

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

# Journal

PO Box 2, 115 Youmans Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882  
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www.jcnwj.org

March 2016  
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## Rabbi's Message

With the Presidential nominating races fully underway, it's hardly difficult to become a bit jaded every now and then about the process. To call the campaigns nasty or opportunistic would at times be quite the understatement. It's no wonder our country has one of the lower voter participation rates in the democratic world!

But, lest we become too overwhelmed by the fierce vitriol being hurled every which way, it is important to consider and appreciate the outrageous privilege that we, as Americans, have in being able to vote for our governmental representatives. In fact, so great is this privilege, that I would say voting is nothing less than a responsibility and obligation. And I wouldn't be alone in thinking this, because Jewish Tradition argues to the same conclusion.

Rabbi David Evan Markus, co-chair of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, the umbrella organization for the Jewish Renewal movement, and co-rabbi of New York City's Temple Beth-El of City Island (New York City) wrote a wonderful short piece about voting. He is especially qualified to write on the subject because not only is Rabbi Markus an ordained rabbi, he is a licensed attorney who holds a Masters Degree in Public Policy as well. Rabbi Markus presides as judicial referee in New York Supreme Court, 9th Judicial District, which makes him one of the few U.S. pulpit rabbis also to hold public office.

*Continued on the next page*

## Mark Your Calendar

- **Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**  
6:30 pm Shabbat Across America Dinner and Services  
Oneg: Hirsch, Mattson, McGraw, Margolis, and Fitzsimmons Families
- **Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>**  
9:30 am Sunday School
- **Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>**  
7 pm Board of Trustees Meeting
- **Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**  
10:30 am Torah Study
- **Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>**  
9:30 am Sunday School  
10:30 am Confirmation Class  
10:30 am Sisterhood Meeting
- **Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>**  
7:30 pm Shabbat Services and Hebrew Naming Service  
Oneg: Heller Family
- **Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>**  
10 am Walker Heller's Bar Mitzvah  
7 pm Purim Celebration
- **Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>**  
9:30 am Sunday School Purim Celebration
- **Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**  
No Sunday School

## Rabbi's Message (cont.)

Among the points Rabbi Markus makes in his article are the following:

1. **Government is important**, as “Rabbi Chanina, the Deputy High Priest, says: “Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear of it, man would swallow his fellow alive.” (Mishna Avot 3:2).
2. The duty to create and support government is **one of the few duties that Jewish law recognizes for all, Jew and non-Jew alike** (B.T. Sanhedrin 56a).
3. As Maimonides (1135-1204) writes, the purpose is to ensure public order:

“Six precepts were commanded to Adam:

- i. The prohibition against worship of false gods;
- ii. The prohibition against cursing God;
- iii. The prohibition against murder;
- iv. The prohibition against incest and adultery;
- v. The prohibition against theft;
- vi. The **command to establish laws and courts of justice**.

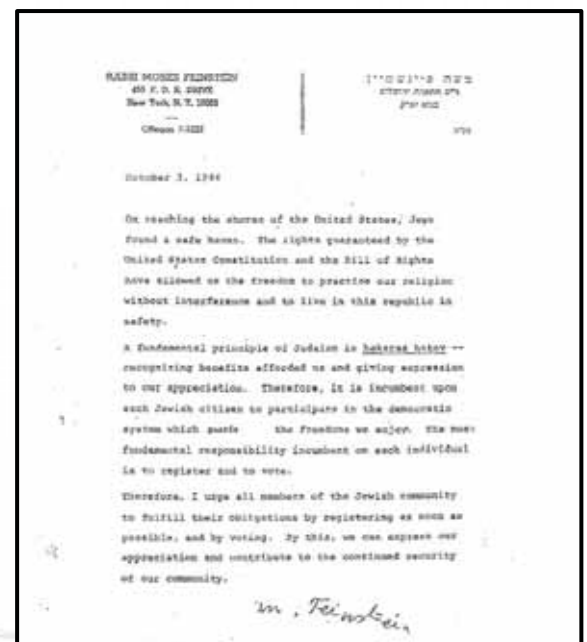
How must the gentiles fulfill the commandment to establish laws and courts? They are obligated to set up judges and magistrates in every major city to render judgement concerning these six mitzvot and to admonish the people regarding their observance.

