

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey

Journal

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www.jcnwj.org

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Rabbi's Message

Celebrating Imperfection

When I was a child, there was something magical about driving around at dusk. The sun would be setting, the sky slowly darkening into night, and folks would be turning on the lights in their houses. Yet, the time to draw the drapes had not yet come. This time of year with its early sunset creates such moments by early afternoon. As a child, sitting in the back of my parents' car looking out the window, I gawked in wonder at the vignettes appearing before me. Every few feet offered a new living diorama to interpret. In my mind I would enjoy making up the stories that glimpses prompted. It was living theater and make-believe rolled into one.

As an adult I have come to realize that we all play this game of make-believe, especially at the holidays. Rather than being young children who wonder at the magic of dusk and delve into their imaginations to dream up narratives based on the glow of lit up homes, we adults do something much more dangerous. We buy into the myth of the perfect holiday.

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Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, December 1st**
No Sunday School – Thanksgiving
- **Monday, December 2nd**
7:30pm Board Meeting
- **Friday, December 6th**
7pm Shabbat Music Preview
7:30pm Shabbat Service/Hanukkah Celebration/New Member Service
Oneg: Stanton, Rosenblum, Webb, and Schutzbank Families
- **Sunday, December 8th**
9:30am Sunday School (K/1)(Music)
11am Parent Topics with the Rabbi
12pm B'nai Mitzvah Brunch
- **Monday, December 9th**
7:30pm Adult Ed
- **Friday, December 13th**
5pm Confirmation Retreat
- **Sunday, December 15th**
9:30am Sunday School (K/1)(Music)
9:30am PTO Meeting
10:30am Sisterhood Meeting

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Rabbi's Message (cont.)

Our communal expectations, created by society and pounded into our psyches by seasonal advertising, are that when we celebrate our holidays – Chanukah, Thanksgiving, and even secular New Year's – we should have a perfect holiday. Media messages tell us if we buy the right gifts and decorations and create the right menus, we will have that picture perfect holiday. And we often believe it. We start to believe the myth that there is such a thing as a perfect family moment and we even think that everyone else is achieving that which we cannot seem to have. But the reality is that we do not live in a Norman Rockwell picture.

Fueled by this societal message, we come to our holiday tables with high expectations and, as a result, are in danger of walking away disappointed or worse -- feeling like failures. While we come to believe that others are happier, more financially secure and have more harmonious families, the reality is that we are human and, therefore, imperfect. We come to our holiday tables as imperfect individuals with imperfect families living lives filled with challenges. Before we despair and never invite the family over again, we can simply let go of the myth and be thankful for who we are, for what we do have, and for the loving, although imperfect, people who are our friends and family. When we let go of the myth of perfect, we can celebrate with full hearts. At this season of holidays, I invite you to celebrate the imperfect.

As we celebrate the final days of Chanukah, I wish you and your family a holiday filled with light.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Mary Zamore

Shabbat Music Preview!

Join our Student Cantor Lilah Sugarman on **Friday, December 6th at 7pm**, for joyful singing, as she teaches some of the newer music from our Shabbat service. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our rich musical traditions.

Mark Your Calendar (cont.)

- **Friday, December 20th**
7:30pm Shabbat Service
In Celebration of Paul May's Birthday
Oneg: May and Robins Families
- **Saturday, December 21st**
10:30am Torah Study
- **Sunday, December 22nd**
No Sunday School
- **Sunday, December 29th**
No Sunday School

Welcome New Members!

Join us Friday, December 6th, at our 7:30pm service as we bless our new members and welcome them into our Temple Family.

- ❖ The Kalisher Family
- ❖ The Goldfarb Family
- ❖ The Dieso Family
- ❖ The Kahan Family
- ❖ The McGraw Family

Opportunities for Teens, College Students, and Beyond!

