

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey



Journal



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

April 2010
Vol. XXXVI, Issue 8

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

*Friday, April 2, 7:30 pm
Shabbat Service/Pesach
Oneg: Rosenblum, Weiner/Margolin,
Bakyoni, and Peckman/Greenwald Families

*Sunday, April 4
No Sunday School: Pesach

*Tuesday, April 6, 7:00 pm
Adult Hebrew Class

*Saturday, April 10,
10:30 am Torah Study
7:00 pm 5th Annual Talent Show

*Sunday, April 11
9:30 am Sunday School and Men's Club
10:45 am Adult Education / Yom HaShoah
12:00 pm Religious Practices Committee
Meeting

*Monday, April 12, 7:30 pm
Board Meeting

*Tuesday, April 13, 7:00 pm
Adult Hebrew Class

*Friday, April 16, 7:30 pm
Shabbat Services w/Rock Band
Oneg: Kestecher Family

*Saturday, April 17, 10:00 am
Bar Mitzvah: Craig Kestecher

*Sunday, April 18,
9:30 Sunday School (K/1)
10:30 Yom HaAtzmaut

*Tuesday, April 20, 7:00 pm
Adult Hebrew Class

*Sunday, April 25
9:30 Sunday School
10:30 Confirmation Class

*Tuesday, April 27, 7:00 pm
Adult Hebrew Class

*Friday, April 30, 7:30 pm
Shabbat Services
Oneg: Shelofsky Family

Rabbi's Message

As we sat listening to student cantors' audition at Hebrew Union College yesterday, I realized that we have achieved a new status. We at the Jewish Center have become a training ground for future cantors of the Reform movement.

We didn't start out with that as a goal. We began 6 or 7 years ago with the idea that we might enjoy having a monthly student cantor who could enhance our Shabbat and holiday worship as well as continue to build our music program in the school. We asked them to learn how we do things and to maintain our musical traditions. Since then, we have been fortunate that we have developed relationships with three different student cantors, all talented, all unique.

But as we sat and listened to students from among whom we hope to find our fourth student cantor, I thought that somehow this felt different. What began as a wish has turned into a new tradition in our congregation. We are no longer just thinking about what we want; we have also learned to ask what the students themselves want to get from this experience. We have taken on the responsibility of helping them to develop their skills – whether they be musical, educational, relational or spiritual - so they can take that experience with them as they move into their careers.

Although I am not in the business of making predictions about the future, I don't foresee that we will ever become a congregation that can afford a full-time cantor (or a full-time rabbi, for that matter). What that means is that we are not in a position to offer a cantor a multi-year commitment. Our student cantors will come and go for a year or two or three, and then they will leave us. And while that is hard on us – to fall in love with a cantor and then have to say good-bye – we gain so much from them during those couple of years. They bring excitement, new ideas, new ways of thinking, different melodies, rock bands, and inspiration. We receive their offerings with an open mind and, more importantly, with an open heart.

These auditions have brought me back to the time when I was a student in rabbinical school and was lucky to be trained by these small student pulpits. I spent two years at a biweekly congregation in Pittsburgh (where coincidentally our student cantor Tifani Coyot served during the two years prior to her joining us).

That congregation has grown over these past thirty years and now has its own building and a full-time rabbi. I spent the high holidays in Victoria, Texas one year (go to Houston and then drive south for a few hours on the way to Corpus Christi).

Continued on Page 2

President's Message

Let's rock, let's rock today.

I want to use my column to thank the Tarlowe family, especially guitar hero Ezra and Flautist extraordinaire Stephanie, for allowing me to play congas while they rocked the house Friday night. For those who were there, it was an experience not to be missed. With Cantor Coyot leading the band, Ezra, Stephanie, Sharon Herson and I had more fun than should be allowed on Shabbat. We played 5 or 6 Shabbat songs, some with melodies you knew and others that we got to debut for you.

In addition to the "Rock Band", I also got to be a part of the Purim spiel again this year, after missing last year. This was also an incredible experience as I had 3 parts, with 7 costume changes during the spiel. At some times, I didn't know if I was coming or going, and at a frantic pace. All the while, the stars of the show, Kelsey Shelofsky as Queen Esther, Grace Weiner as Mordechai and Sharon Herson as Haman wowed the audience. All of us in the cast worked very hard to put on a fun show and we were so glad that everyone enjoyed it.

Lastly, as you read in the Rabbi's message, I was part of the group that was privileged enough to listen to and interview the next student cantor for our congregation. Unless you have had this privilege, it is hard to know how inspiring it is to listen to these remarkably talented people who are giving their life and their talent to the Jewish people. We have been very fortunate to have such wonderful student cantors and I know you will all welcome the newest cantor.

As you can tell, I have been very busy this month. All I can tell you is that when you are doing things that you love, the time passes by so fast and the pleasure is so great that it isn't work at all, but a pleasure. My hope for all of you is that you can find something in your life that gives you the pleasure that being in this congregation gives me. Whether it is helping the congregation, helping in your community, spending time with your family or anything else that truly excites you, I hope you find that place.