-- (Mishneh Torah, Melachim 9:14)

The most important reason Jews must vote, though, according to Rabbi Markus, is that our Tradition values collective action so highly that public interest can compel individual behavior. By choosing to live somewhere as citizens, we bind ourselves into a **social contract with our society**. As Shlomo ben Meiri (1080-1174, “Rashbam”) held, this social compact obliges Jews to honor the realm’s civil laws in exchange for the realm’s benefits and protection (comm. Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra 54b).

**While Rabbi David Markus represents perhaps the most liberal side of the modern Jewish religious world, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein** (b. 1895 in Minsk – d. 1986 in New York) became perhaps the single most revered Orthodox legal authority in all of America during his 91 years. Remarkably, while branches of our Jewish family tend to have different perspectives quite often when it comes to matters of personal obligation, on the matter of voting, these two rabbinic authorities are of one mind.

Among the treasure trove of writings that Rav Feinstein produced, one in particular stands out at this period of our political calendar:



## Rabbi's Message (cont.)

“October 3, 1984

On reaching the shores of the United States, Jews found a safe haven. The rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights have allowed us the freedom to practice our religion without interference and to live in this republic in safety.

A fundamental principle of Judaism is *hakaras hatov* – recognizing benefits afforded to us and giving expression to our appreciation. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each Jewish citizen to participate in the democratic system which guards the freedoms we enjoy. The most fundamental responsibilities incumbent on each individual is to register and to vote.

Therefore, I urge all members of the Jewish community to fulfill their obligations by registering as soon as possible, and by voting. By this, we can express our appreciation and contribute to the continued security of our community.”

-- M. Feinstein

While the New Jersey and Pennsylvania primary dates come later in the process than many of the other states, this does not render your voice any less critical. If you have not yet registered to vote, I urge you to do so at your very earliest convenience.

### DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **March 28, 2016:** Last day to register to vote in the Pennsylvania Primary Election
- **April 26, 2016:** Pennsylvania Primary Election
- **May 17, 2016:** Last day to register to vote in the New Jersey Primary Election
- **June 7, 2016:** New Jersey Primary Election

*Rabbi Dubin*

## FOOD DRIVE

Sisterhood will be continuing their community service project of donating to local food pantries each month. Please bring **soup, pasta, and/or cereal** to the JCNWJ in the month of March.



## SISTERHOOD NEWS

The JCNWJ Sisterhood is 29 members strong in number, and growing. Please come and join us for fun discussion and fellowship. Our next meeting is on **March 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am**. A light breakfast will be served.

We will be discussing volunteer activities at Family Promise, our upcoming Yoga class, and the First Sisterhood Tea.

All new ideas and members are welcome.

Please feel free to contact Alison Shelofsky at [Shelofsky@comcast.net](mailto:Shelofsky@comcast.net) with any questions.

## Memorial Plaques

If you are interested in purchasing a memorial plaque for a loved one, please contact Lois Goldberg at [DewieandLouie7@verizon.net](mailto:DewieandLouie7@verizon.net).

## Simcha Leaves and Pew Plaques

A great way to honor your Bar or Bat Mitzvah or loved one is to purchase a Simcha leaf or a pew plaque. If you are interested, please contact Iris Hirsch at [irishirsch@comcast.net](mailto:irishirsch@comcast.net) or (908) 850-1030.

## President's Message

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, 11 members of our congregation visited the Mt. Pisgah AME (African Methodist Episcopal) church in Washington to worship with them. This is the beginning of outreach that we plan to do in the community. It was a smaller congregation than ours and they welcomed us with open arms. Reverend Terrilisa Bauknight gave a wonderful sermon.

The highlight to me was when their 93 year-old member Alice was giving the announcements. It was almost like I channel her when giving my announcements. She was lively, communicative and requested help from the congregation to make sure she didn't forget anything. But the best part was when she was saying that she was 93 and the oldest person there, and our own Edythe Herson was quick to correct her that she was not the oldest person there. After the service concluded, Alice and Edythe got together and seemed to really hit it off. The sight of the elders of the our congregations embracing a new found friendship was wonderful to see.

