

Mark Your Calendar!

- Sunday, June 1, 9:30 a.m.
Annual Meeting

- Friday, June 6
7:45 p.m. Shabbat/Shavuot
Oneg - Goldner Post, Melon,
Resker, Weiss Families

- Sunday, June 8, 9:30 a.m.
Confirmation (Graduates
must arrive by 9:00 a.m.)

Last Day of Sunday School

- Saturday, June 14,
10:00-11:30 a.m.,
Torah Study

- Friday, June 20
7:45 p.m. Shabbat
Oneg - Margolin Weiner
Family

- Saturday, June 21, 10:00 a.m.
Bat Mitzvah - Margie Weiner

Rabbi's Message

I went downtown and visited the local cobbler this week to ask what time they open in the morning. He answered, "Eight a.m. on a good day, 8:10 or 8:15 the rest of the time." Next door to the cobbler is a café. I asked them the same question about when they open in the morning. "Well, usually around 8:15 or so," the owner answered. A customer chimed in, "She likes to go to the bank first. That's the way it is in a small town."

We could use the same words for the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey. So often we say, "That's the way it is in a small congregation." We say the words with the same attitude of the cobbler and the café owner in my town, with love and appreciation for individual needs and foibles, with a tolerance of variation from the norm. And yet we have seen the increasing disappearance of both the small town and the small congregation. In part, that change is due to the lure of the big city as well as the lack of economic resources in a small place. In a small town, more people have to stretch to do more volunteer work to keep the town going. And so we, too, know what they know in small towns: if we are to stay alive, we have to be every vigilant about protecting our identity. We have to remain aware of what we can and can't do, not try to do it, all but to do what we do best.

What we do best in our congregation is to teach the values of community. By our actions, we demonstrate the importance of the individual to the community while also teaching its sobering obverse: that membership in a community cannot be delegated. We can hire someone to paint our house but we can't hire someone to be Jewish for us. We can

continued on next page

President's Message

Dear Friends:

It is very funny to me when I think back on how much I disliked writing anything except facts and figures in research reports for school. Creative writing was torture for me! However, the older I have gotten and the more I have grown as an individual, I find that words now flow from my mind and heart to the paper with much more ease. Writing has actually become a delightful and rewarding venture for me!

Unfortunately, this will be my final message to you as President of the Jewish Center. I have thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to share my experiences with you and to express my opinions and concerns for our Center, our Jewish communities and our country as well. I can only hope that you have felt and understood my love of Judaism which I have tried my best to convey each month. I appreciate those of you who commented and responded to what I wrote.

Of course, serving as president was more than just writing for the newsletter! I have utilized my leadership skills quite proudly; however, when tricky situations occurred, I turned to a very savvy group of Board Members for assistance. I thank Sharon, Helen, Don, Jim and Paul for their time spent in helping me to handle some overwhelming occurrences. Their insight was extraordinary help. And, of course, the experience and wisdom of the Rabbi was invaluable. So many thanks to Rabbi Lewis for helping to put things into perspective and always helping to calm the seas for me! I also thank Andrew, Rochelle,

continued on next page

Rabbi's Message, cont.

drop our kids off at Sunday School but that alone will not make them Jewish. In a big congregation, a data bank of members may contain twenty others who possess the skills you possess. In our small synagogue, you may be the only one who can chair the PTO, organize the Purim carnival, teach Hebrew to sixth and seventh graders, run the Religious School, or balance the books. You might not be the only one who can dust the sanctuary chandeliers or change the bulb in the Eternal Light, but you might be the only one who notices it needs to be done and takes the time to do it.

I often tease our thirteen year olds that once they become b'nai mitzvah, they are no longer allowed to say "No" to me. They laugh, but they know that what I say is akin to the truth; they're not really saying "yes" to me, they are saying "yes" to the obligation of being an adult Jew. That's what they learn when they see their parents and other adults saying "yes" to the mitzvot of membership. Being part of a small community entails both privilege and obligation; the one doesn't exist without the other.

Don't wait to be called and asked, and for the sake of heaven, don't say no. Being an adult in our small Jewish community means saying "yes" even before you are asked. In Pirke Avot, Rabbi Tarfon offers a metaphor in which God is the Employer and the individual Jew the employee: "The day is short, there is much work to be done, yet the laborers are lazy, even though the wages are great, and the Householder is insistent." And Rabbi Tarfon continues: "It is not up to you to complete the work, neither are you free to desist from beginning it."

