

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

PO Box 2, 115 Youmans Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882
(908) 689-0762
www.jcnwj.org

January 2014
Vol. XXXIX Issue 5



Rabbi's Message

Tu Bishvat: Zionism vs. Environmentalism

This time of year is tough on those of us who enjoy gardening. My pots are tucked away, the last wilted blossoms were pruned weeks ago, and the ground has finally reached its deep freeze. In the winter I can only dream over seed catalogues, as I eat fruit and vegetables imported from far off places.

While Chanukah gives us light at the darkest part of the year, Tu Bishvat reconnects us back to the earth when we are most distant from it. Falling on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shvat (starting at sunset on January 15th this year), this minor holiday marks the new year of the trees. Of course, the holiday is linked to Israel's climate and agrarian cycle. In Israel, winter is marked by colder weather, but more importantly it provides needed rain. By the 15th of Shvat, the rains have nourished the earth and the weather is starting to shift away from the cold. As a result, the sap rises again in the trees. It is not spring yet, but the seasonal transformation has begun. Yet, here in the Northeast, it is not time to put away our shovels; we have plenty more winter ahead.

For us, the Jews of New Jersey, Tu Bishvat can provide two important tether points to our tradition. First, the holiday emphasizes our connection to Israel. All of our agrarian based holidays force us to celebrate on Israel's seasonal cycle.

continued on next page

Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, January 5th**
9:30am Sunday School
10:30am Confirmation
- **Monday, January 6th**
7:30pm Board Meeting
- **Friday, January 10th**
7pm Shabbat Music Preview with Cantor Lilah Sugarman
7:30pm Shabbat Service
Oneg: Fitzsimmons, Friedlander, Hall, and Santillo Families
- **Sunday, January 12th**
9:30am Sunday School (K/1)(Music)
10:30am Tu Bishvat Service
- **Monday, January 13th**
7:30pm Adult Education
- **Sunday, January 19th**
9:30am Sunday School
10:30am Sisterhood
- **Friday, January 24th**
7:30pm Shabbat Service
In honor of Sharon Herson and Risa Smith's Birthdays
Oneg: Herson, Smith, and Parson families
- **Sunday, January 26th**
9:30am Sunday School (K/1) (Music)

Rabbi's Message (cont.)

New Jersey may share the same shape, size and hemisphere as Israel, but the climate is different. Like all agrarian holidays, Tu Bishvat points Diaspora Jews back to Israel. To quote Yehudah Halevi, "My heart is in the East, and I am at the ends of the West." If we lived in the southern hemisphere, this contrast would be more apparent when we consider the timing of our holidays.

The second tether point is to the environment. Our celebration of the trees provides a perfect time to emphasize our Jewish environmental values, to heighten the call to be responsible *shomrei adamah*, guardians of the earth. God has given humanity this amazing gift which we communally squander daily. Tu Bishvat is the ideal time to teach Jewish environmentalism.

The trick is to balance these often bifurcated themes which live within one small holiday. At a time when American Jews are more and more distant from Israel, we need to come out of our own Zionist dormancy and connect to our homeland. Yet, it is often easier and safer to talk about caring for the earth. After all, who can get angry at saying we should love the trees. Therefore, the challenge is not to forsake one good value for another, but rather to allow them to coexist and flourish together.

Tu Bishvat is a holiday for all ages. For children, we must teach both values, Zionism and Environmentalism, in our communal celebrations. We can use a seder incorporating both values. For example, we can feature by using Israeli produce and highlighting Israeli environmental successes like drip irrigation and electric cars. For adults, we can openly challenge our community to think about the dichotomy of Zionism vs. Environmentalism in our holiday and to seek an integration of these Jewish values. As Psalm 137:5 teaches, "If I forget you, O' Jerusalem" We need not forget Israel in order to celebrate the trees.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Mary Zamore

If you, a family member or temple friend is ill or facing a life challenge, please know that Rabbi Zamore is here to help. Please contact in confidence Rabbi Zamore at zamorem@comcast.net or call her at (908) 317-0417.

Opportunities for Teens, College Students, and Beyond!

Are you a Teen Mitzvah Hero? You may be able to win \$36,000!

<http://www.dillerteenawards.org/nominations-applications/2014-sharing>

Paid Internship March – October 2014. Learn about the environment, farming, & Jewish education on a Jewish Organic Farm. No experience needed.

<http://pearlstonecenter.org/apprenticeship/>

College grad? Want to do something interesting, meaningful and cheap? Teach English in Israel

<http://www.israelteachingfellows.org/>

Shabbat Music Preview!

