



Mark Your Calendar!

- Friday, Nov. 2, 7:45pm
Shabbat Service/Kristallnacht commemoration, Oneg: Ballenberg, Onweller, Becker families
- Sunday, Nov. 4
9:30am Sunday School (K/1),
Music with Cantor Kadin
9:30am Men's Club Breakfast
10:45am Pirke Avot class
- Monday, Nov. 5, 7:30pm
Board Meeting
- Tuesday, Nov. 6, 7:00pm
Beginning Hebrew for Adults
- Sunday, Nov. 11
9:30am Sunday School
10:30am Confirmation class
12:00pm Ginger Nathanson lecture
- Tuesday, Nov. 13, 7:00pm
Beginning Hebrew for Adults
- Friday, Nov. 16, 7:45pm
Shabbat Service, Oneg:
deClerq, Yanow, Weinstein families
- Saturday, Nov. 17, 10:30am
Torah Study
- Sunday, Nov. 18
9:30am Sunday School (K/1),
Music with Cantor Kadin
9:30am PTO Meeting
12:15pm Cooking Club
- Tuesday, Nov. 20, 7:00pm
Beginning Hebrew for Adults
- Sunday, Nov. 25
No Sunday School
(Thanksgiving)
- Friday, Nov. 30, 7:45pm
Shabbat Service, Oneg:
Margolin/Weiner, Hirshberg,
Ostenfeld families

Rabbi's Message

There is a book just out called *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible*. In the interest of full disclosure, I will tell you I have read the excerpts published in Christian Century magazine (whose cover is devoted to this book this month) but not the entire book. I have read enough to satisfy myself that I do not want to read further. The author's premise is my problem. A.J. Jacobs (a self-professed secular agnostic Jew) writes, "One of the reasons that I embarked on this experiment was to take legalism to its logical extreme and show that it leads to righteous idiocy. What better way to demonstrate the absurdity of Jewish and Christian fundamentalism? If you actually follow all the rules, you'll spend your days acting like a crazy person." His goal was mockery and he has succeeded.

While I am no fan of fundamentalism of any sort, I am also no fan of how AJ. Jacobs interprets living biblically. He grows a beard, wears tassels and sandals, and carries a walking stick. When he reads Leviticus 20:27 ("They shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them"), he takes a handful of stones to Central Park with the idea of stoning a Sabbath-breaker or an adulterer. Even the most devoted card-carrying fundamentalist wouldn't think to do that. In addition, we don't know that these verses ever were meant to be taken literally. Jacobs tries

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President's Message

Shalom Y'All

I just came back from the South-O.K. it was only South Jersey. I have been fortunate enough in the last few weeks to have attended two valuable meetings of Presidents of Jewish Congregations. The alphabet soup gets a little difficult, but let me try.

The Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren (Federation for short) met in the Jewish Community Center in Bridgewater, NJ. It is a magnificent complex. I wish it were closer to us. Some of our fellow congregants are members of this JCC. The Federation includes Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist temples. It would be great if it included all Jewish Houses of Worship, but the inclusiveness and diversity is still impressive.

The Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) is our reform national organization. It is headquartered in New York City. Our Regional office is the NJ-WHVC (New Jersey-West Hudson Valley Council). It is located in Washington Township, NJ in Bergen County. Rabbi Marcus L. Burstein is the new Acting Regional Director. I would assume that administratively he would report to Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the president of the URJ. My compulsion with all of these politics is intended to inform us regarding the wonderful resources that we have available to us.

A common thread that presidents of all the persuasions mentioned above listed was retention of members, especially members without children in Hebrew school. Yes, this has disheartened me in my short tenure as your president. I have talked to several ex-congregants that have given so much of themselves to our temple. The "reasons" they cannot continue must be valid in their lives, but difficult for me to understand.

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Rabbi's Message, cont.

on these laws for size as if it were a game. He plays it once or twice and goes on to the next things.

This approach is certainly not humble or meaningful in any way that I can discern, unless the meaning lies in book sales. Jacobs isn't following the Bible, he is living a parody of the Bible. Those of us who take living a religious life seriously would never dream of doing what Jacobs did. His book is the kind of book that gives religion a bad name.

