

# Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey



## Journal



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

Summer 2012  
Vol. XXXVII, Issue 18

### Rabbi's Message

It hardly seems like eighteen years. When I first walked through the doors of this congregation, I had no idea how long I might be here. I met with the Search Committee. From the beginning, we were honest and direct with each other. "We won't hire you if you insist on doing adult education programs during the Oneg Shabbat, because that is the only time of the week we get to see each other and catch up," they said. That sounded okay to me. "And promise us that you won't talk about gematria from the pulpit," they said. Okay, no problem. "And when the weather is bad, we cancel services because we don't want people to risk their lives getting here. And if the weather is bad by you and okay by us, don't come," they said. I could live with that, I thought. And finally they said, "If we hire you and things don't work out, we'd like to just shake hands and walk away from the table." I felt the same way. From the very first, I sensed that I might find a home at the Jewish Center and I was right.

You might think that after eighteen years, things could become routine and predictable, but that hasn't been the case. Even though we are small, we are always "growing" in ways other than size. This past Sunday was a good example. It was the final day for teachers to be in class (and out on the front lawn with baby goats) with students. We said goodbye to Cantor Elana Rosen-Brown with a rousing rendition of Kehillah Kedoshah (thank you, Debbie Fesinstine for helping us to learn this song). We had a visit from Rabbi Yitzhak Winer, a scribe from Staten Island who brought us a light-weight Torah for our inspection and subsequent purchase. After a lovely lunch (thank you, Sharon Herson), we studied about the shofar with Cantor Daniel Pincus and even learned to blow a few notes. We did this in memory of our ba'al tekiyah Eric Edelstein who surely would have been proud of our attempts.

I didn't know when I walked through the doors eighteen years ago that I would find a community that liked to learn and grow. I didn't know I would find a community that functioned as a community in the truest sense of the word, a place that believed in taking care of each other and taking care of the synagogue. I used to say that membership came with a mop (that was in the days when the Simcha Room flooded regularly). Everyone pitches in when they see that they are needed.

## Rabbi's Message, continued

When a congregation does what it is supposed to do, the rabbi gets to do what the rabbi is supposed to do. Because you do what you do, I get to do what I am trained to do. We work hand in hand. A newspaper reporter asked me recently if I thought that our finding each other was a result of Divine Providence. I said, "No, just good old-fashioned luck."

Many thanks for a wonderful eighteen years. L'chaim! Rabbi Ellen Lewis



## President's Message

I can't believe it has been 18 years since Rabbi Lewis and I joined this congregation. I remember when I was searching for a temple, I came to services in the late spring and there was a male Rabbi who seemed to be very nice, and I thought we got along well in the one time I met him. Then I came to Rosh Hashanah services in the fall and there was a woman Rabbi, A WOMAN RABBI. I don't think I had even heard of such a thing let alone have a woman for my Rabbi. I was brought up in a conservative congregation where at least girls were able to be Bat Mitzvah'ed, but a woman rabbi?

Four days later I suffered a terrible accident when I fell out of a third story window. This woman Rabbi called me in the hospital to see how I was doing. It was probably one of the first things she did outside of her "normal" duties in the congregation. It was an odd way to start off my life in the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey. My children started going to Sunday school and services that year. As I started to know Rabbi Lewis, I found her to be intelligent, personable, caring, nurturing and a general joy to be around. I am not sure what my life would have been like without the Jewish Center and Rabbi Lewis, who I feel are inseparable at this point to me. The Jewish Center is my second home and the congregation has allowed me to be the president for 7 of the last 9 years.

If it were not for Rabbi Lewis, I do not think that I would have grown in my life enough to be able to handle this position.

So on Friday June 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will be holding a very special Shabbaton in honor of Rabbi Lewis' 18<sup>th</sup> year at this shul; in the country. There will be guest rabbis and cantors joining us on this weekend including our previous student cantors, now ordained cantors Marcy Kadin and Elana Rosen-Brown.

On Friday night, we will be presenting a Torah to the congregation in honor of Rabbi Lewis. Please join with me and my family to honor our very special Rabbi.

