

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey



Journal



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Rabbi's message

One day some years ago when my kids were in Valley View Middle School in Watchung, I went to pick them up with a friend who had come to visit. We walked right into the side door and down the hall to their classrooms. My friend marveled at the ease of entry and the friendliness of the kids and teachers. Her son attended a large middle school in Rhode Island. Due to its strict security procedures, you couldn't just walk in casually the way we had.

That world is gone now. Long before the shootings at Newtown, that world had disappeared due to increasing awareness of needing to protect our children. We couldn't rely naively on living in communities that simply felt safe; we had to do things to insure safety. So we locked the outside doors to the school and restricted access to everyone, even to well-meaning parents. Does that prevent a deranged gunman from getting into the school by breaking a window? Of course it doesn't. But that possibility also doesn't justify the NRA's solution of arming teachers and school guards.

We can debate the intention of those who drafted the 2nd amendment just as we can debate what the ancient rabbis would have said about all this. We can wonder if the Holocaust would have been less destructive if Jews had owned guns and we can debate whether it could happen here. We can point out that Israeli schools have armed guards outside the school and we can argue that we are not a country at war as Israel is. We can point out that the Reform and Conservative movements in this country support gun control legislation while the mainstream Orthodox community has been largely silent.

All of this is instructive and interesting but for me it begs the point. The drafters of the US Constitution did the best that those leaders could do and gave us a framework that has accommodated change. The ancient rabbis lived then and there, not here and now. Both those legislators and the rabbis understood that laws and religious tradition need to be resilient to remain relevant. As a serious Reform Jew, I believe both in the wisdom of the sages and also in the wisdom that emanates from leaders and scholars of our own time. I believe that revelation wasn't frozen once for all time but continues to inform us as our times change. And I have no doubt that gun control is at least a part of the answer. Last week, Rabbi David Saperstein of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, convened a meeting in Washington of interfaith religious leaders. This is a part of what he said in his remarks:

"Is the need for sensible gun-control a religious issue?"

You bet it is.

The indiscriminate distribution of guns is an offense against God and humanity.

Our gun-flooded, violence-prone society has turned weapons into idols. And the appropriate religious response to idolatry is sustained moral outrage.

What manner of nation are we that in the face of overwhelming support for stronger gun control, we can bring ourselves to legislate only the most anemic controls for the bloodiest problem we face? What manner of people are we that we can accept that we have lost more people to gun violence on our streets and in our homes than we have to all the wars in the history of our nation, more children every year than our brothers and sisters who perished on 9/11? The victims of violence overwhelm our emergency rooms, requiring the costliest of care, erode confidence in our communal institutions, and undermine our political, educational and civic institutions.

It doesn't have to be that way."

I agree completely with Rabbi Saperstein. Yes, there are other things we need to do in addition to drafting gun control legislation. There is serious work to be done in providing access to good healthcare for all, including mental health. And yes, Anne Curry's inspiration via twitter that we should perform 26 acts of kindness in memory of those killed in Newtown is an idea no one can argue with. In the face of evil, we strive to do good.

But what happened in Newtown reminds us that good deeds done by good people are not enough. Life is too precious to leave it up to good will.

Between Hurricane Sandy and Newtown, we have lived through a sobering few months. As we enter this secular new year of 2013, I am ever more grateful for the love of this community. May this new year bring a new era of caring and of peace for us all.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis



President's message

For all of you who were able to make it to New York City on December 2nd to participate in the Voices against Brain Cancer event, you all know how emotional a day it was. One of the ways that we can come together as a community is to help our members when they need us. To see the number of people that were there that day from the congregation was wonderful to see. As I was taking a picture of "Friends of Mike" after the awards ceremony, it was surreal to see so many people there to support Mike. I know that he appreciated it immensely, and the support he is receiving from his family and friends as well as the congregation is helping feed his drive to beat this disease.

As we turn to a new secular year, my wish for the entire congregation remains constant from my wishes every year. First of all, may you enjoy good health in 2013. May you find peace within yourself. May you make a commitment to helping others. And lastly, make a commitment to involve yourself in our Jewish community wherever and whenever you can. Try to make as many Friday night services as you can and join us for Shabbat. Shabbat really is the most important day in the Jewish year, and it is wonderful when we are together.

He Nay Mah Tov, U'man-ay-im, Shevet Ach-im Gam ya-chad.