For me, the important lessons that were either learned or reinforced were:

- 1) Religion should be used to bring people together.
- 2) In spite of some fundamental differences regarding Jesus as the messiah, the teaching of Christianity and Judaism are very similar.
- 3) we are all members of the human race and we need to be able to get along with people regardless of the color of their skin or any other differences we may have.
- 4) I am very proud of the showing we made at the church, and
- 5) we will be reciprocating and inviting the church to worship with us, look for the date in an upcoming newsletter and do your best to be at that service.

And lastly, the Purim Shpielers will be putting on an evening performance of the spiel the night before our annual Purim festival (Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup>) at the Sunday School (Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup>), to be followed by a Rock and Roll dance. I hope that you are able to come to this performance/party and have a really good time. The cast would like to make this an annual party, so let's make the first one a lot of fun.

Love to you all,

*Howie Hirsch*



*Eleven JCNWJ members visited Mt. Pisgah AME Church in Washington in February.*

# SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA

## IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP!

On **March 4, 2016**, tens of thousands of Jews across America will come together to eat, drink, relax, dance, enjoy, debate, and celebrate at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Shabbat Across America.

Join the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey in Washington, New Jersey as it takes part in a historical Jewish event to celebrate that which unifies Jews ~ Shabbat! Everyone is invited – singles, couples, families, all ages – to bring your neighbors, your friends, your co-workers – and let's celebrate together.

**March 4, 2016**

**6:30 pm ~ Pot Luck Dinner**

**7:30 pm ~ Shabbat Service**

**Oneg Following Service**

**The Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey  
115 Youmans Avenue, Washington, NJ**

For more information or to RSVP, please contact [jcnwjmembership@gmail.com](mailto:jcnwjmembership@gmail.com) or (908) 689-0761 Ext. 1.

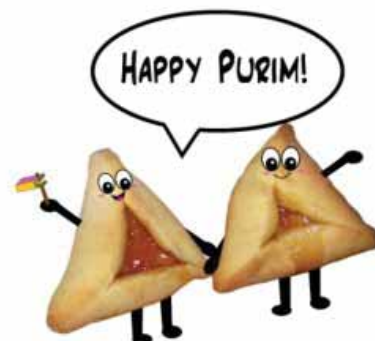


## Yahrzeit Reminders

If you have not been receiving a card for an upcoming Yahrzeit, please contact Judy May at [judymay@mac.com](mailto:judymay@mac.com).

# Contributions

- ✧ In memory of Tillie Ratzman  
- Steven & Linda Ratzman
- ✧ In memory of Rona Schick  
- Joan Chase  
- Ruth Schick  
- James Segarra & Tracie Brennan  
- Alison Shelofsky
- ✧ In loving memory of Rona Schick  
- Helen Mattson
- ✧ In memory of my dear friend Rona Schick  
- Gwen Nagorsky
- ✧ In memory of Ellis Golub  
- Helen Mattson
- ✧ In memory of Don Gross  
- Marsha Gross
- ✧ In honor of Howie's 60<sup>th</sup>  
- Marsha Gross
- ✧ In memory of Ellee Field  
- Alison Shelofsky



## ADULT STUDIES 2016

Our adult programs have ranged all over the roadmap, and an exciting and fun journey it has been. Here are some samples.

At the end of January, Rabbi Dubin's first class focused on *The Jazz Singer* as an example of changing Jewish culture and assimilation in America. We were treated to multiple versions of the story, from the original 1927 film through clips of later—and even later—versions.

Cantor Labow's most recent class (Feb.) examined the biblical/Talmudic concept of mitzvot—what are they?—focusing on the mitzvah of recounting the story of the Exodus; study time is always bracketed by joyful song for Shabbat morning.

In February the Torah study group (lay led) tackled Balak and Balaam: Numbers, verses 22–24. This story of blessings instead of curses, an angel, and a talking four-legged is so extraordinary that, not surprisingly, some scholars believe that it once constituted its own separate book in the the Pentateuch (five scrolls, from the Greek), which would have made the latter into a Septateuch (not to be confused with the Septuagint!). (Incidentally, from the Byzantine period there remain six bound illuminated Octateuchs, housed in European museums and monasteries; these consist of our traditional five books of Moses plus Joshua, Judges, and Ruth.)