Love Howie

# Mark Your Calendar

## June, July, August, and Early September 2012

- Fri. June 1      Shabbat evening service (Oneg hosts: Margolis, Goldberg,  
7:30 p.m.      Wilson, Joel Berkowitz, Yanow)
- Sun. June 3      Sunday School for all grades and Confirmation service  
9:30 a.m.      (Congregation is invited for the Confirmation of Scott Marinich and Sally Weiner)
- Mon. June 4      Board meeting (open to all congregants)  
7:30 p.m.
- Tues. June 5      Yoga  
6:30 p.m.
- Sun. June 10      Congregational General Meeting (RSVP to Howie Hirsch)  
9:30 a.m.
- Fri. June 15      Shabbat evening service (Oneg host: Suzi Marr)  
7:30 p.m.
- Sat. June 16      Bat Mitzvah of Gracie Marr  
10:00 a.m.
- Fri. June 22      Shabbaton in honor of Rabbi Lewis: evening service led by  
7:30 p.m.      Rabbi Lewis and Cantor Rosen-Brown\*
- Sat. June 23      Shabbaton in honor of Rabbi Lewis: morning service led by  
10 a.m.      Rabbi Lewis and Cantors Kadin and Rosen-Brown\*
- Fri. June 29      Final Sisterhood meeting/Shabbat at the home of Rochelle Ostenfeld  
7 p.m.      (RSVP to Rochelle)
- Sat. June 30      Torah study at the home of Judy May (RSVP to Judy)\*  
10:30 a.m.
- Mon. July 2      Board meeting (open to all congregants)  
7:30 p.m.
- Mon. July 23      Sunday school teacher's meeting
- Fri. July 27      Shabbat summer service, led by Rabbi Lewis\*  
7:30 p.m.
- Mon. Aug. 6      Board meeting (open to all congregants)  
7:30 p.m.
- Fri. Sept. 7      Shabbat evening service, led by Rabbi Lewis and Cantor Goldmann\*  
7:30 p.m.
- Sun. Sept. 9      Opening day of Sunday School. Meet the new cantor. See the new  
9:30 a.m.      Torah.\*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### *Shabbaton in Celebration of Rabbi Lewis's Eighteen Years at the JCNWJ*

Our *Shabbaton*, to be held on 22–23 June 2012 / 2–3 Tamuz 5772, a special celebration in honor of Rabbi Lewis's 18 years of service with us, will focus on Shabbat, Torah, and the entry of women into the rabbinate.

The Friday night service will be led by **Rabbi Lewis and Cantor Rosen-Brown**. The highlight will be the presentation of the new Torah to the congregation, which will include Vice President Bob Margolis talking about the search for a new Torah. *Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime event.* A very special Oneg Shabbat will follow the service.

The Saturday service will also be unique. Worship will be led by **Rabbi Lewis and two cantors, both former student cantors with us** (a fitting first): **Marcy Kadin and Elana Rosen-Brown**. Torah and Haftarah portions will be read or chanted by congregants (Suzi Marr, Iris Hirsch, Karen Finkelstein, Rita Berkowitz, Howie Hirsch, Mike Weiner, Marcy Kadin, Marsha Gross, and Helen Mattson).

Our guest speaker on Saturday morning will be **Rabbi Mindy Portnoy**. Rabbi of Temple Sinai for twenty-five years, she was ordained in June 1980 by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City and has been one of the pioneers for women in the Rabbinate. (For a fuller biography of Rabbi Portnoy, see below.)

Other honors for the *Shabbaton* are as follows. Friday night: ushers—Jeffrey Berkowitz and Jerrold Berkowitz; candle blessing—Rita Berkowitz, Iris Hirsch, Susan McNamara, and Sharon Herson. Saturday morning: ushers—Rene Marinich and Gerri Klein; ark opening—Jeannie Berkowitz; *hakafah*—Sharon Herson; *hagbah*—Jeffrey Berkowitz; *gellilah*—Susan McNamara.

An elegant luncheon, organized and prepared by Jeannie Berkowitz (with help from congregational choppers and kibitzers) will follow the Saturday service. Table seating will be assigned, so be sure to pick up your table-assignment card.

#### *Rabbi Mindy Avra Portnoy*

Rabbi Portnoy is the author of five children's books, *Ima on the Bima (My Mommy is a Rabbi)* (1986), *Mommy Never Went to Hebrew School* (1989), *Matzah Ball (A Passover Story)* (1994), *Where do People Go When They Die?* (2004; Spanish translation, 2008), and *A Tale of Two Seders* (2010). Her article "Prelude to Dialogue: What Christians Need to Know About Jews" has appeared in ecumenical journals. Her sermons and articles have also been published in *The American Rabbi* and the *Washington Jewish Week*. Her Rosh Hashanah sermon, "The Missing 'Hineni'," was selected for inclusion in *Mivchar Hadrush: Selected Sermons* (1992); and her Rosh Hashanah sermon, "Jewish Men on My Mind," was included in *Living Words III: Best High Holiday Sermons of 5761* (2000).