Love to you all,
Howie



Mark your Calendar

Sunday, Jan. 6	9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m.	Sunday school Confirmation B'nai Mitzvah workshop/brunch
Monday, Jan. 7	7:30 p.m.	Board meeting
Friday, Jan. 11	7:30 p.m.	Shabbat Service Oneg: Knobelman, Tarlowe, Orenstein families
Sunday, Jan. 13	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Sunday School Sisterhood
Saturday, Jan. 19	10:30 a.m.	Torah study
Sunday, Jan. 20	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m.	Sunday school PTO meeting Adult Education Tentative Torah signing
Monday, Jan. 21	7:00 p.m.	Book club
Friday, Jan. 25	7:30 p.m.	Shabbat Services/Sermon in Song by Cantor Goldmann Oneg: Friedlander, Hall, Weiner, Fitzsimmons families
Sunday, Jan. 27	9:30 a.m.	Sunday School

Now that Chanukah is over it is time to focus on the wonderful holiday of Purim! This means that it is time to gather up any willing adults to put together a purim spiel for the enjoyment of our Hebrew School kids!

For a truly fun experience please join me, the director, for this year's spiel, THE LION KING.

There will be 1-hour practices Sunday mornings in January and February, with the performance on Feb. 24th during Hebrew School.

Please consider joining in. It is well worth it! Just email me your willingness to participate.
Debbie Fesinstine debfez@comcast.net



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE RITUAL COMMITTEE

B'nai Mitzvah Brunch Meeting for Class of 2014 on Sunday January 6 from 12 pm to 2 pm

Cantor Elizabeth Goldmann will be presenting a "sermon in song" at the Shabbat service scheduled for Friday, January 25.

Honoring Family Members and Friends

If you would like to honor a loved one, whether family member or friend, living or deceased, there are a number of ways to do so within the tradition of *tzedakah* to the synagogue. You may purchase a memorial plaque for the memorial board (\$325), a pew plaque (\$250), a leaf on the Simcha Tree (\$180), a prayer book dedication (\$36), or a donation card (for any occasion, \$5 and up).

If you have a professional activity that you want the congregation to know about, please let us know in time to make the newsletter deadline for that month.



Education/PTO

January is a month to wind down from the holidays. Hope yours were happy! Hebrew School resumes on **January 6th, 2013** after two weeks off for winter break. Happy New Year to you all. Confirmation class meets on **January 6th** at 10:30 a.m.

We have a PTO meeting on **January 20th** at 9:30 a.m. Then, on **January 27th**, the Hebrew School students will enjoy our annual Tu B'Shvat seder. Confirmation class meets again on **February 3rd**, and there is also a PTO meeting scheduled for **February 3rd**.

Marsha Gross, Education Chair

Contribution



In honor of Michael Weiner
Iris and Howie Hirsch
Jamie Cicerelle and Family

In honor of Jeannie Berkowitz's conversion
Robin and Colson Hall
Nancy and Bernie Robins

In honor of the engagement of Daniel Hall and Nicola Haag
Robin and Colson Hall

In honor of Rabbi Lewis' 18th year
Rabbi Michael and Judy Weinberg

In memory Max Weil
Ruth Schutzbank

In memory of William Robins
Bernard Robins

In memory of Jean Siegal
Rhonda Jordan

In memory of Rita Hecht
Rona and Stan Schick

In memory of Jessica Hirsch
Iris and Howie Hirsch

In memory of Jack Zemel
Ralph Zemel

In memory of Laurette Pinn
Helen Mattson

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Mo and Tracey Bauer in honor of Mikaela's becoming bat mitzvah.



Sisterhood News

Purim is a time for gift giving The JCNWJ Sisterhood is once again sponsoring the wonderful Mishloach Manot fundraiser for Purim February 24, 2013. This is a great occasion to give sweets and gifts to your friends, family and co-workers.

Every Temple family participating will receive one small bag of hamantaschen. In each hamantaschen bag is a card identifying the family(ies) that contributed to your gift with special acknowledgement to you. Like last year, each Temple family will be mailed the forms to purchase a hamantaschen bag to send to other for Temple members or to purchase extra hamantaschen bags for family and friends.

Although each Temple family will receive only one hamantaschen bag, you may make your purchases for as many families as you wish.

This year your generous contributions will go directly toward the purchase of an AED-Automated External Defibrillator, a [portable electronic device](#) that automatically diagnoses the potentially life threatening [cardiac arrhythmias](#) and is able to treat them through [defibrillation](#). With simple audio and visual commands, AEDs are designed to be easy to use for the layman. The use of AEDs is taught in many [first aid](#), [first responder](#), and [basic life support](#) (BLS) level [CPR](#) classes.

