



Mark Your Calendar!

- Friday, April 2, 7:45 p.m.
Shabbat - Oneg: Schroeder,
Eisenberg, J&J Berkowitz
Families
- Sunday, April 4
Men's Club Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
Adult Ed, 10:45 a.m.
- Sunday, April 11
No Religious School
- Friday, April 16, 7:45 p.m.
Shabbat - Oneg: Herson, May,
Arveson Families
- Saturday, April 17
Adult Ed, 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday, April 18, 10:00 a.m.
Yom Ha Shoah Service
Confirmation - 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday, April 25, 10:00 a.m.
Yom HaAtzmaut Celebration
with Guest Cantor Leon Sher
- Friday, April 30, 7:45 p.m.
Shabbat Honoring our Graduates
- Oneg: Braunstein, Simms,
Fiedler, Wyckoff Families



Happy Passover!

First Seder: Evening of April 5

Rabbi's Message

On a recent Sunday morning, only one student showed up for class. It was one of those potentially negative situations which became a positive opportunity. We spent our time doing something we otherwise would not have been able to do — we practiced writing his name in Hebrew script. I told him this was an important Jewish skill. I told him how many times I have arrived at a wedding and found myself teaching the adult witnesses how to sign their names in Hebrew so they could sign the ketubah, the wedding contract.

That morning reminded me how important it is to learn the Basic Skills of Judaism. When my kids were young and first were learning to play basketball, they groaned when they had to repeat drills over and over again before the coaches would let them play a game. The coaches explained that the players needed to work on their fundamentals before they could go on to the next level. The religious arena also has its own set of fundamentals or Basic Skills. When we joined together for Shabbat Across America, we began with a Kabbalat Shabbat service. Before we sat down to eat together, we recited the Shabbat blessings over candles, wine and challah. We blessed the children. We recited the Birkat HaMazon, the blessing after the meal. We sang Shabbat zemirot, songs from our tradition. All of these skills are part of being competent as adult Jews.

It isn't just about competence. It is also about the sense of ease competence brings, about feeling comfortable in your own Jewish skin. If you feel comfortable with your Jewish identity, then you will know how to respond to people's questions about Judaism. Basic skills are the best form of Jewish self-defense I know. Leading a fulfilling knowledgeable Jewish life is the best form of Jewish offense I know.

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President's Message

For those of you who were fortunate enough to attend Aaron Goldner's Bar Mitzvah this past week, you got to hear one of the best sermons I have ever heard from Rabbi Lewis.

It concerned a boastful man who was trying his best to impress King Solomon. The king gave him an impossible task to fulfill, to find a ring that would make a happy man sad and a sad man happy. The man at the last minute was able to find a ring that a local artisan made for him that said, "This too shall pass." Solomon was astonished because he believed that the man had found a correct answer and rewarded him highly. The message I get from this story is very similar to advice that my father gave to me many years ago, which was to remain on an even keel (even though I never saw my dad on a sailboat).

We all have times of trouble in our lives and we hopefully have times of joy as well. Try to remember that when things are not going well, "this too shall pass," and that your troubles won't be there forever. And when things are going well, these feelings are also fleeting.

My hopes for all of you this month are that when you are sad, look to your friends and your community to help share your burden. And when things are going well for you, be there for the people who need you.

Wishing you a happy Passover.

Shalom,
Howie Hirsch

Rabbi's Message, cont.

As I was thinking about this column, I noticed a newspaper ad for a summer writing program at Sarah Lawrence. It read: "Writing is both a calling and a craft." The same is true of what we believe; Judaism is both a calling and a craft. The calling is a divine gift; the craft is our own contribution to the creative processes of the universe.

May the coming Season of our Freedom be one of gifts and opportunities.

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis

Yom Ha Shoah - Sunday, April 18

Please join us at the Yom Ha Shoah service at 10:00 a.m., **Sunday, April 18**. After a brief service to remember those who perished in Holocaust, Peppy Margolis will present "The Boys of Buchenwald." Below is Peppy's summary of the film:

"The film is a documentary that is my cousin's story of survival after the war, in France, with many other boys who were under the age of 14.

"My cousin, Joseph Schwarzberg, survived the Holocaust with my father, David Schwarzberg, and my uncle, Jacob Schwarzberg (my father's youngest brother).

"They were liberated in Buchenwald, Germany. At the gates of liberation they were separated. My father went to Frankfurt and my cousin Joe went to Paris with Elie Weisel and Rabbi Lau. They studied in the same chateau. The video illustrates how the Boys of Buchenwald survived and are located in many parts of the world.

"It is a tribute to their will to live and be productive citizens making contributions to society wherever they are living. Yet they still remain in contact for almost 60 years!"

Ms. Margolis is Program Manager-Culture Outreach for Raritan Valley Community College. She has more than 20 years of experience in Holocaust and Genocide studies as well as cultural diversity and interfaith relations.

She was Assistant to the NJ State Holocaust Commission, and was the primary author of the first curriculum on prejudice reduction, cultural diversity, Holocaust and genocide: Caring Makes A Difference K-8 that is mandated today.

The service is open to the congregation and community. Confirmation and Religious School students will also attend.

Cantor Leon Sher Featured at Yom HaAtzmaut Celebration - Sunday, April 25

Cantor Leon Sher is well-known in New Jersey and the wider metropolitan area for his inspired guitar-playing, song-leading and enthusiastic work with adults and children in synagogues and at camps. He will be joining us on Sunday morning, **April 25** at 10 a.m., to lead us in a celebration of Yom HaAtzmaut, Israeli Independence Day.