Having said all that, I have to say reading the book made me think about many of the ideas that consume me over the high holy day period. We have come out of that period and have reached the month of Heshvan, a month notable for its lack of holidays. The only holidays in the entire month are the Shabbatot, a blessed relief from Tishri. Now that things are quiet, it is time to recall the promises we made to ourselves over the high holidays and to put that resolve into action. What does it mean for us to live religiously every day, every week, every month? What does it mean to be Sabbath-observant as a liberal Jew? For us, living biblically lies not in being fundamentalists but in making a serious and thoughtful commitment to God, Torah and Israel. This is a much harder task than arbitrarily picking a law from Leviticus and throwing a few stones at people in Central Park. And we know something else Jacobs doesn't know: We don't wrestle alone with these ideas. We work on them together, as a holy people, as the God of the Bible would have us do.

Rabbi Lewis

President's Message, cont.

I remember a memorable post-9/11 sermon that Rabbi Lewis gave concerning similar issues. One of her congregants from another temple had decided to end their membership. Their son perished in the 9/11 terror attacks. As a member, a shiva would have immediately been organized. Yes, one occurred, but this is not the event a family wants to organize after the death of a son.

My family has been comforted by this congregation after the death of several family members. We were in no position to initiate this responsibility. Thank you.

What a shame it would be for our children if there were not a Jewish presence in our rural area,. Diversity is what makes our country great, not conformity and uniformity, a trait too common in all teen-agers.

What can we do? After listening to the various speakers these past weeks at the meetings I attended, I believe we are doing a lot. Our confirmation classes seem to have a much higher retention percentage than larger temples. Our NFTY programs and Jewish camps also appear to have a solid attendance among our children. We are making it even better with rebates on fees for some of these programs. We can always do more.

Please let me know your thoughts. More needs to be done.

Jim Arvesen (917-941-4332, arvesen@att.net)

"Miracle in Whitwell," Kristallnacht Observance during Shabbat Service on November 2

To commemorate our observance of Kristallnacht (November 1938), Maureen O'Leary (new member) and Lisa Greene will describe their recent journey to the Children's Holocaust Memorial in Whitwell, Tennessee. The Memorial houses many millions of paper clips collected by the school children of the town to symbolize those murdered in the Holocaust. The Paper Clip Project and the Memorial give concrete meaning to the number six million. Photographs of the Memorial will be on view in the simcha room.

Ginger Nathanson, "Jewish Genetic Diseases: Gaucher and Tay Sachs"

Ginger Nathanson, longtime member of the JCNWJ, will be our guest speaker on November 11 (at noon). Her subject, "Jewish Genetic Diseases: Gaucher and Tay Sachs," combines science, history, and ethnicity in a unique way. Ginger's personal story makes her especially qualified to discuss this topic. Not only does she live daily with Gaucher disease, she has been a science teacher, supervisor, and curriculum developer on the high school level since the 1970s. She has also taught extensively on the college level—biology, physiology, human anatomy, among other subjects. With this background, you know she will be able to explain her subject to those of us whose science knowledge is much more limited. And why is there such a thing as a Jewish disease anyway?

To continue the conversation, Ginger's talk will be followed by a buffet lunch in the simcha room. RSVP for lunch by Nov. 5 to Sharon Herson.

Cantor's Special Program for Shabbat Service, November 16

On Friday evening, November 16, Cantor Marcy Kadin will be leading services and doing a Sermon in Song. A Sermon in Song explores the musical repertoire of our heritage. She will be choosing a prayer that we all know. She will then sing and analyze many different musical settings of that particular prayer, both old and new. Cantor Kadin will also include a setting that she has written herself. The exploration will be both fun and informative.

Long Term Insurance Briefing

Do you know anyone in a nursing home?

Do you know anyone in an assisted living facility?

Do you know anyone who has needed assistance in their home?

Long term care insurance -

What is it? Who needs it? It's expensive, right?

Find out what long term care insurance is, what it is not, and how to configure a policy that meets your needs from Larry Glazer, Joanne Weiss's brother, an insurance agent that specializes in LTCi and has worked with several members of our temple community. Come for brunch at Noon on Sunday December 2nd and get an informal informative talk about it.

Religious School/PTO Events

- Chanukah Bazaar Fridays, Nov 16th, 18th, Sundays, Dec 2nd & Dec 9th
- Sunday school children will have the opportunity to shop for their families at the bazaar. Please help them make a list. More info to follow.
- Sunday School Chanukah Craft December 2nd
- Sunday School Chanukah Party December 9th- Each family please donate a dozen cooked latkes. Families are invited.

Cooking Club Update

The next Cooking Club—November 18 at 12:15—will tackle Thanksgiving side dishes. Bring ingredients and, if possible, a written recipe for a dish you want to share. If you're not a great cook and want to come to learn, don't bring anything except yourself. Everyone is welcome. Please call Esther Bakonyi or Iris Hirsch so that we know how many people to expect and what each person will demonstrate.