Rabbi Portnoy served for five years (1980–85) as Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at The American University and is a former national co-coordinator of the Women's Rabbinic Network (WRN) and one of its originators. She has been a member of the Publications Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and on the board of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington.

Rabbi Portnoy, a 1973 graduate of Yale University in the first class that accepted women, holds a Master of Arts degree in Hebrew literature from Hebrew Union College and spent a year as a graduate fellow in Comparative Religion at The Dropsie University in Philadelphia. She wrote her rabbinic thesis in the area of medieval Jewish polemical literature. She has done additional graduate work at The Catholic University of America, and has taught in the Jewish Studies and Religion Departments at The American University and the Theology Department at Trinity College. For several years at The American University, she co-taught with a Presbyterian colleague a course entitled History of Jewish-Christian Relations.

Rabbi Portnoy was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on December 6, 1951, and is married to Philip Leonard Breen, who is now retired from his position as Special Legal Counsel, Disability Rights Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice. They reside in Kensington, Maryland, and have two adult children, Ceala Eloise and Barney Samuel.

### **New Cantor, 2012–13**

It is exciting to report that the search for a new cantor, following the ordination of Elana Rosen-Brown, has ended successfully in the hiring of Cantor Elizabeth Goldmann for 2012–13, with the possibility her continuing if all parties are satisfied with the arrangement. Cantor Goldmann will lead services together with Rabbi Lewis for the High Holy Days, and then she will come one weekend per month (dates TBA), Friday evening through Sunday midday. Cantor Goldmann is an invested cantor (see her bio below). Besides co-leading Shabbat evening services and working with the Sunday School students, coordinating with our music teacher, Debbie Fesinstine, Cantor Goldmann will also initiate special programs on Saturdays (TBA). *If there is a type of program (series or single day) that you would like to see for the Saturday portion of the monthly visits, please speak to Rabbi Lewis or Howie Hirsch or Sharon Herson (by June 20) so that your ideas can be considered in the discussions with Cantor Goldmann.*

#### *Cantor Elizabeth Goldmann*

Cantor Goldmann is a 1986 graduate of Cornell University (B.S.). She received her Master's degree and cantorial investiture from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music in 1991; her Master's recital focused on "Liturgical Poetry from the Golden Age of Spain." Since her investiture, she has served as cantor to several congregations in New York and New Jersey, adjusting her work life to the needs of her family life. Cantor Goldmann's first weekend visit will be September 7–9, and this will be an opportunity for all members to meet her. Mark your calendar now for the September 7 Shabbat service, for a special program on Saturday, September 8, and for the opening of Sunday School on September 9.

Cantor Goldmann lives with her family in Nanuet, New York.

## The Shofar Workshop, Ongoing



Thursday June 7th Shofar training at Howie's house  
Thursday June 21st Shofar training at Howie's house  
Thursday June 28th Shofar training at Howie's house

The series of workshops is presented in memory of Eric Edelstein, who was our primary Baal Tekiah (master blaster) for many years. It is hoped that the workshops will train several individuals who will be able to assume responsibility for the sacred obligation of blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. One of the 613 mitzvot is to hear the sound of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah (Numbers 29:1); in order for us to fulfill this mitzvah, someone from our congregation (over the age of 13) must be able to sound the shofar, which is not an easy thing to do.

The first Shofar workshop was held on Sunday, May 20, in the sanctuary, where about a dozen participants (adults and children) viewed a variety of shofarot (a masculine word with a feminine ending), long horns and short, and were awed by what they heard when the horns were sounded by Cantor Dan Pincus, who traveled from Riverdale to conduct the workshop. The series of sessions—continuing throughout the month of June in the form of interactive Skype meetings on Thursday evenings at the home of Howie Hirsch (contact Howie if you want to join)—began with each person trying to make a sound on several instruments until he/she found one that worked. Cantor Pincus emphasized the importance of finding a shofar “that you love and that loves you”—precluding the purchase of a shofar online. Best to go to one of the Judaica stores and try them out (you can look online to see the selection; see below). Several participants were able to make decent noise by the end of the session, but not all—Cantor Pincus told me not to feel bad, not everyone can do this, he said. Nevertheless, I was happy to be there. I learned a lot. You can, too. Check out the websites listed below.

