

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey



## Journal



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[www.jcnwj.org](http://www.jcnwj.org)

February 2010  
Vol. XXXVI, Issue 6

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- \*Monday, Feb. 1, 7:30 pm  
Board Meeting
- \*Tuesday, Feb. 2, 7:00 pm  
Adult Hebrew Class
- \*Friday, Feb. 5, 7:30 pm  
Shabbat Services  
Oneg: Dorman/Cafaro, Hirshberg,  
Sonzogni, and Hirsch families
- \*Sunday, Feb. 7  
9:30 am Sunday School (K/1)  
(Music), Men's Club, and Sisterhood  
10:30 am Confirmation Class  
12:00 pm B'nai Mitzvah Brunch
- \*Tuesday, Feb. 9, 7:00 pm  
Adult Hebrew Class
- \*Sunday, Feb. 14  
No Sunday School
- \*Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7:00 pm  
Adult Hebrew Class
- \*Friday, Feb. 19, 7:00 pm  
Lay Lead Shabbat Service  
Oneg: Gross, Marr, Stanton, and  
Bloch families
- \*Sunday, Feb. 21, 9:30 am  
Sunday School  
10:00 am Purim Spiel Rehearsal
- \*Tuesday, Feb. 23, 7:00 pm  
Adult Hebrew Class
- \*Saturday, Feb. 27, 3:00 pm  
Purim Spiel Dress Rehearsal
- \*Sunday, Feb. 28  
9:30 am Sunday School (K/1)  
10:30 am Megillah Reading  
12:00 pm Purim Carnival and Talent  
Show Auditions

### *Rabbi's Message*

As I watched the earthquake disaster unfold in Haiti, I felt like I had been handed the answer to the question I posed here last month: What is the function of our new *tzedakah* box? Is there any way for us to hear of that devastation and not feel compelled to give what we can? The numbers of dead defy comprehension. The numbers of the orphaned, the injured, and the gravely ill are likely to grow. It is our religious obligation to give whatever we have.

It is hard not to feel helpless in the face of this and every tragedy, but helplessness can lead us to look for hasty answers. The news has reported them all. Haiti is so corrupt, this is why it happened; its leaders don't care about the people, this is why it happened. Evangelist Pat Robertson was quoted as saying that the country has been "cursed by one thing after another" since they "swore a pact to the devil." We feel tempted to lay blame as a way of comforting ourselves and rationalizing our own fears.

Jewish tradition, however, teaches that this isn't the moment to ask why. When lives are at stake, we act first and ask later. The JTA wire service reported:

The Israel Defense Forces was the first major Israeli team to arrive. Team members reached Haiti last Friday on a flight loaded with military and civilian medical personnel from all over Israel, rescue teams, search dogs and supplies. While Port-au-Prince's hospitals were rendered mostly useless by the quake, the IDF team set up a field hospital near a soccer stadium to treat survivors. It was one of the only places Haitians could receive advanced medical treatment in the city. "The Israeli field hospital is phenomenal," [reported] Dr. Richard Besser of ABC News "Good Morning America." "They were up and running on Saturday morning, way ahead of the United States hospital."

Another reporter said the Israeli field hospital is the "Rolls Royce of medical care." One grateful Haitian mother, whose baby was delivered at the field hospital, has decided to give her baby the name Israel. You may have read about ZAKA, an Israeli volunteer rescue team that immediately deployed to Haiti as they had to New Orleans after Katrina. ZAKA's workers consist of traditional Jews who would not customarily work on Shabbat. In this case, they kept working as Shabbat began: "There was not really a Shabbat, but on Friday night we said Kiddush with delegations from Mexico, England, and Scotland," commander of the ZAKA mission to Haiti, Mati Goldstein, told Ynet. "With all the hell going on outside, even when things get bad Judaism says we must take a deep breath and go on to save more people." Our tradition teaches that the saving of a life supersedes Shabbat.

