

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

# Journal

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www.jcnwj.org

Summer 2016  
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## Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

I hope you will all join us on **Friday Night, June 10**, as the JCNWJ community gathers for our annual **Confirmation** service. In years past, this service has taken place on Sunday mornings. This year, in order to elevate our joy (and enable more congregants to attend), we have chosen to conduct Confirmation on Shabbat, complete with Torah reading for the day.

Because June 10 is very close to the end of the school year, it might be assumed that we chose this date to *kvel* for that very reason. Such an assumption, however, while reasonable and logical, would also be wrong. Allow me to explain.

While it is commonly understood that the Jewish ceremony of Confirmation, which was developed and introduced at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Germany, developed at least in part out of a desire to include and honor participation in Jewish life not just by boys but by girls as well (for whom the ceremony of *Bat Mitzvah* had not yet been developed) this cannot have been the only reason. After all, while the first recorded Confirmation service occurred in 1803 (Dessau, Germany), the first girls were not confirmed until 1814 (Berlin, Germany). Still, though, inclusion of girls by 1814 should hardly be understood as an inconsequential event. It set the stage for so much more to come.

*Continued on the next page*

## Mark Your Calendar

- **Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm Shabbat Services Honoring High School Graduates & Confirmation Service  
Oneg: Bauer, Parson, and Perfetti Families
- **Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>**  
10:30 am Cantor's Class: *Who Were the Great American Songbook's Jewish Composers?*
- **Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>**  
9:30 am Last Day of Sunday School
- **Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm Shabbat Services  
Oneg: Shelofsky, Feinstein/Epstein, Koch, and Nathanson Families
- **Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>**  
10:30 am Lay-led Torah Study
- **Friday, July 15<sup>th</sup>**  
6 pm Potluck Dinner  
7:30 pm Shabbat Services
- **Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm Sisterhood Book Club
- **Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
10:30 am Lay-led Torah Study
- **Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>**  
6 pm Potluck Dinner  
7:30 pm Shabbat Services
- **Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup>**  
10:30 am Lay-led Torah Study

## Rabbi's Message (cont.)

This said, we cannot ignore the fact that at least part of the impetus for Jewish Confirmation came from an appreciation of its practice in the Christian world. As well, as I will discuss below, there was a growing dissatisfaction with the *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony as it stood at the time.

From Germany, the Jewish practice of Confirmation spread quickly, first to Denmark, Russia, and England, and then to the United States, where Isaac Mayer Wise presided over America's first Confirmation service as the Rabbi of Congregation Beth-El (Albany, NY) in 1846.

As Confirmation continued to find its place in American Judaism, Reform communities began in increasingly serious ways to question the legitimacy of *Bar Mitzvah* itself at 13 years of age (the first *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony didn't take place until Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan presided over his own daughter's coming of age on March 18, 1922). How, it was asked, could 13 possibly be the age of adulthood in the modern world? Therefore, not only did most Reform congregations (and many Conservative ones as well!) begin to emphasize Confirmation, but many (including B'nai Israel of Albany, GA where I served as a student rabbi during Rabbinical School) went so far as to actually **ban** the practice of *B'nei Mitzvah* at 13. It wasn't until the 1970s that this prohibition came to be lifted in many communities. By then, however, Confirmation had become so ingrained in the Reform mindset that it has continued to stand as a major life-cycle event in the lives of our young people and, indeed, our entire communities, ever since.

And so now, back to the timing of our Confirmation service. It is no accident that we celebrate Confirmation during the second week of June this year, because this is also when Jews around the world (on the evening of June 11, 2016) will come together to usher in the festival of Shavuot. Confirmation is perfectly suited for this holiday because it is at this moment in the Jewish calendar that we commemorate and celebrate our receiving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. At its core, Shavuot is about accepting responsibility. Our Confirmands, through their previous celebrations of becoming *B'not Mitzvah*, have already shown themselves capable of performing the fundamental rites of Judaism. Now, at Confirmation, it is different. Now, with some years of further maturation behind them, they are now ready and willing to (re)confirm their acceptance of responsibility to live lives of Jewish commitment.

Our Confirmation Shabbat service will take place Friday night, June 10, at 7:30. We look forward to seeing you all there.

L'Shalom,

*Rabbi Dubin*

### Who Were the Great American Songbook's Jewish Composers?

With Cantor Labow

Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am

Learn about some composers you know well and others that are not so well known. Sing along to some of their tunes.

### Summer Services

**Friday, July 15**

Potluck Dinner at 6 pm, followed by services

**Friday, August 19**

Potluck Dinner at 6 pm, followed by services

## President's Message

To quote my good friend and former temple member Lenny Bloch, "Don't just be good, be good for something."

How Jewish is that statement? The Torah commands us to repair the world. We are not obligated to complete the task, but nor are we relieved of the duty of doing our part. There isn't a member of our congregation I know of that does not do some good to make the world a better place. Some of us donate to charities, some of us donate our time to help others, some of us raise money for good causes. There are even those among our congregation who start their own charities. Whatever you plan on doing this summer, try to incorporate a little Tikkun Olam in your plans. Do it on your own terms, because if you do something from your heart and you enjoy what you are doing, it becomes a labor of love. Every time I volunteer or make a contribution or run a board meeting, I always feel a little better about the shape that the world is in.

If you listen to enough news, it seems like the world is in total disarray. If you look at all the good that people are doing quietly and without reward (or television or internet coverage), I think that you will find the world is a much better place than what the media portrays. BUT, that does not mean there are not things to be done, and people and animals that need our help. Make the JCNWJ proud of the charities you work for.

I would love for you to send me a list of the organizations that you donate your time to. I will use this as part of my Yom Kippur speech. I will not list any names, but I will list the organizations that we are supporting with our time. If you want to send me the names of the organizations and not include your name, that is just as good. I simply want the congregation to know that all of our good deeds are not only for our temple, but that we walk the walk in terms of assisting those in need.

Have a wonderful summer.

Love,

*Howie Hirsch*

# MAZEL TOV

**To the Class of 2016 Confirmands of the  
JCNWJ:**

Jill F., Jill W., Lauren, and Mikaela

**To the Class of 2016 High School Graduates  
of the JCNWJ:**

Abby, A.J., Conner, and Hailey

## 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).**

### **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.

# SISTERHOOD

May was a very busy month for the Sisterhood. We started off the month with a wonderful Sisterhood Tea which was both well attended and immensely enjoyed by attendees. The Sisterhood would like to thank the Social Committee for organizing the event (Marsha Gross, Marci Braunstein and Deb Kalisher) and Marci Braunstein for hosting the tea at her beautiful home.

The Sisterhood also provided a meal for Family Promise at the Harmony Presbyterian Church. A big thank you to Ruth Schutzbank for her food donations and for delivering the meal. Continuing their dedication to community service, the Sisterhood also put together activity bags for the Jersey Battered Women's Shelter. Thank you to Marci Braunstein for setting up the event and organizing the donations.

The Sisterhood Bookclub will meet over the summer; watch your emails for more information about date, time and book.



“The Sisterhood is full of heart and sprung into action immediately upon hearing of the need.”

~Marci Braunstein

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