The entire congregation is invited to join the Religious School for a song session that will include Israeli music as well as other Jewish music.

Passover Food Drive

Be sure to pick up a paper bag or two from the Center's lobby to bring home and fill with your hametz and other food and toiletries, which will be donated to the local food bank. Return your filled bags to the Center's kitchen by the end of April. Any questions, call Gwen.

Upcoming Adult Education Programs

Torah Study - If line-by-line (and sometimes word-by-word) textual study interests you, come join us one Saturday morning per month, 10:30 to noon or thereabouts, on the following dates: **April 24, May 22, and June 12**. If you would like more information, call Sharon Herson.

Adult Ed - Sunday, April 4, at 10:45 a.m., SATURDAY, **April 17**, at 10:00 a.m. and **Sunday, May 2** at 10:45 a.m.

Education Committee and PTO News

The religious school has been busy with its model seder and its upcoming Passover craft on **April 4**. There will be no school **April 11** in observance of Passover. On **April 18**, the Religious School and Confirmation students will attend the Yom Ha Shoah service. **We ask that all parents join their children at the Yom Ha Shoah service.** On **April 25**, we invite all parents to celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut as we sing along with Cantor Leon Sher and enjoy an Israeli breakfast.

A Very Special Request

Chelsea Friedlander will be traveling to Russia this summer. She is collecting goods to deliver to a hospital: first-aid supplies, latex gloves, children's coloring books with little or no writing, and toiletries. Watch for a box at the Temple in May.

Shoprite/A&P Vouchers

ShopRite/A&P script can be purchased at Sunday School/Confirmation Class on **April 4, 18, May 2, 16**. Please call Sandy Seidorf at the Temple to purchase scrip.

Inky Made It!

The Braunstein family trained Inky, a beautiful black lab, to be a seeing eye dog. He visited us many times at the Religious School. We are thrilled to report that Inky graduated with honors and will soon be placed with a family.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Jewish LIFE

Upcoming events include...
Barbara Krasner-Khait, author of "Discovering Your Jewish Ancestors" on Thursday, April 18 at 7:30 p.m. The Community-wide Yom Hashoah observance featuring Henry Frankel will be held on Sunday, April 15 at 7 p.m. at Temple Har Shalom, 104 Mt. Horeb Road in Warren. (Please RSVP

directly to Temple Har Shalom at 732-356-8777.) On Sunday, April 25 at 10 a.m., Star-Ledger Sports Writer Jerry Izenberg will be our featured guest. Jewish LIFE concludes the season on Thursday, May 20 at 7:30 p.m. with a discussion on Anti-Semitism on College Campuses with guest speakers Jay Rubin, Executive Vice President of Hillel in Washington, DC, and Shai Goldstein, Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League, NJ Regional Office. For fees and to RSVP contact JCC Assistant Executive Director Laura Friedman at 908-725-6994 x213; LFriedman@ssbjcc.org.

The Fresh Air Fund

The Fresh Air Fund is looking for host families to open their homes to an inner-city child this summer. This experience is known to be as rewarding for the host families as it is wonderful for the visiting child. Anyone interested in learning more about the program can call Susan Richards at 813-8791.

March for Freedom of Choice

On April 25, the Reform Movement will join with pro-choice organizations including the National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood, and NARAL/Pro-Choice America for a march in Washington, DC, to protect women's reproductive rights. You, too, can be a part of this historic event. For more information, please visit www.rj.org/choice, or contact the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism at 202.387.2800, choice@rac.org.

Summer in Israel for Teenagers

NFTY is once again offering L'Dor V'Dor, a life-changing five-week trip to Israel and Eastern Europe. Participants will live at Kibbutz Tzuba, a secure facility in the mountains outside Jerusalem, while they explore Israel from border to border.

Snorkel in the Red Sea and float in the Dead Sea; walk the winding streets of the Old City of Jerusalem and crawl through the caves of the Maccabean revolt; visit the sacred Western Wall and spend three days and nights camping under the starry skies of the Negev Desert. Befriend Israeli teenagers, and learn from the inhabitants of Kibbutz Yahel, the first Reform kibbutz in all of Israel. NFTY L'Dor V'Dor is the only summer program the Reform Movement is offering in 2004, and it will be accepting applications up to May 1. For more information, visit www.nfty.org/travel/2004.html, or contact the Gadi Dobkin, Coordinator of NFTY travel programs, at 212.452.6517, Gdobkin@urj.org.

Donations

Lawrence Steinhardt made a contribution to the Temple Rabbi Lewis in memory of Lillian Jay
Gwen and Ed Nagorsky in memory of Harold Nagorsky's yahrzeit
Seidorf Family in memory of Ken Weiland's mother,
Ruth Schneider

From Your Newsletter Editor

The deadline for May's issue will be April 18.

All committee members: Please send updates to your programs to Wain Schroeder at niaw1@comcast.net for Web posting.



WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHERS?

Because on this night we begin our Passover seders with the words, "Let all who are hungry enter and eat."

This night, **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger** asks you to breathe life into these ancient words by offering a hand up to the 35 million Americans living at the edge of hunger.

Your gift to MAZON of whatever you would spend to invite even one extra person to your seder helps hungry families in our own country, in Israel and around the world.

For these children, and for millions like them around the globe, please lend your voice to the struggle against hunger. Let them know that this night will be different.



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**Have a Zissin Pesach from the JCC!
Spring Session begins April 18th**

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- Summer Swim Club
- **NEW!** JCC Dance School



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Journal

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