

## President's Message February 2014

When I was a kid, the only means to learn about Judaism were through your parents, by attending Shabbat services, and Hebrew School. I resisted having to spend 5 to 8 hours each week at temple. Books on the subject were not readily obtainable, not to mention they were lengthy and not particularly kid-friendly. There was no internet with endless information. I never took an interest in learning the numerous Torah stories nor the meanings of the prayers that we recite at a Friday service. I learned about a few holidays, Hanukkah, Purim and Passover, but not all of them. I did not want to spend what I then perceived would be a lot of time learning about Judaism. After all, I had sports to play with my friends.

With the advent of the internet and e-mail, I have found that learning Judaism is not onerous. I now am finding the stories to be interesting, not terribly lengthy, and meaningful and applicable to our daily lives. Why is my interest piqued now and not when I was a kid?

After becoming President of the JCNWJ, I began receiving e-mails from a multitude of Jewish organizations. The one e-mail that has grabbed my attention is from [ReformJudaism.org](http://ReformJudaism.org). I receive it every Friday morning at 5:15 am (no, I don't read it at that early hour). The e-mail takes but a few minutes to read. It includes a segment entitled "Ten Minutes of Torah". The weekly Torah parashah is concisely summarized and analyzed.

Past e-mails have included blurbs on "Food & Cooking" (recipes), Teaching Kids about Tzedakah and "Ask A Rabbi", which provides a Q&A opportunity. One of the recent questions asked was, "Why is it traditional to have two Challot on Shabbat?" Yes, we at the JCNWJ do have two Challot at our onegs.

If you are really hungry to learn, you can peruse the website [www.reformjudaism.org](http://www.reformjudaism.org). Its structure offers a drop down menu for Jewish Holidays, Jewish Life (arts, culture, interfaith, parenting, family activities), Practice (rituals, prayers and blessings), Learning (including a Jewish glossary), Social Justice (Jewish views on political topics) and Israel.

Today, there is information provided from one e-mail and one website all at your fingertips (this is not a paid plug). I learned about the festive holiday of "Lag BaOmer", the origin of Mandelbrot, which means "almond bread" in Yiddish (you can make it with chocolate chips) and that the two challot are used as a remembrance of the double portion of manna (cakes or wafer-like) that fell in the desert so that no Jew should have to gather food on Shabbat (Exodus 16:22-32).

As I did, I hope each of you can find something that piques your interest and fulfills your life-long Jewish learning. And that what you learn you share with your children, our congregants, and our community.

Mo Bauer

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