



Our Temple

December 2002

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 39 No. 4

Notes from the President

Kristallnacht service profound, moving

By Ellen Azrael
President

We just got home from the Kristallnacht service at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Court Streets. What a wonderful experience it is, not because this service remembers the night that Jews and their property were attacked by the Nazis and their followers, but because it is the non-Jewish community remembering.

I have attended this service many times since it was first held in 1988. The

lights are dimmed, and out of the darkness there is a deep voice that speaks as if it remembers the despair felt on that night in November of 1938. Shortly thereafter there is a period of silence shattered by the sound of broken glass. Not once, but three times and each time I was startled and goose bumps ran down my back.

Can you imagine waking up to the sounds of windows shattering in your home or neighborhood! Can you imagine your father, husband or brother taken

away to prison or even shot in front of your home! It's almost unbelievable, yet it happened and we need to remember.

It's also very important that we attend the remembrance services sponsored by those outside of the Jewish community. Next year when Kristallnacht (Nov. 9, 1938) is again remembered in the Episcopal Church I hope many more of us will attend the service to show our appreciation and join in, making sure that we never forget the horrors of hatred.

(Continued on page 3)

From the Rabbi's Study

Ethics vs. ritual

(My thanks to Rabbi B. Presler, whose teaching formed the basis of this article.)

People love to argue about religion. Or maybe, more accurately, they like to argue with me because I am a rabbi. Invariably, at a party or a social gathering, or even at a Shiva house, someone will start a discussion about religion.

The most common issue has to do with morality and ethics on the one hand, and ritual observances on the other. Which is better: a person who is religiously observant but morally lax, or a person whose morals and ethics are beyond

question but who is not observant -- who does not believe in "organized religion."

The answer I give is that neither is better; both are incomplete; both are missing something. Invariably what people want to hear is that morality and ethics are more important than ritual. Too often we overlook the importance of ritual. We fail to appreciate its vital role in our lives.

What is ritual? It is a way to show how we think and feel. We do not live in our heads, with our thoughts and feelings. We must express our thoughts and feelings. If I love someone deeply, but fail to express that love in concrete terms, the object of

my affections will feel unloved. *We do not live in thoughts, but in deeds.* Judaism has always stressed the act, the deed, and the ritual.

How do we change the attitudes people have? Every educator knows that our habits and customs condition our attitudes. Good study habits generally make good students. This is why Judaism sees the deed as the means to transmit values. It highlights those things it wishes to cultivate to the level of *Mitzvot* -- Commandments. It proclaims the idea that *mitzvot* have the power to hallow our lives, to make them meaningful and fulfilling. We cannot sanctify our lives by thoughts alone.

It is very easy to say "I believe" or "I

(Continued on page 2)

December Highlights

Friday, Dec. 6: Shabbat service, 6 p.m., followed by Chanukah dinner

Saturday, Dec. 7: Morning Shabbat Service, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 8: Blood drive, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 14: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 15: Men's Club, 9:30 a.m.

Friday night services at 7:45 unless otherwise noted

Babysitting available at all services

Bulletin sponsored by

Ivan and

Dr. Mildred Gordon

in memory of Kate and

Nathan Gross



Religious School News

Catching up on lots of new activities

By Holly Michelson, RJE
Religious School Administrator

Happy Chanukah. A nice quiet December to fill you in on some of the goings on around the school.

This year we are fortunate in being able to offer Hebrew Enrichment on Sundays again. For some students, this involves a chance to play games, get in extra reading practice and review their Tuesday lessons. It also means the school is able to offer a limited amount of tutoring for those who could use a little one on one time with a teacher. We also have students who are learning their Alef Bet for the first time with a great new set

of materials. You should hear how much they know already.

We have also added something new to our Confirmation Class. This class, which is open to adult learners as well, offers an exciting interactive, multimedia learning opportunity — a guided exploration of basic concepts and principles of Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah from a practical, contemporary perspective, as an avenue to enhanced understanding of God and Torah. Robb Mutzel, the class instructor, is helping students explore such topics as: the history and origins of Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah and, among other things, the application of Jewish

mystical and spiritual teachings to everyday life, relationships and contemporary issues.