For more information about Mishloach Manot, and to get the forms for this event, check your mail and the temple web site at www.jcnwj.org in January 2013.

Remember that every dollar contributed will go toward making our Temple a better place!

Sisterhood sing-along at Clover Nursing Home



Upcoming Jewish LIFE Special Events include:

Iris Krasnow, author of *The Secret Lives of Wives*, Wednesday, January 9, 12 Noon at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Iris Krasnow is a New York Times best-selling author and specialized in celebrity profiles. *The Secret Lives of Wives* is a composite of 200 interviews, conducted by Iris with women married from 15 to 70 years. Program fee includes Lunch & Program: \$18/person in advance or \$22/person at the door. *Advance registrations required.*

Simcha Weinstein, author of *The Case for Children: Why Parenthood Makes your World Better*, Thursday, January 17, 7 pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Rabbi Simcha Weinstein is a best-selling author and speaker. He has appeared on CNN and has been profiled in leading publications. His groundbreaking book explores the benefits of Parenthood bring to individuals and society and provides strong evidence that contradicts many modern myths of parenthood. Fee: \$8/person in advance; \$10/person at the door.

Coming in February...

The Irma Horowitz Film Series, featuring Israeli short films, Thursday, February 7, 6:30 pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. The following films will be presented by Ma'Alen School of Televisions Film and the Arts in Jerusalem: *"Barriers"*, *"Stand Up"* and *"Cheftzi on Air"*. Fee includes falafel dinner: \$10/person in advance; \$15/person at the door. *Advance registration requested.*

Step Up for Israel Film Series, *Crossing the Line: The Intifada Comes to Campus*, Thursday, February 13, 7 pm at the Birnbaum JCC. Free to the community.

Reuven Firestone, *Holy War in Judaism: The Fall and Rise of a Controversial Idea*, Tuesday, February 12, 7pm at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Reuven Firestone identifies, analyzes and explains the historical, conceptual and the intellectual processes that revived holy war ideas in modern Judaism. Fee: : \$8/person in advance; \$10/person at the door.

Feburary Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles, advertisements and photos to be included in the January issue is January 19, 2013. Please email articles, ideas or news items to Journal Editor, Barbara Simons at bjbs@comcast.net



Jewish LIFE

special events

Wednesday, January 9

Iris Krasnow

The Secret Lives of Wives

Wednesday, January 9

12 NOON

Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, 775 Talamini Rd., Bridgewater

\$18/advance-\$22/door includes Program & Luncheon



Iris Krasnow is a New York Times best-selling author and specialized in celebrity profiles, including Yoko Ono, Billy Graham, Ted Kennedy, and many more. She is a longtime professor and Academic Director of Washington Journalism Semester at American University in Washington, D.C. Her writing has been featured in many national publications including The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. Iris has been a guest on numerous national television and radio programs including Oprah, Good Morning America and has been featured on CNN several times. *The Secret Lives of Wives* is a composite of 200 interviews conducted by Iris with women married from 15 to 70 years. Fresh, honest, and bold, Iris parts the curtain and reveals uncensored real-life confessions of what it really takes to keep the promise "till death do us part"—without killing someone first. The real secret to happily-ever-after, says Iris, is to have your own passions and not to expect a spouse to make you happy.

Co-sponsored by the Brandeis National Committee Somerset Chapter; Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Sisterhood; Temple Beth El, Somerset Sisterhood and Temple Shalom Sisterhood

Program
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Jewish LIFE

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Jewish LIFE

special events

Thursday, January 17

Simcha Weinstein

The Case for Children:

Why Parenthood Makes Your World Better

Thursday, January 17

7:00 pm

Hosted by the JCC

\$8/advance-\$10/door



Rabbi Simcha Weinstein is a best-selling author and speaker. He has appeared on CNN's Showbiz Tonight and PPR, and has been profiled in leading publications, including The New York Times, The Miami Herald, and The London Guardian. His groundbreaking book explores the benefit that parenthood brings to individuals and society and provides strong evidence that contradicts many modern myths of Parenthood. Quite simply, parenthood makes your world physically, materially, and spiritually better.

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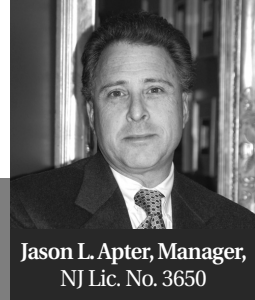
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