I treasure each and every one of you for the special and unique talent that you bring to our congregation and truly believe that the congregation is a better place because you are a part of it.

May you have a wonderful Pesach with your family and friends

*Love,
Howie*

Rabbi's Message (Cont.)

They have been in existence since the mid 1800's and describe themselves as "home to one of the oldest, continuous, small-town Jewish communities in the Southwest." They are quite small and are managing to function with a monthly rabbi, monthly services and a monthly religious school. And then I had a monthly pulpit in Natchez, Mississippi, once a prospering river town.

There was once a thriving Jewish community in Natchez dating back to the mid 1700's but over the years the population has dwindled and now only a few elderly members remain. Even when I was there thirty years ago, the congregation only numbered 28 people. They have formed a partnership with the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience so that, when the temple finally closes for good, it will be turned into a museum teaching the history of the Jewish community in Natchez.

I learned so much from each of those pulpits. They took pride in training their rabbinic students over the years as we can take pride in training our cantorial students. We shoulder a large responsibility in bringing in a student and we all win. We help them and they help us.

May your Pesach be a sweet one.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

Happy Passover



May Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles, advertisements, and photos to be included in the May Issue is **April 22, 2010**. Please email articles, ideas or news items to Journal Editor, Abby Bauer.

Wanted: Advertisers for JCNWJ Journal

Reaching hundreds of readers each month in Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, and Warren Counties in New Jersey as well as those residing parts of Eastern Pennsylvania, advertising in the Journal is effective and affordable. Tell your friends and contacts at local businesses whom you patronize about the opportunity to market themselves through sponsoring an advertisement in the online newsletter. For more information on placing an ad, see the Journal Advertising Form ([on the temple website](#)) or contact Tracey Bauer.

Contributions

In memory of Ellen Field
~Alison Shelofsky

In memory of Fannie Garfunkel
~Jan and Leo Romanczyk

In memory of Lillian Jay
~Rabbi Ellen Lewis

In memory of Betty Berkowitz
~Rita and Jerry Berkowitz

In memory of Julius Katz
~Marsha Gross

In memory of Pauline Schick
~Laverne Bardy

Education/ PTO

Spring is Here! There is no Hebrew School on **April 4th** for Passover. The Sunday School students will celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut on **April 18th** with an Israeli Breakfast. The confirmation class meets next on **April 25th**.

Marsha Gross and Karen Finkelstein

(Education Co-Chairs)

Cantor's Message

This past weekend, I experienced my first Shabbat Across America. This event reminded me of the uniqueness of Shabbat; we enjoyed dinner as a community and sang together during desert. I was so happy to be joined by our Rock Band as we sang z'mirot (songs in Hebrew). The Rock Band premiered during our Shabbat Service and they added different layers of voices and instruments. It was a great Shabbat and if you missed the Rock Band the first time, I will keep you updated for their next appearance.

I want to take this opportunity to invite all of you to my Senior Cantorial Recital. This event will take place on Wednesday April 14th at 10:45 am.

Please email me if you are interested in coming.

B'shir
,
Cantor Coyot

A Message from the Sisterhood

Well we have witnessed the effect of **Sister Power!** Michloach Manot is a huge success thanks to our hard working, dedicated Sisterhood! The feedback has been awesome! People are coming up to me left and right expressing their appreciation and admiration for the bags and the goodies they hold. One Temple member sent a note saying....." *I was so surprised when I came home today and found the Purim bag at my front door. It was so sweet and appreciated. I wanted to not only thank the Sisterhood and the Sunday school class of Mike Weiner, but the person who hand delivered the bag to my door*"

On behalf of the Sisterhood and the JCNWJ, I would like to thank Debbi Longenecker who not only suggested this fundraiser, which made over \$3700 for a new boiler at the Temple, but worked tirelessly to bring the project to fruition (you go girl!). The commitment of the entire Michloach Manot Committee succeeded, not only in helping our temple, but also making each congregant feel special.

The success of this program would not be possible without the generosity of our temple membership! Our temple truly displayed the Purim tradition of giving and we hope to continue this tradition for years to come!

Thank you, thank you, thank you, to all the special people who gave their time and their heart to this project!

Rochelle Ostenfeld

JCNWJ Sisterhood President

You are invited to Tifani Coyot's Senior Cantorial Recital

Hoshanah Rabbah; a Reform Ritual

Experiencing Worship through Music, Movement, and Meditation

April 14th 2010 at 10:45am

In the Hebrew Union College Chapel
One West Fourth Street NYC, 10012

Featuring....

Joyce Rosenzweig, Ivan Barenboim, The School of Sacred Music Choir, The Avodah Dance Company, & Tracey Katof.



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Photo Album



Combining music and art, the Sunday school students enjoyed making tambourines as a Passover Craft.