Join our Student Cantor Lilah Sugarman on **Friday, January 10th at 7pm**, for joyful singing, as she teaches some of the newer music from our Shabbat service. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our rich musical traditions.

Like Us On  **facebook**

The JCNWJ is now on Facebook. Visit www.facebook.com/jcnwj and give us a "like." We will keep you up to date on programming and other helpful information. Your feedback is welcome and encouraged. Post a message on our page and let us know what kind of content you would like to see on our virtual congregation.

President's Message

Tis the season. Hanukkah, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years. It is a busy time for an interfaith family and possibly a confusing time for a young child of an interfaith family being raised Jewish. I personally have first-hand experience, having grown up in a small Christian town in Western Maryland with an interfaith family.

My mother converted to Judaism to marry my father, who was raised orthodox in New York City. My mother brought to the marriage my two oldest brothers, who were then 7 and 10 years old. My father couldn't possibly take Christmas away from my brothers, and, thus, he allowed for a Christmas Tree and the interior of our house to be adorned with Christmas lights. My mother's family never missed a Sunday church service and one of my aunts was ordained as a minister. My mother's family hosted an annual Christmas party for my 25 cousins. I think I won the Christmas prize every year.

For many of my school years, I was the only Jewish student in the classroom. I was the only Jewish student in my high school graduating class. My teachers decorated the classroom for Christmas, the weekly spelling list was full of Christmas-related words and we were taught Christmas carols. My 10th grade English teacher was aware that I was Jewish and she added some Hanukkah words to our spelling list, and she asked me to discuss Hanukkah with the class.

I could easily have struggled with my religion, become shy about being Jewish or confused during the holiday season, but I did not. I attribute my religious pride to my parents. My parents were pro-active with me at an early age in educating me about other religions, comparing them to Judaism and most importantly, expressing the import of our heritage and how proud I should be of being Jewish, and its values.

I took my parents lead and explained Hanukkah to my classroom peers. I compared the family gathering and gift giving of Hanukkah to that of Christmas. I think my friends were jealous of the eight nights of gifts. I shared the story of the Maccabees and taught my classmates the draydel game. I clearly had a decided advantage. My friends even tried latkes, a delicacy that they never would have enjoyed, but for knowing me.

In reading this, you may think I made it a competition, Hanukkah vs. Christmas. I did not. I did not present Hanukkah as "better" or "right." Rather, I took the opportunity to show my teachers and classmates what happy holidays meant to me. For us all, it meant the season of bringing families together.

Hoping you each enjoyed your families this holiday season.

Mo Bauer

Picnic Shabbat

On Friday, January 10, Rabbi Zamore and Student Cantor Lilah will be at the temple at 6:15 p.m. with their 'picnic Shabbat dinner'. They welcome any congregant wishing to join them to bring their own 'brown bag' picnic Shabbat dairy dinner for some informal pre-service time together. They will provide wine and Challah!



Contributions

- ☆ In honor of Paul May's Birthday
 - Helen and John Mattson
 - Marian and Mark Berkin
 - Nancy and Bernie Robins
- ☆ In honor of and in thanks to Helen Mattson
 - Barrie Cohen and Mirril McMullen
- ☆ A gift to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in appreciation of Rabbi Zamore's support
 - Barrie Cohen and Mirril McMullen
- ☆ In memory of Michael Weiner
 - Ruth and Howard Schutzbank
 - Rona and Stanley Schick
 - Sharon Herson, Daniel Fleckles, and Edythe Herson
 - Jeannie and Jeff Berkowitz
 - Nancy and Bernie Robins
 - The Goldmann Family – Cantor Elizabeth, Michael, Shira, and Noah
- ☆ In memory of Jessica Hirsch
 - Iris and Howie Hirsch
- ☆ In memory of Sally Zemel and Jack Zemel
 - Ralph Zemel
- ☆ In memory of Sarah Zeiden and Laurette Pinn
 - Helen and John Mattson
- ☆ In memory of Shelley Herson and Richard Herson
 - Sharon Herson, Daniel Fleckles, and Edythe Herson
- ☆ In memory of William Robins
 - Nancy and Bernie Robins

Sisterhood's Mishloach Manot Fundraiser

The JCNWJ Sisterhood is once again sponsoring the wonderful Mishloach Manot fundraiser for Purim (March 15, 2014). 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 or families 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 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.