The first Cooking Club class, taught by Esther, was a fabulous experience in group cooperation, learning how to do everything, and eating a lot. We made crepes, the fancy word for blintzes, and stuffed them with a variety of fillings. If you didn't come last time, come in November.

SUNDAYS, 12:15 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Nov. 18, Dec. 2, Jan. 13, Feb. 3, April 6. Bring bag lunch. Fee: Share in expenses of ingredients. Children interested in cooking may come with a parent. Contact Iris or Esther at least a week before session(s) you will be attending.

Naming Ceremony to be Held during Shabbat Service

If you or any of your children do not have a Hebrew name, consider choosing one and being named in a beautiful group ceremony at a Shabbat service on January 25. Please contact Rabbi Lewis if you are interested and before you start looking through books for

names—that may not be the way to do it. Deadline for participation: January 7, 2008.

Book Club Update

Although the next meeting of the Book Club is not until December 19, everyone needs an early heads-up to get going on the next book. Highly recommended by Mike Weiner—as well as numerous other critics—Daniel Mendelsohn's *The Lost* was also reviewed very positively by Gideon Lewis-Kraus in *The Nation* (November 6, 2006). The book is a non-fiction mystery, family history, tale of healing, biblical commentary, all woven together in a humorous (yes) and gripping story of the author's search to discover what happened to six members of his family (his father's generation) who didn't survive the Holocaust. Please contact Risa Smith by December 10 if you plan to come because the group will be meeting at the home of a participant, and where we meet will depend on how many people plan to attend.

Pirke Avot

The Wisdom of the Fathers, taught by Rabbi Ellen Jay Lewis. Lively group discussion always. SUNDAY MORNINGS, 10:45 a.m.–noon
Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Jan. 6, Feb. 3, March 2, April 6, May 18 (noon)

Torah Study

The group will be studying Exodus during this year. Another stimulating group discussion, Torah-based, with occasional digressions into contemporary events and politics. Coordinated by Sharon Herson SATURDAY MORNINGS, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Nov. 17, Dec. 15, Jan. 19, Feb. 16, March 22, April 26, May 10, June 21
Members can come and participate in any and all sessions.

Placing a Name on the Mishabeirach list

“When you ask for a mitzvah, it is customary to do one.” To place a name on the mishabeirach list, write the individual's name before you enter the sanctuary. Complete the mitzvah cycle by making a donation in the tzedakah box that will soon be placed there for your convenience. This new (for us) custom will begin as soon as the tzedakah box has been purchased.

Donations

In honor of our daughter, Rabbi Ellen Lewis

E. I. and G. J. Lewis

In memory of Debra Albin, Linda Albin's sister

Gwen and Ed Nagorsky, Eric Edelstein

Judy and Paul May

In memory of Steve Tarlowe - Laura & Paul Tarlowe

In memory of Sallye Klein - Joan & Irving Edelsberg

In memory of Harold Saul, my Jewish godfather

Alice Hausmann

Community Programs

JEWISH LIFE

Esther Schor, author, poet and professor of English at Princeton University, will discuss *The Double Life of Emma Lazarus* on Thursday, November 15 at 7 p.m. Rabbi Michael Marmor, Dean of the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, presents *In Search of Heschel* on Thursday, November 29 at 7 p.m. Both programs will be held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The fee for each program is \$10/Jewish LIFE Member and \$15/Guest. RSVP to the JCC office at 908-725-6994 x201. Additional details on Jewish LIFE programs, including course listings, are included in the Jewish LIFE brochure available in the synagogue office and posted at www.ssbjcc.org.

Intro to Judaism Class

Or Chadash in Flemington is offering an Intro to Judaism class. This 16-week class is sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism. While this class is appropriate for anyone who would like to learn more

about Reform Judaism, it is usually a requirement for anyone considering conversion. Also, the class is rarely offered anywhere near us, so it is a pretty rare opportunity. The URJ requires a minimum of 6 people before they can offer the class and so far they have 3. The class was originally supposed to start on Oct 24, but they're holding off until mid-November in hopes that they can find more participants. Registration information is on the URJ website: <http://urj.org/njwhvc/outreach/>.

Your Temple Board has decided that we can save approximately \$1000 annually by emailing the newsletter. Members that do not have email addresses will automatically receive the newsletter by regular mail as in the past. Members that prefer to continue receiving the newsletter by regular mail should respond to Lisa Bauch. This also may save a tree or two. Thank you for your support of this initiative.

James Arvesen, President, Jewish Center of North West Jersey.

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