Lastly, along with our being a pilot site for the new Siddur, we have been honored in being a pilot site in the Religious School for the new UAHC Core Curriculum for Grade 3. More details next month.

Have a wonderful winter break and have a Happy secular New Year.

Important Dates:

- Dec. 6: Family Chanukah Service
- Dec. 24: NO SCHOOL
- Dec. 29: NO SCHOOL
- Dec. 31: NO SCHOOL

Men's Club News

Exploring the tough issues of medical ethics

By Marshall Azrael
Men's Club president

Medical Ethics in a World of Change - On December 15, Rabbi Michelson will address this weighty topic. Hardly a week goes by without a news story about medical malpractice or the costs of medicines. What is the Jewish point of view? And how can we apply those principles today. Meet us for breakfast to hear the rest of the story.

At our November meeting, a motion was passed to contribute \$200 to The Jewish Chautauqua Society. Established in 1893, JCS is Reform Judaism's oldest and largest interfaith education program.

And, the North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods runs JCS. The Mission of The Chautauqua Society is: To provide knowledge and education about Jews and Judaism. To bring about an appreciation of the Jewish people, their history, religion, and culture To build bridges of understanding between peoples of all faiths and cultures.

Individual contributions are also encouraged — Ellen and I always do. The address is: 633 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6778. For more information, the E-mail address is: <http://RJ.ORG/JCS> I hope you will join us for breakfast at 9:30, Dec. 15. I look forward to seeing

you. Please call me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Our next meeting will be Jan.19. Our speaker will be President Ellen Azrael. She will prepare us for "Bracing for the Tax Man."

Our officers are: Marshall Azrael, President; Sidney Symons, Vice President; Michael Pardo, Secretary; Arthur Becker, Past President.

Future Meetings, all on Sundays: Feb. 9, March 16, April 6, May 11.

RABBI

(Continued from page 1)

love." But to say it is not necessarily to mean it. When we show love, when we live our faith, then we prove to ourselves that this is how we really feel. A person's convictions that will not stand the acid test of being demonstrated in action are no

convictions at all.

Ethics or ritual? Both are important. Yet, we should never underestimate just how important ritual is. It can bring meaning and fulfillment to our lives.

“Repairing Our World from the Inside Out”

a three-session Adult Education program on **Jewish Ethics** with Rabbi Michelson. Tuesdays, Dec. 3, 10, 17 from 8 –9:30 p.m. If you haven't registered, please call the office to see if there are workbooks available. **Cost: Members \$10, non-members \$18**



PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 1)

Next month I'm sure I will be writing about the Biennial, which I will have attended about three weeks before you get this bulletin. So in the meantime I wanted to let you know about some of the programs we are involved in through the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) the Reform Movement's parent organization.

We are participating in the evaluation of a new prayer book, which is being

developed by the UAHC. We have six members committing to attending at least six services during a 12-week period. At the end of the trial period the committee will report its findings to the UAHC.

More than a few years ago our congregation formed a few focus groups, and sent info to the UAHC about what we thought would improve the prayer book in use at the time (Gates of Prayer). It will be interesting to see, if some of our suggestions from the past are being used

in this new prayer book.

The other UAHC program involves testing the new "CHAI Curriculum" in our religious school. This year the third grade is following a curriculum created by the education department of the UAHC. It's very exciting to see our congregation involved in projects coordinated by the UAHC.

Kudos to the Food Festival committee and the league of volunteers. What a wonderful job you have done!

Food Festival produces many delicious memories

By Jeri Kozloff

Here are a few of my favorite Food Festival things:

- The matzah ball crew in the temple kitchen
- Rabbi Michelson telling about the windows in the sanctuary wearing his apron with two teddy bears sticking out of the pockets
- Ina Grapenthin, the two Dans, and their four instruments making beautiful music together
- Our littlest volunteers cleaning tables and trays
- Our biggest volunteers carrying kettles, pans, tables, chairs, and trashbags
- Sara and Al Diamond "shmoozing" with Jim and Shirley Ullman as they filled applesauce containers

- Kaye Ullman's china
 - Maxine Henry selling challahs
 - Visitors wearing crosses in our sanctuary, library, and gift shop
 - Hearing people say, "I saw so many people I know and haven't seen for so long."
 - The knishes
 - Richard Yashek winning the prize for selling 64 platter tickets
- Truly the list could be endless but these examples highlight the numberless "intangibles" that this event now brings to Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and the Berks County community. At the same time we earn funds for our music program, support and enhance our building, and share with MAZON and the Berks County Food Bank.