The JCNWJ Sisterhood's first temple wide Mishloach Manot fundraiser was a lot of fun and a huge success! Susan McNamara and I worked with a great committee that dedicated their time and generosity to creating a beautiful gift bag. Each goodie filled bag was hand delivered or mailed to every member of our congregation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Shop Rite of Flemington, Shop Rite of Washington, Harper's Bakery and Fliegau Jewelers for their charitable donations. A special thank you goes to Rita Berkowitz and Lynn Kestecher for hitting the pavement to get these donations! My hope is that everyone is enjoying drinking your favorite beverage from the JCNWJ mugs that Brett and Susie Schaffer obtained for us and munching on the delicious hamantashen that was donated by Rita Berkowitz.

I also would like to thank and commend the volunteers that mailed and delivered the Purim bags; Alison Shelofsky, Tracey Bauer, Sharon Herson, Helen Mattson and Howie Hirsch. This program would not have been a success without the accounting and organization genius of Lisa Bauch.

Without the generosity and kindness of the JCNWJ members who participated in Mishloach Manot, we would not have raised over \$3600 for the much needed furnace.

Kudos and a heartfelt thank you to all!

~Debbi Longenecker

Mazel Tov

From the JCNWJ

To Craig Kestecher and Kelsey Shelofsky and their families on their upcoming b'nai mitzvahs

In Memory Of Edward Lewis

Gwen and Ed Nagorsky
The Longenecker Family
Roni Epstein
Melissa and Bill Parson
Helen and John Mattson
Sherry and Allen Onweller
Rita and Jerry Berkowitz
Laurie Post and Steve Goldner
Jan and Leo Romanczyk
Tammie and Harvey Applebaum
Lisa and Richard Bauch
Carole and Paul Thau
Peggy and Jerry Baker
Susan Gnall
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Marsha Gross
Pat and Stan Nevins
The Levin Sisters
Myra and Milton Kohn
Diana and Harold Cohen
Davida Fromm and Family
Susan Newman
Elaine and Julius Zack
Barbara and Al Goldstein
Chris and Pierre Rakib
Noreen Blakeley
Lois and Max Krauss
Arlene and Stanley Newman
Ann and Warren Bartlett
Fran and Michael Trachtenberg
Lauretta and Bill Koch
Confirmation Class
Irene Marinich
Susan and Justin Mamis
Michael and Vicki Pressmen
Steve and Susan Fahs

Yom HaShoah

Sunday, April 11, 10:45 a.m.
Commemoration of Yom HaShoah.

Rabbi Lewis will lead study of texts relating to the Holocaust.
All adults and Confirmation students are welcome.

It Isn't Too Late!

If you would like to participate in the Talent Show on April 10th at 7:00 pm, there is still room for a few more acts. Please contact Helen Mattson if you're interested. Thank you!

Jewish Life

Join us for the two remaining Jewish LIFE **Special Events** scheduled this season. The community-wide **Yom Hashoah Observance** takes place on **Sunday, April 11 at 7 p.m.**, featuring Clara Kramer, author of **Clara's War**. In her story, Clara Kramer recreated in frightening, vivid detail the story of how she and her family survived the Holocaust in a dug-out bunker, under the home of a known anti-Semite. The Yom Hashoah Observance will be held at Temple Beth El, 1489 Hamilton Street in Somerset, and is free to the community. Please call Temple Beth El to register at 732-873-2325. *(This program is co-sponsored by the JCC Festival of Books and Culture.)* Author **Jeffrey Zaslow** will be the final speaker of the season on **Tuesday, April 20** at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, 775 Talamini Road in Bridgewater. Jeffrey Zaslow, known to many for his book, *The Last Lecture*, will be discussing his latest book, ***The Girls From Ames: A Story of Women and a Forty-Year Friendship***. A Sponsor Reception takes place at 6:30 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m. The program fee is \$18/person in advance and \$24/person at the door. The Program Sponsor fee is \$36/person and includes a Reception with Jeffrey Zaslow; \$50 includes Sponsor Reception, Lecture and Book. Please call the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201 to register for Jeffrey Zaslow. *(This program is co-sponsored by the JCC Festival of Books and Culture and Somerset Hadassah.)*

Bat Mitzvah Project: Homeless Solutions

Hello. My name is Abby Bauer and I will become a bat mitzvah in November 2010. Hoping to make a difference in the lives of less fortunate children, my bat mitzvah project is volunteering at Homeless Solutions in Morristown, NJ. Homeless Solutions is a non-profit organization that provides shelter, services, and supportive housing to homeless or low-income people.

I organize activities for the children twice a month at the shelter: crafts, games, bedtime stories, music, and more. The children enjoy and look forward to my visits and the entertaining programs I offer every other week. It makes them happy, which makes me happy in return.

After visiting Homeless Solutions, I realized that there are needs that I can't provide for on my own. That's where you, my caring congregation, can also help to make a difference. During the month of April, there will be a basket located in the entrance of the temple. Please place necessities (listed on the "Wish List" below) in the basket. In May, I will donate the basket on behalf of the JCNWJ. I know the residents at Homeless Solutions will greatly appreciate your donations.

Homeless Solutions Wish List:

*Coffee *Iced Tea Mix *Toilet Paper *Paper Towels
*8 oz Foam Cups *Anti Bacterial Wipes

Thank you for supporting Homeless Solutions and my bat mitzvah project.

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