Are you a Teen Mitzvah Hero? You may be able to win \$36,000!
<http://www.dillerteenawards.org/nominations-applications/2014-sharing>

Paid Internship March – October 2014.
Learn about the environment, farming, & Jewish education on a Jewish Organic Farm. No experience needed.
<http://pearlstonecenter.org/apprenticeship/>

College grad? Want to do something interesting, meaningful and cheap?
Teach English in Israel
<http://www.israelteachingfellows.org/>

President's Message

The past six weeks exemplified the tight, coherent community of our wonderful congregation. We collectively participated with the McMullen family in the joy of Alex's becoming a bat mitzvah. Kudos to Alex. She showed great poise in leading the Saturday service with Rabbi Zamore. At the conclusion of Alex's service, several attendees told me how impressed they were with the level of participation of our b'nai mitzvah students. From the time my family joined the temple, this level of participation has had the greatest impression on me. It is a testament to our students and their families' commitment to the Jewish religion and our community. It is complimentary to our Sunday School teachers and b'nai mitzvah tutors in their preparation of our youth to perform at such a high level. Also, at the conclusion of Alex's bat mitvah, several attendees approached me with the observation of the outpouring warmth of our temple community. We received similar comments from non-members at High Holy Day Services. Warmth, commitment, and support are the backbone of our congregation's success.

Unfortunately life is not always joyous. Beyond festive holidays and times of celebration, our warmth, commitment, and support are demonstrated during challenging times as well; as with the passing of our beloved Mike Weiner. Our rabbi and congregation stood beside the Weiner family during the funeral and Shiva, comforting them as best we knew how. As Mike would have wanted, we kept it "simple"; we were there, we expressed our condolences, and we reflected on all the good times we and our children shared with Mike. This is the way Mike would have wanted it. For Mike's family, we will always be there for you. For Mike, you will be missed by us all.

Mo Bauer

Mitzvah Day
JCNWJ Mitzvah Day at the Clover Rest Home will be rescheduled. Stay tuned for details.

Attention Parents!

Join Rabbi Zamore on Sunday, December 8th at 11am as we learn and schmooze over coffee. This session we will be reflecting on "Raising Proud, Happy Jewish Children, Even in December."

Education/PTO

The education committee would like to wish everyone a very Happy Hanukkah. We look forward to hearing about how each family takes on the combined celebration of Thanksgiving and Hanukkah. The 'hand-made' turkey menorahs Mrs. Stanton made with her 2nd/3rd graders are simply perfect for the occasion.

Please take the time to 'like' the temple's Facebook page so that you can see important updates and reminders. This is also another opportunity for our congregation to stay in touch and interact outside of temple, strengthening the bonds of our community.

Lastly, we'd like to thank Howie for giving us the unique and powerful opportunity to hear from holocaust survivor, Margit Feldman. We realize that the subject can arouse great emotion and bring upon difficult questions from our children. However, we also realize the distinct importance of these future generations having a true understanding of those events that our people as a whole will depend upon them to remember. Adults and older students are encouraged to obtain a copy of Margit's self-titled book, *Margit*, and to have these challenging (and age appropriate) conversations so that we shall never forget what the Jewish people have endured for our faith and culture.

Happy Hanukkah!

Joon and Gerri

Contributions

- ✧ In honor of Alex McMullen's Bat Mitzvah
- Rhonda Jordan
- ✧ In memory of Belle Shure
- Helen and John Mattson
- ✧ In memory of Jean Siegel
- Rhonda Jordan
- ✧ In memory of Max Weil
- Ruth and Howard Schutzbank
- ✧ In honor of Stanely Schick's 90th Birthday
- Helen and John Mattson
- ✧ In memory of Herb Parilis
- Susan and Gary Parilis
- ✧ In memory of Rose Fleisher
- Rona and Stanley Schick

שהחינו

Please join us in a
she'hechi-yanu

for **PAUL MAY's 75th
BIRTHDAY**

at Shabbat Services on
**December 20th
7:30 p.m.**



Sisterhood's Mishloach Manot Fundraiser

The JCNWJ Sisterhood is once again sponsoring the wonderful Mishloach Manot fundraiser for Purim (March 15, 2014). This is a great occasion to give sweets and gifts to your friends, family and co-workers.

Every Temple family participating will receive one small bag of hamantaschen. In each hamantaschen bag is a card identifying the family(s) that contributed to your gift with special acknowledgement to you. Like last year, each Temple family will be mailed the forms to purchase a hamantaschen bag to send to other Temple members or to purchase extra hamantaschen bags for family and friends.