Remember that all contributions benefit our Temple! This year your generous contributions will go directly toward the purchase and installation of an outdoor shed. This shed will store our Sukkah as well as other materials for our Temple and Sunday School. For more information, and to get the forms for this event, check your mail and the Temple website, www.jcnwj.org, by the end of January.

~ Sisterhood



☆ In memory of Rita Hecht
- Rona and Stanley Schick

☆ In memory of Ellen Fuld
- Alison and Andrew Shelofsky

Adult Education

Join Rabbi Zamore as we continue the exploration of food, food production and Judaism. Rabbi Zamore's book on this topic The Sacred Table: Creating a Jewish Food Ethic was a National Jewish Book Award Finalist. Come to one session or come to all!

Mondays, 7:30pm: Dec. 9, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, March 10, April 7, May 12, June 9

News About Our Members

Someone in your family receive an honor? Achieve some goal? Perform an outstanding mitzvah? If you'd like to let JCNWJ members know about it in the newsletter, please send the information in "ready to print" form to Mo Bauer at jcnwjprez@jcnwj.org.

Memorial Plaques

Anyone interested in purchasing a permanent bronze memorial plaque to honor a loved one in your family, please contact Lois Goldberg at DewieandLouie7@verizon.net.

Confirmation Class

Next Confirmation class is January 5th at 10:30am. It is never too late to join confirmation!

THINK TALENT

The Spring Talent Show is looking for a date. If you are interested in participating, work on your talent: singing, playing an instrument, dancing, poetry reading, etc. Children and adults, you are welcomed to strut your stuff. After the show we will all celebrate with ice cream sundaes. Auditions will be held during the Purim Carnival.

Thank You

To Karen Finkelstein for organizing the Hunterdon Developmental Center Hanukkah Gift Drive and for delivering the gifts to the Center. The JCNWJ helped make the residents' holidays a little bit brighter

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.

Money for Summer Camp 2014

<http://www.onehappycampernj.org/>

Work at Camp

Not just a good summer job for teens and 20 year olds! Also, an affordable way to have your kids enjoy camp!

www.jewishcamp.org/camp-jobs

February Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles and advertisements to be included in the February Issue of the JCNWJ Journal is **January 19, 2014**. Please email articles, photographs, or news items to the Journal Editor, Abby Bauer at abbybauer@comcast.net.

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) or Ruth Schutzbank (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.

Jewish LIFE is pleased to present: **Dr. Robert Harris**, Associate Professor of Bible at The Jewish Theological Seminary, will present *Jews and Christians Read Scripture*, Thursday, January 30 at 7 p.m. Dr. Harris will be examining the commonalities as well as the differences between Jews and Christians in medieval biblical study; the relationships and mutual influences that Rabbis and churchmen had on one another (particularly in northern France) and, in particular, the polemics through which they typically interacted. The program will be hosted by the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The event fee is \$8/person in advance and \$10/person.

Ryan Murray will discuss *Anti-Semitism in the 21st Century: An Ongoing Threat*, on Thursday, February 27 at 7 p.m. at the Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater.

Many incidents of anti-Semitism receive limited media attention, and yet it is only through recognition and education that the threat of anti-Semitism can effectively be countered. Mr. Murray teaches a widely popular course titled "Holocaust & Genocide" at Watching Hills Regional High School in Warren, NJ. In 2012, Mr. Murray was awarded the Jack Zaifman Humanitarian Award for his work in Holocaust education. The program will be hosted by the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The event fee is \$8/person in advance and \$10/person at the door.

To register for Jewish LIFE Programs, please call the Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

Thank you for supporting Jewish LIFE.

WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN YOU MAKE?

ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

The difference for the Levin Family?
Highly professional family counseling
during a particularly rocky time.

ACT NOW
(973) 929-3198
www.jfedgmw.org

Jewish Federation*
OF GREATER METROWEST NJ
90
1923-2013



MUHEISEN'S BAKERY

- * ARTISAN BREADS
- * ITALIAN PASTRIES
- * ITALIAN COOKIES



- * CHEESE CAKES
- * WEDDING CAKES
- * BIRTHDAY CAKES



217 WEST WASHINGTON AVE
WASHINGTON, NJ 07882



PHONE: 908.689.4100
FAX: 908.689.4177



WARREN HILLS MEMORIAL HOME

234 W Washington Ave
Washington, NJ 07882
908-689-0119

THEODORE PLATE & CO *Jewelers* Since 1857

179 Main Street
Hackettstown, NJ

908-852-3224
Fax: 908-852-7663