Besides the June Skype sessions on Thursday evenings, there will be additional Skype sessions in July and August (times TBA) and a final in-person session with Cantor Pincus in September before the High Holy Days (date TBA).

A final word: although the official Baal Tekiah must be over the age of thirteen, I note that several of our children show great promise and should be encouraged to continue practicing because, before they know it, they will be of age. The JCNWJ will purchase one new shofar and keep it on site in the Rabbi's office. Students may use it for practicing if they don't have one at home.

SRH

Websites to learn about the shofar:

<http://hearingshofar.blogspot.com/p/intro.html>

<http://www.shofarot.com/>

For purchase of a shofar:

[www.chabadessex.com](http://www.chabadessex.com)

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[www.judaicawebstore.com](http://www.judaicawebstore.com)

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Judy and Paul May  
Nancy and Bernard Robins  
Susan Scholar



### Memorial Plaques

**If anyone is interested in honoring a family member who has recently died with a permanent bronze memorial plaque, please contact Helen Mattson. Ordering a plaque now will insure that it will be installed before the High Holidays in September.**



## CONTRIBUTIONS

Congratulations to the Needleman family on the birth of their granddaughter Sarah Margaret Needleman.

In honor of Sabrina Hutt's bat mitzvah  
Lori Klein

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In memory of the 10th anniversary of the yahrzeit of Sadye L. Hertzmark  
Nancy and Bernard Robins

In memory of Michael Lewis  
Rabbi Ellen Lewis

In memory of David Parilis  
Gary Parilis

In memory of Rita A. Leiter  
Audrie Sonzogni

In memory of Eric Edelstein  
Debbi Longenecker

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A gift to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund with thanks and in memory of Lester Moskowitz  
Debbi Longenecker

A gift to the Rabbi's Discretionary fund in honor of the bat mitzvah of her granddaughter Heather Gross  
Klaire Katz

A gift to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund from in honor of Alex's bar mitzvah  
Bill and Melissa Parson



## Education/PTO

June is here and another wonderful year of Hebrew School comes to an end. June 3<sup>rd</sup> is our Closing Assembly and Confirmation Service. All of the Hebrew School students will participate in the Confirmation Service, so parents should plan to stay that day. Mazel Tov to our confirmands: Sally Weiner and Scott Marinich.

Thank you to Rabbi Lewis, Cantor Elana Rosen-Brown, our teachers and their assistants, our PTO Chair and all of the PTO families who have made our Hebrew School so successful. It has been a great year – have a wonderful summer.

Marsha Gross (Education Chair)

### **Time to Change Over the Closet: Donate Unwanted Clothing & Practical Shoes**

Hi, my name is Gracie Marr. My bat mitzvah is on June 16th. Part of my mitzvah project is working at The Caring Closet, located in the United Methodist Church in Washington, NJ. This is an organization that gives clothing to people who can't afford it or those who are in need due to fire or tragedy. They offer clean, nice clothing. If someone can't afford the clothing, it is free. They have mens, womens, teens, childrens, and babies clothing. They have shoes, as well. Right now, they are in need of men's clothing, comfortable shoes, and teen's clothing. The shoes can be mens or womens and any size (no high heels). Same with the clothing. If you have extra hangers, they could use those, too. Please donate to The Caring Closet! Bring your donated items to the temple and leave it in my mother's (Ms. Suzanne) classroom. You will be helping a family have nice things to wear. Thank you!

### **DISCOUNTS FOR SHOWS**

**The discount show offers that we have been keeping on the piano downstairs is being replaced by an online version.**

To sign up for the offers, you must join the e-mail list.