*Continued on Page 2*

## President's Message

This month has been a revelation to me. My wife Iris has been recovering from surgery and all I can do is marvel at the support we have received from this congregation. From the folks who bring us food so I have time to do other things besides cook, to the folks who have offered us rides, or to go to the store for us. The phone calls asking how Iris is doing and if there is anything that we need are all appreciated. I cannot express my gratitude and thankfulness enough to all of you.

In dealing with our family issues, a worldwide tragedy struck in Haiti. When you look at the pictures and stories coming from there, it makes you realize that we are blessed, even when we are going through troubles. I attended a prayer meeting at the Trinity Methodist Church in Hackettstown two days after the earthquake hit. The church has been sending a mission to Haiti for the last 15 years, and their annual mission was twenty miles north of Port-au-Prince when the earthquake hit. The leader of the Girl Scout troop that my daughters were in when they were younger was on this mission. When I decided to attend the prayer service, the members of the mission had not been heard from. No one knew if they were alive and, if alive, if they had been injured. A few hours before the service, the pastor on the mission was able to call and say that all members of the mission were safe and sound.

This changed the tenor of what the meeting was from concern about the local church members to the overall situation in Haiti. We prayed, sang hymns, consoled each other and made donations to assist the needy in Haiti.

I hope that each one of you is able to make a difference in our temple family and in the world in general this year. Do it in honor of your parents or teachers. Do it for our children. Do it for yourself. Pledge to make 2010 the year that we all go that extra step to enhance the lives of those around us. I give you my word that those will be my goals for the coming year.

May you enjoy a healthy and peaceful year.

*Love,  
Howie*

## Rabbi's Message (cont.)

Our traditional texts offer us guidance when we don't know what to do or say. The most important lesson is often what not to do. Pirke Avot 4:18 is specific with us: *Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: When your friend becomes angry, don't try to calm him. When he is recently bereaved, don't try to comfort him.* It is not for us to utter platitudes or offer theological solutions. Resolving the problem of theodicy (attempting to reconcile God's positive attributes with the problem of evil in the world) can wait for another place and time.

Crises motivate us to give. That is a good thing. But we don't want to wait for crises in order to be inspired to give. Maimonides' ladder of charity says the highest degree of charity—above which there is no higher—is giving money, a loan, your time or whatever else it takes to enable someone to be self-reliant. The goal of our intervention in Haiti at the moment is to manage the crisis; the longer-term goal will be to help the people become self-sufficient. Again, the words of Pirke Avot (Chapter 2 Mishnah 16) give us direction when we feel helpless: "It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to avoid it."

We of all peoples know what it is like to be in need and to hope and pray for help. Our experience and our sacred texts tell us we have no choice but to open our hearts and our wallets to help the people of Haiti.

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis

## Education/PTO

There is no Sunday School on **February 14<sup>th</sup>** (President's Day). On **February 21<sup>st</sup>** the kids begin celebrating Purim by baking hamentaschen ... always a good time. On **February 28<sup>th</sup>** beginning at 10:15 a.m. we will enjoy the Purim Spiel and Megillah Reading – get your groggers ready! Kids are encouraged to come in costume and bring a friend if they want. After Hebrew School on February 28<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate with our annual Purim Carnival. There will be games and activities for the kids, baked goods, theme baskets, and much more!

**Thank you to our Hebrew School families and everyone else who donated items for our Purim Carnival. We really appreciate it.**

Marsha Gross and Karen Finkelstein

(Education Co-Chairs)

## March Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles, advertisements, and photos to be included in the March Issue is **February 19, 2010**. Please email articles, ideas or news items to Journal Editor, Abby Bauer at



# PHOTO ALBUM



Kindergarteners celebrate Tu'Bishvat, singing and dancing at the seder.



PTO members prepare Tu'Bishvat fruit platters for the annual Tu'Bishvat seder.

## New Members

*We would like to welcome the following families to our congregation:*

*~Martha & Jack Needleman and their son Drew who will be joining the confirmation class*

*~Pamela and Mark Fitzsimmons and their daughter Nina who will be joining Teri Stanton's class and their two year old son David*

*~Susan and Michael Santillo and their son Matthew who will be joining Terri Stanton's class*

## Join us for our Annual Purim Carnival



Fun Games and Activities! Raffles with Great Prizes!!