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis

President's Message, cont.

Suzanne, Mike, Ron and The Lauries for their help in running the show! For me, knowing that the Center's daily operations were in such competent hands made things much easier. And, a great big thank you to my husband, Ed, for being a great sounding board. His years of management and business experience proved to be a valuable asset for the Center and to our marriage! I highly recommend him if you are looking for an attorney!

And to all the other members who have done their part in helping out at the Center, I hope to see you at the annual Congregational Meeting on June 1 to thank you in person. Be sure to keep up with pitching in and supporting the new Board. It is vital to the continuation of our Jewish community.

May the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey have a future filled with prosperity and the congregants be blessed with peace and good health. I thank G-d for having you all as friends.

Shalom,
Gwen

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

Be sure to attend the annual Congregational Meeting on **June 1 at 9:30 a.m.** Election of officers for the next two years tops the agenda. The conversation continues on the future of our building with a presentation from the ad hoc committee regarding a proposal for an entrance ramp and revisions to the existing staircase area. Much research has been done by this committee and the costs involved will be presented. Also, the 2003-2004 budget and dues will be presented along with a financial and operating plan to carry us into the future.

A Very Special Shabbat

Don't miss the Shabbat Service on **Friday, June 6.** Incoming president Howie Hirsch will be reading from the Torah, and we will be having a baby naming for Barbara and Don Meltz's grandson, Henry Matthew Marocchi.

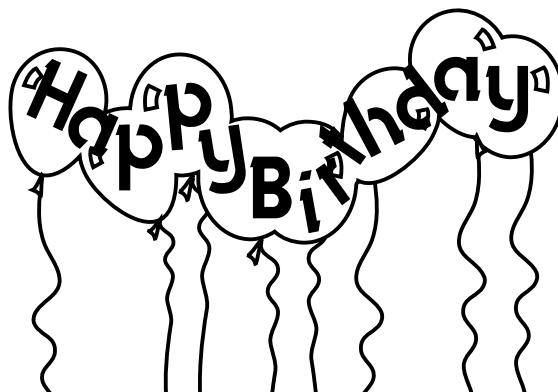
Education Committee and PTO News

**URGENTLY NEEDED-
HEBREW TEACHER FOR THE 6/7 CLASS!**

We desperately need a part time teacher to team teach with the Rabbi next year. All that is required is one to one and a half hours every Sunday. This is a paid position. This individual would take the Hebrew portion of the class, primarily reviewing the B'nai Mitzvah service. Please make a difference for the congregation and the students, consider giving your time. If interested please call the Temple.

Sunday School registration for the 2003-2004 year will begin in June. Please call the Temple as soon as possible if you will be registering your child for the first time or know of new members with school age children.

We need substitute teachers. Knowledge of Hebrew is not required. Please let Laurie know if you can volunteer for this essential role.



Happy 90th Birthday to Paul Leitner!

Just a Reminder

Bills for membership dues will now be sent out by the end of June.

Shoprite/A&P Vouchers

Shop Rite and A&P gift certificates will be available over the summer by calling the office. Thanks for your support.

American Cancer Society Relay for Life

The Relay for Life represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, those who face cancer will be supported and that one day, cancer will be eliminated. Teams will walk on the North Hunterdon High School track from 6 p.m., June 6, until 10 a.m., June 7. For more information, contact the office



Allen Menkin, M.D., F.A.A.P
Reform Mohel

Board Certified Pediatrician
245 Main Street, Chester, NJ 07930
(908) 879-3100

Donation Options

The fund to purchase an audio system with headsets for the hearing impaired is off to a great start; but more dollars are still needed. If you can help support this wonderful project, please send your contributions to Andrew Colby. The Board hopes to have the system installed by the High Holidays in September.

Donations

Memorial

Gwen and Edward Nagorsky in loving memory of Harold Nagorsky, father of Ed

In Honor of:

Paul Leitner's children and grandchildren - books in honor of Paul's 90th birthday

Helen and John Mattson in honor of Paul Leitner's 90th birthday

Simcha Leaf

Gwen and Edward Nagorsky in honor of Leah's Bat Mitzvah

Pew Plaque

Robin & Colson Hall in honor of Daniel Hall's Confirmation

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ I/We would like to make a contribution of _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

Phone _____ Please contact me/us about membership _____

Make check payable to Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey, and mail to JCNWJ

Your newsletter has been printed by **ACTION COPY** Chester Mall • 89 West Main Street, Chester • 908-879-8852