



## Mark Your Calendar!

- Sunday, June 1, 9:30am  
Sunday School  
Annual Meeting  
10:45am Adult Ed/Pirke Avot
- Monday, June 2, 7:30pm  
Board Meeting
- Saturday, June 7, 10:30am  
Torah Study
- Sunday, June 8  
Sunday School Closing  
Assembly (K/1)  
Confirmation  
Shavuot Service
- Friday, June 13, 7:45  
Shabbat Service  
Oneg: Fesinstine family
- Saturday, June 14, 10:00am  
Bat Mitzvah, Jamie Fesinstine
- Sunday, June 15, 9:30am  
Men's Club Breakfast
- Saturday, June 21, 10:30am  
Torah Study
- Friday, July 25, 6:00pm  
Kabalat Shabbat Service  
followed by potluck dinner

**Rabbi Lewis's sermons are now on our Website!**  
Visit us at [www.jcnwj.org](http://www.jcnwj.org)

## Rabbi's Message

Now and then, something happens at the Jewish Center that makes me step back and think, "This is what it is all about." I had such a moment on May 4 when we celebrated Yom HaAtzma'ut in our Religious School. We wanted to do something different that would help the children appreciate Israel's importance. Based on something they learned in a teachers' training program last July, our teachers decided to create a school-wide game. Mike and Sally Weiner devised the game itself, which included dividing the school into multi-age teams and rotating them around different "stations" in the Temple. Post-b'nai mitzvah students and other adult Temple members staffed the stations. As they arrived at each station, the teams had to answer questions from relevant Jewish categories. Sometimes they had to act out their answers (e.g., demonstrate the correct body movements for a particular prayer). There was even a question designed for the youngest students alone. When the team got a correct answer, they received a piece of a giant puzzle. When all seven teams had completed their rounds, each team had seven pieces. The students gathered in the Simcha Room where they (with a little parental assistance) all helped in putting together the puzzle. As the puzzle pieces began to fit together, it became clear that the puzzle was becoming a map of Israel (lovingly painted in advance by Jane Kunzman).

Since the puzzle had 50 pieces in total, I held the final piece without which the puzzle could not be completed. That piece became a symbol of how important it is for us to make ourselves part of that giant puzzle we call the people Israel. Then we all sat down to an Israeli breakfast prepared by our PTO.

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## President's Message

Hopefully everyone liked my message in the last newsletter because these comments are an extension of that erudition. I thought I would take a stab at drilling down in one of the websites that I mentioned last time. Since I am still waiting for my Atzmi score (a score for Kabbalah orientation) I decided to not go there. In webspeak, drilling down is known as web-surfing. It helps if you are Bar/Bat Mitzvah age to perform these tasks. Since that was a few years ago for me, I required the patience of Job to find my perfect site.

It was found in [www.urj.org](http://www.urj.org), and I decided to click on the learning button. It happens to be a very good site, but I found it difficult to navigate. Nevertheless, I converged to the Q&A for conversion. I found it quite helpful. There were 13 questions (Passover is over, there were not four), and they must have resonated with me some fifteen years ago when I chose Judaism.

One does not wake up one morning and decide to "Choose Judaism." For me it was a process that was accelerated by our family's membership in Temple Beth Haverim in Mahwah. At that time, the shul was in an old firehouse. Our son Brandon was the last Bar Mitzvah there, and due to space constraints, possibly forty people were able to attend the service. Now, Beth Haverim, in a new building, has several hundred members. I would like to think it was due to Brandon's awesome Torah chanting. Being an active participant in this simcha

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That morning, everyone who participated felt what it is to be part of our Temple community. All ages were involved. The older students were the leaders who helped the younger children answer questions. Adults staffed the stations with the older students. We even grabbed some Temple members who had nothing to do with the school but who were around the building that day and asked them if they would help. There was a wonderful feeling of being part of something bigger, something transcendent.

That is what being part of a community is about, creating something as a group that would not be possible for any one person to create alone. That is the meaning of a congregational meeting. Yes, we meet to make financial decisions and to voice our recommendations about Temple priorities, but what we are really doing is carrying out the responsibility that belongs to each of us. "All Israel is responsible for one another," say the sages, and we attempt to live those words in a small rural outpost in northwest New Jersey. Every now and then, you are blessed with a moment where you can see it all come together.

May your summer be filled with blessed moments.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

## Annual Meeting

Dear Members of The JCNWJ,

I look forward to seeing you at our Congregation's Annual Meeting, Sunday, June 1. A breakfast buffet hosted by the PTO parents will be served at 9:30 a.m. and our meeting will start at 10:00 a.m. Following are the main items of business:

1. Welcome-State of the Temple
2. Brief presentation of committee reports
3. Discussion of proposed budget and dues
4. Voting on proposed budget and dues
5. New business

Thanks in advance for your continued interest and support.