Rabbi Dubin's Sunday mornings for adults will resume in March and Cantor Labow's Shabbat mornings will start again at the end of April. Check upcoming newsletters for details and dates.

## SECOND DAY SEDER

We will be having a potluck second day Seder on Saturday, April 23, 2016 at about 6:00 pm. Kindly contact Iris Hirsch by March 31, 2016 at [irishirsch@comcast.net](mailto:irishirsch@comcast.net) or (908) 850-1030 if you would like to attend.



## 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.

### April Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles and advertisements to be included in the April Issue of the JCNWJ Journal is **March 19, 2016**. Please email articles, photographs, or news items to the Journal Editor, Abby Bauer at [abbybauer@comcast.net](mailto:abbybauer@comcast.net).



Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey  
115 Youmans Ave., Washington, New Jersey  
www.jcnwj.org

## Come and join us for the JCNWJ Annual Purim Party

March 20, 2016 Noon



Special Offer to New Families-We are offering  
**FREE Membership + Sunday School** for the  
remainder of the school year\*



Kids Costume Parade  Costume Contest  
(Bring a Friend and you both get a special prize)

Rock-N-Roll themed party with  
Games and Activities!

Refreshments Include: Pizza, chips, snacks, and delicious baked goods ... including hamantashen.

\*Space permitted and offer expires April 1, 2016



Please join Jewish LIFE for these upcoming programs in March:

The Jewish Film Series at Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough will be showing the film *Epilogue*, **Saturday March 5 at 7pm**. Suggested donation \$5/person. Call Temple Beth-El to register at 908-722-1339. **Steven Ray Gimbel** will discuss *Einstein, His Space and Times* on **Sunday, March 6**, 10:30am hosted by Or Chadash, Flemington. Fee: \$10/person...call Or Chadash at 908-806-2122 to register. Join Jewish LIFE for *The Irma Horowitz Film Series featuring Falafel and Films* **Thursday, March 10, 6:30pm** at the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Three Israeli short films will be screened, with discussion to follow after each film. Fee: \$12/person in advance or \$15 day of the program. Chabad Jewish Center of Hunterdon County is hosting a community **Shabbat Dinner Friday, March 18 at 6:45pm**. The evening will featuring Sassy Reuven, an IDF Veteran who took part in Operation Entebbe. Fee: \$18/person. To register, call 908-238-9002.

**Register Now!!... 4th Annual Celebrate Israel, Tuesday, April 12 at 6:30pm** to benefit Israel Bonds and the State of Israel. The event will be held at Raritan Valley Country Club in Bridgewater. This year's honorees are Marjorie & Jonathan Slass, and Evan Gottesman, a Rutgers Hillel Student. Distinguished guest speaker is Malcolm Hoenline, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The evening will include a special remembrance of Rabbi Evan Jaffe. The registration fee is \$50/Adult and \$18/Student and includes full buffet. Cash bar available. You can register by mailing payment (check payable to "JCC") to the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, 775 Talamini Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807, on line at [www.ssbjcc.org](http://www.ssbjcc.org), or by calling the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

#### Looking ahead...

Chef and cookbook author **Paul Shoyer** presents **The New Passover Menu, Wednesday, April 6, 12 Noon** at the Birnbaum JCC. Passover has never been so easy or delicious! Fee includes program and lunch: \$18/person in advance or \$22 day of the program. The Jewish Film Series at Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough will be showing the film *Three Mothers*, **Saturday, April 9 at 7pm**. Suggested donation \$5/person. Call Temple Beth-El to register at 908-722-1339.

Join Jewish LIFE for a **Kosher Food Excursion in Brooklyn with Arthur Schwartz, Thursday, May 2**. Nobody knows kosher cooking and shopping like Arthur Schwartz, and we are very fortunate to have him for our guide for the day! **Register early...trip is limited to 12**. Call the Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

**MAKE COMMUNITY MATTER**

You can gather with your community to take pride in and celebrate being Jewish. Through Federation, there is a wide choice of cultural programs and activities. Bake challahs for our food pantries, attend a Jewish film, celebrate Israel, explore Jewish history, and more.

**TOUCH MORE LIVES EVERY DAY**

Volunteer. Give. Do Good Today.

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