**\*\*\*Kids can come in Costume and Bring a Friend\*\*\***

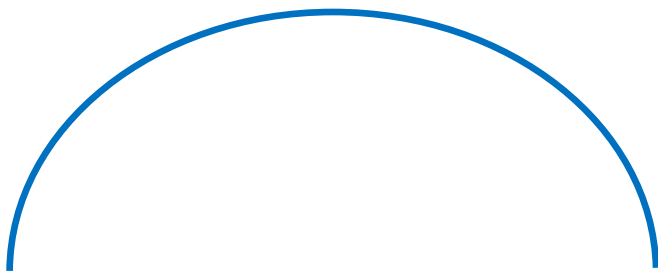
February 28, 2010 14 Adar 5770

Begins 12:00 noon (after Hebrew School)

## A Message from the JCNWJ Sisterhood

The JCNWJ Sisterhood has proven to be a thoughtful, passionate and energetic group of women. At the January 17th sisterhood meeting many of the tools needed to govern this vibrant group were put into place. Sisterhood Board Officers were elected, by-laws were adopted and an outreach committee was born. The officers are – President, Rochelle Ostenfeld – Vice President, unknown – Treasurer, Marci Braunstein – Co-Secretaries, Sherry Oweller and Gerri Klein. A formal installation of officers will take place at a later date.

Mishloach Manot, our Purim program for giving, is well under way. The generosity of our congregation is apparent. Keep those gift basket contributions coming! Lauretta Koch has kindly offered to chair the Outreach Committee and is currently researching opportunities in the community to assist those in need. Any ideas for outreach should be emailed to Lauretta. Sisterhood is planning a social outing for the spring, details to follow. The next sisterhood meeting will be **February 7, 2010 at 9:30**. See you there!



Our Temple needs a new furnace. The Sisterhood is looking for your help. The Purim tradition of giving is called Mishloach Manot. Give whatever you can by contributing to the creation of our Purim Gift Bags.

Having trouble Deciding who to give a bag to? Pick...  
~A committee member with whom you worked this year

~A temple member that helped you  
~Someone you don't see that often  
~Someone in need of cheer

Every temple member will receive a bag.

Don't forget your Mishloach Manot participation form needs to be in by February 10, 2010.

The JCNWJ Proudly Presents...

# The 5th Annual Talent Show

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
7 o' clock

Star on our Mainstage

Auditions: Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup>  
12:00 — 1:00 pm

Acting • Vocals • Instrumental • Jokes • Dance



## Jewish LIFE

Jewish LIFE is pleased to present these programs...we hope you can attend!

\***Michael Rosen**, author of *What Else but Home: Seven Boys and an American Journey between the Projects and Penthouse*, **Tuesday, February 23 at 7 p.m.** (Sponsored by the JCC Festival of Books & Culture)

\***Professor Leonard Saxe**, author of *Ten Days Birthright Israel*, **Sunday, March 21 at 10 a.m.**

\***Clara Kramer**, author of *Clara's War*. Community-wide Holocaust Observance, **Sunday, April 11 at 7 p.m.** at Temple Beth El, 1489 Hamilton Street, Somerset; 732-873-2325. (Sponsored by the JCC Festival of Books & Culture)

\***Jeffrey Zaslow**, author of *The Girls from Ames: A Story of Women and a Forty Year Friendship*, **Tuesday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m.** (Sponsored by the JCC Festival of Books and Culture and Somerset Hadassah)

All programs will be held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, 775 Talamini Road in Bridgewater, with the exception of the Holocaust Observance with Clara Kramer, which will be held at Temple Beth El in Somerset. For program fees and additional details, please go to [www.ssbjcc.org](http://www.ssbjcc.org). (The Clara Kramer program is free to the community. Please call Temple Beth El directly at 732-873-2325 to register.)



### Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

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Tues-Wed 9:30-5:15 Thurs-Fri 9:30-7:00

Sat 9:30-4:00 (9:30-2:00 During Summer)