Jim Arvesen

was one reason for my decision to choose Judaism.

I have gone off topic. Many questions arise as one walks through the possible paths to Judaism. They are all options. As with any life-changing event, one wants to learn as much as possible about the new changes that one considers embracing. The basics are the same in the new Internet Age as they were fifteen years ago.

Find a Rabbi that you are comfortable with. The Rabbi will help you through the process and be there for the rituals.

Take an Introduction to Judaism Course. On a periodic basis, our Temple has "A Taste of Judaism" course.

Historically, the Rabbi was obligated to turn the prospective convert away three times before allowing them to convert. This has never been an issue in Reform. Reform Rabbis are welcome to this opportunity and will discuss whatever might be getting in the way of the candidate choosing Judaism.

Along the way, you are reinforced by the Biblical passage from Ruth. "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for wither thou goest, I will go; and wither thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God..."

Now all that is left is the fun part. As Reform Jews, we are allowed to choose whether to visit the Mikvah. Everyone, even Jews, knows what baptism is. Well we invented it! The Mikvah ritual involves reciting the Shehecheyanu and other blessings while enjoying full-body immersion in running water. For me, it was a memorable experience. Serving as your president, I have been proud to participate as other congregants have participated in this ritual.

Just like Irving Berlin, many converts have an attachment to "White Christmas" and other holidays they have enjoyed in the past. One way to do this, and still be honest to one's conscience, is to enjoy other people's holidays with the other people. Just as non-Jews are welcome to come to our home for Passover and other holidays, I feel welcome at their homes for their holidays.

Some quick references for more information:

*Choosing Judaism*, Lydia Kukoff.

*Every Person's Guide to Judaism*, Rabbi S. Einstein, Lydia Kukoff

*What is a Jew?*, Rabbi M. Kertzner, rev. by Rabbi L. Hoffman

Shalom,  
Jim Arvesen  
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## Religious School/PTO Events

June 8th is the last day of Hebrew School and is the Confirmation Service — all of the Sunday School students will participate. Mazel Tov to Andrew Ostefeld and A.J. Seidorf, who are being confirmed. June 8th is also our Closing Assembly when the students will receive their progress reports and certificates.

Thank you to everyone — wonderful teachers, great teachers' helpers and the best PTO ever — for making this year so successful and special for our children.

During the summer (hopefully July) you can be looking for your registration packages for next school year 2008-2009. Please let Karen or Marsha know if you have a child or children who will be starting Kindergarten next year so we can send you a registration package for them.

Thank you again for a great year ... and have a wonderful summer!

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

## Eagle Scout Project

Andrew Seidorf (AJ), a member of Rabbi Lewis' Confirmation Class, is painting the first floor of the Temple as part of his Eagle Scout Project. This mitzvah needs our support too. He will need approximately \$1000 for the materials. We can make a donation to Boy Scout Troop 288 (get a tax deduction) and send the check to: Andrew J. Seidorf, 5 Grace Drive, Annandale, NJ 08801. AJ will then submit the checks to the Troop and purchase the materials.

## Torah Study Group Meetings

The final Torah study dates before the summer are June 7 and 21.

## Community Events

### Hebrew Chanting Circle

**Thursday, June 19, 7:30-9:00pm**

**Temple Sholom, 594 N. Bridge St., Bridgewater**

Looking for a way to clear your mind of clutter, relieve yourself of stress, and feel a sense of inner peace and wholeness? Then chanting may be just the thing! Led by Ronnie Weyl, who has studied Hebrew chanting with Rabbi Shefa Gold, the chanting circle learns simple Hebrew phrases from psalms or the Torah and sings them in repetition. The vibration of the words and the energy from singing aloud with others has the power to transform and uplift the spirit. You need no prior knowledge of singing, chanting, or Hebrew language to join us and have fun.

### Living Hopefully with a Chronic Illness or a Physical Challenge

**Wednesday, June 11, 7:30-9:00 PM**

**Jewish Family Services, 150-A High Street,  
Somerville, Fee: \$10.00**

Rabbi Robin Nafshi invites members of the community to join her for an informal discussion about living with a chronic illness or physical challenge. Rabbi Nafshi will share her own story (she lives with four chronic illnesses), welcome others to share their stories, and explore how Judaism can help us cope. According to a recent study, those patients with a deep, internalized faith recover faster from the depression than those without faith, even when their physical condition wasn't improving.

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