To do this, visit: [www.schooltix.com](http://www.schooltix.com)

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### **September Journal Deadline**

**The deadline for submitting articles, advertisements and photos to be included in the September issue is August 19, 2012. Please email articles, ideas or news items to Journal Editor, Barbara Simons at [bjbs@comcast.net](mailto:bjbs@comcast.net)**



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**Electric Meter Information**  
Meter Number 26421908  
Current Meter Reading, May 11 (actual) 048857  
Last Meter Reading, Apr 12 (actual) 047910

**PSEG** April 2010 Account number 0000000000 Invoice number: 00000000000000000000 Page 3 of 3  
24-hour customer service and emergencies 1-800-436-2506 (7734)

**PSEG Electric**

Usage: Meter 0000000000 Charges: Paid 0 FE0000113333136/247 Rate: LPLS  
Reading May 3 Delivery  
Actual Or Peak Service charge \$705.44

**Orange & Rockland** 390 West Route 59 Spring Valley NY 10977-5300 Page 1 of 2  
Pike County Light & Power Co. 1-877-434-4100 www.oru.com

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☒ Your next Meter Reading will be: Aug 23

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**ELECTRIC RESIDENTIAL SERVICE** BILLING DATE 07/22/10

Jul 22 reading (Actual) 1461  
Jun 23 reading (Actual) -9035  
Total Usage KWH 29 Days 2426

**BILLING SUMMARY**  
ACCOUNT NUMBER 0000000000  
Last Bill \$430.04  
Payment - EFT 07/06/10 -430.04

Basic Service Charge \$3.88  
Distribution Charges  
First 250 KWH @ 4.180¢ each 10.45  
Rest 2176 KWH @ 4.890¢ each 106.59

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When contacting an Electric Generation Supplier or CleanPower Supplier, please provide the customer numbers below.  
Call JCP&L at 1-800-662-3115 with questions on these charges.

**Basic Charges**  
Customer Number: 0803505442 0005200417 Residential Service - JC\_RS\_01D  
Customer Charge 2.20

**Basic Generation Service**  
45 KWH x 0.112444 5.06  
389 KWH x 0.116350 45.26  
434 KWH x 0.006406 2.78  
Total Basic Generation Service 53.10 53.10

## Q. Who is Viridian?

Viridian is a socially responsible retail energy company based in Norwalk, CT. Viridian provides affordable green energy to commercial and residential customers in its service territories in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Maryland.

## Q. How does Viridian save customers money?

Due to energy deregulation, customers can choose an alternative supplier like Viridian who can buy energy wholesale from competitive generators and pass the savings along to customers. The utility still provides delivery, service and billing.

## Q. How does our organization benefit?

The funds generated from this program will support our overall mission or any other projects we are working on.

## Q. What do I need to enroll?

Just your basic contact information and utility account information from your bill. (see bill samples to the left)

## Q. What will change when I enroll?

You won't notice any change except Viridian's name listed as your supplier and Viridian's rate per kilowatt hour under the supply section of your bill. The bill will still come from the utility and the lights will still turn on just like they always have. You still pay your bill to the utility and will still receive repair, maintenance and emergency response from the utility.

## Q. Does it cost anything to enroll?

No, there are no enrollment fees. There are also no cancellation fees.

## Q. Do I have to sign a contract?

No, there are no long-term contracts. Viridian's service is month to month and customers can cancel at any time with no penalty.

## Q. Will I get a separate bill?

No, you will receive only one bill from the utility just like you always have. You will still pay the bill to the utility just like you always have.

## Q. Why did our organization choose Viridian over other suppliers?

In addition to providing our supporters savings on their energy bill, Viridian is committed to helping the environment by providing greener energy to the grid. Plus, we earn residual income for our organization, while our supporters save.

## Q. Will it cost me anything extra to help our organization?

No. This fundraising opportunity allows our organization to earn income simply by referring customers to Viridian. As a customer, you will actually save money over time on a service you are already using and paying for.

## Q. What if I'm on a budget plan with the utility?

Enrolling with Viridian may affect your current payment plan if you are on a budget billing plan or receiving government assistance. Check with your utility to see how your billing will be impacted.

## Q. Can I choose how much green energy I use?

Yes. Viridian has two green rate plans. Everyday Green comes from 20% renewable sources and offers customers an affordable way to go green. For the most environmentally conscious customer, Viridian offers the Green-e Energy certified 100% Pure Green plan.

## Q. What if I don't choose a supplier?

As a resident of a deregulated state, you have the right to choose a third party supplier like Viridian. If you have not yet selected a supplier, you automatically get the utility's retail supply rate.

## Q. Can I talk to someone from Viridian?

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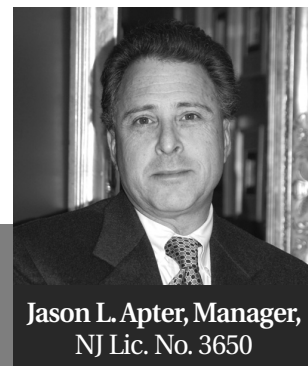
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