Although each Temple family will receive only one hamantashen bag, you may make your purchases for as many families as you wish.

Remember that all contributions benefit our Temple! This year your generous contributions will go directly toward the purchase and installation of an outdoor shed. This shed will store our Sukkah as well as other materials for our Temple and Sunday School. For more information, and to get the forms for this event, check your mail and the Temple website, www.jcnwj.org, in January 2014.

~ Sisterhood



Money for summer camp!

Visit <http://www.onehappycampernj.org/>

2013 Voices Against Brain Cancer Walk/Run



On November 17th many JCNWJ congregants traveled to Central Park in New York City to participate in the annual Voices Against Brain Cancer Run/Walk. Voices Against Brain Cancer is a foundation dedicated to finding a cure for brain cancer through scientific research, increasing awareness within the medical community, and supporting brain cancer patients and their families. As members of the “Friends of Mike Team”, congregants proudly walked to support our teacher, mentor, and dear friend, Mike Weiner, who lost his courageous battle with brain cancer shortly after the event. Mike will be deeply missed by everyone whose lives he touched.

News About Our Members

Someone in your family receive an honor? Achieve some goal? Perform an outstanding mitzvah? If you'd like to let JCNWJ members know about it in the newsletter, please send the information in "ready to print" form to Mo Bauer at jcnwjprez@jcnwj.org.

Memorial Plaques

Anyone interested in purchasing a permanent bronze memorial plaque to honor a loved one in your family, please contact Lois Goldberg at DewieandLouie7@verizon.net.

January Journal Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles and advertisements to be included in the January Issue of the JCNWJ Journal is **December 19, 2013**. Please email articles, photographs, or news items to the Journal Editor, Abby Bauer at abbybauer@comcast.net.

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 in 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 Rita Berkowitz.

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.

Adult Education

Join Rabbi Zamore as we continue the exploration of food, food production and Judaism. Rabbi Zamore's book on this topic **The Sacred Table: Creating a Jewish Food Ethic** was a National Jewish Book Award Finalist. Come to one session or come to all!

Mondays, 7:30pm: December 9, Jan 13, Feb 10, March 10, April 7, May 12, June 9



Join us for these upcoming Jewish LIFE programs...

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, author of *How to Be a Friend to a Friend Who's Sick*. **Wednesday, December 4, 12:00 p.m.** Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Program includes luncheon. Ms. Pogrebin will be sharing her experiences of friends' and relatives' diverse reactions to her suffering from breast cancer including how some friends and family members behaved; how some misspoke or misinterpreted her needs; and how wonderful it was when people read her right.

Fee: \$18/person in advance or \$22 at the door. This program is being co-sponsored by Brandeis National Committee, Somerset Chapter; Jewish Family Service of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties; Jewish Federation Women's Philanthropy of Somerset, Hunterdon & Warren Counties; Hadassah; Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough Sisterhood; Temple Beth El, Somerset Sisterhood; Temple Sholom, Bridgewater, Sisterhood.

The Irma Horowitz Film Series featuring *Falafel and Short Israeli Films*. **Thursday, December 12, 6:30 p.m.** Films presented by the Ma'aleh School of Television Film and Arts in Jerusalem include: *The Breakfast Parliament, The Ranch* and *The Rabbi's Daughter*. Hosted by the Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Fee includes Falafel dinner: \$10/person in advance or \$15 at the door.

Dr. Robert Harris, Associate Professor of Bible at The Jewish Theological Seminary, will present *Jews and Christian Read Scripture*, **Thursday, January 30 at 7 p.m.** Dr. Harris will be examining the commonalities as well as the differences between Jews and Christians in medieval biblical study; the relationships and mutual influences that Rabbis and churchmen had on one another (particularly in northern France) and, in particular, the polemics through which they typically interacted. The program will be hosted by the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The event fee is \$8/person in advance and \$10/person.

To register for all Jewish LIFE Programs, please call the Birnbaum JCC at 908-725-6994 x201.

Thank you for supporting Jewish LIFE.



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