonda Jordan's father, Harry Siegel
Rona and Stan Schick, Judy and Paul May
Helen and John Mattson
In memory of Pauline Schick
Rona and Stan Schick
In memory of Harold Nagorsky
Gwen and Ed Nagorsky
In memory of Fannie Garfunkel
Jan Romanczyk
In memory of Saul Kwartin
Helen and John Mattson
In memory of Ruth Zuckerman
Lori and Michael Perlow
In memory of Arthur Tarlowe, husband, father,
grandfather
Phyllis Schwarz, Helen and John Mattson
In memory of Norma and Herbert Shifrin
Laura and Paul Tarlowe
In memory of Richard Herson
Jon Davine

Community Events

Living Hopefully with Illness & Physical Challenges

Ohr Tikvah is starting a support group for individuals living with chronic illness and physical challenges. Co-led by Rabbi Robin Nafshi and a social worker, the group will provide a safe environment to share personal stories, to laugh and maybe cry, and to learn from Jewish text and traditions how to live life fully in the face of adversity. A minimum of eight people is needed to launch the group. Please call Ohr Tikvah at 908-725-6994 if you are interested in participating.

(Source: Ozzie Nogg)

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AT THE JCC

Don't miss this upcoming events: Yom Hashoah Observance: Sunday, May 4, 4:30 p.m. at the Flemington JCC Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration (Israel's 60th!): Thursday, May 8, 4:30 - 8:00 p.m., hosted by the Flemington JCC Salute to Israel Parade in NYC: Sunday, June 1, with a send-off breakfast at the Birnbaum JCC. For more information, visit the website at www.ssbjcc.org.

JOIN THE JCC!

Expand your Connection to the Jewish Community with Membership to the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center

The JCC is commemorating Israel's 60th Birthday with a very special Membership offer.

Family: Join the JCC for one year for only \$460!
Couple: Join the JCC for one year for only \$360!
Single: Join the JCC for one year for only \$260!

To make this special membership offer even better, we're waiving our Joiner Fee, **saving you up to an additional \$200!**

This offer is available only to current synagogue members joining the JCC for the first time.

This offer is good May 1- 16, 2008.

For further information, call the JCC office at 908-725-6994 x201.

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