We've already set and publicized the date for next year: Once again it will be the fourth Sunday in October, Oct. 26. Mark it on your calendar, plan to begin baking and spreading the word early and often, and to be with us as volunteers and participants for what is becoming a "must do" event for our congregation, the Jewish community and our friends and neighbors throughout the area. I confidently turn over the reins of leadership to Ellice Gunter and thank every one of you for the support, enthusiasm, and hard work that has made chairing the festival a tremendous pleasure.

NEWSLETTER

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*To get an item in the bulletin,
call Mark, 610-370-2533 (Marknem@aol.
com)*

or Temple office, 610-375-6043.

Wanted:

Additional upright freezer for food festival and other occasions. Please call Temple office if you have one to donate or sell

The Temple Online

www.ohebsholom.org

To contact us:

Office: office@ohebsholom.org

Rabbi Michelson: rabbi@ohebsholom.org

Bookkeeper Beth Bruck: bookkeeper@ohebsholom.org



The Jane Henry Memorial Fund

The Jane Henry Memorial Fund is not just a camp fund for youth. It will help anyone in need, particularly young people. This fund will consider aiding someone during difficult, needy periods.

Thank you to everyone for the many uniongrams received for my recent birthday
Saul M. Miller

To all of you who responded to my many phone calls and baked so many wonderful baked goods for the Food Festival, Thank you so much. You are all wonderful.
Evelyn Goodman

New Building—Landscaping Fund

Thank you for all the good wishes on the 39th anniversary of my 21st birthday. Love, Carol Cohn.

New Building Fund

To Mrs. Edith Bisgyer and family in memory of David Bisgyer

Norma, Marty, Andy & Erica Beckerman

In honor of Sue & George Viener

Tim & Nancy Grumbacher

To Richard & Rosalye Yashek in honor of their granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah
Trudy Katz
Hilde Gernsheimer & Fred Jakobs

To Ellen Azrael in honor of her birthday
Hilde Gernsheimer & Fred

Jakobs
To Judith Kraines & Dr. Neil Hoffman in honor of their son Seth's engagement
Trudy Katz
Hilde Gernsheimer & Fred Jakobs

For the Heather Nazimov Scarlatta Fund, in honor of Barbara Nazimov's special birthday
Hilde Gernsheimer & Fred Jakobs

Thanks for all the best wishes on the engagement of our son, Seth
Judith Kraines & Neil Hoffman

Yahrzeit in memory of Arthur Levinger

Norma, Marty, Andy & Erica Beckerman

Yahrzeit in memory of my mother, Victoria Levine
Rosalye & Richard Yashek

In memory of Daniel Blank
Harriet Baskin

Yahrzeit in memory of Joseph Hrabak
Ron & Sharon Hrabak

For the Heather Nazimov Scarlatta Fund to Nan Kurlancheek in memory of her mother, Shirley Kurlancheek

Frederick & Kathleen Stefano

Music Fund

To Neil Hoffman and Judith Kraines in honor of Seth and

Joanna's engagement
Kalmen & Margaret Feinberg

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

A donation has been received from
Donald Miller

Wishing everyone a happy Chanukah season
Saul M. Miller

In memory of Mal Spinrad
Norma & Marty Beckerman

Nathan & Alerta Fein Scholarship Fund

To Pauline Goldberg in memory of Bernard Goldberg
Alan & Loretta Green

Shirley K.

Jacobs Religious

School Fund

To Sharon Scullin for a

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Stand up and cheer for the Food Festival

To the Editor:

The recent and unforgettable Jewish Food and Cultural Festival was a dynamite event. Our Temple truly shone as a model of accomplishment, talent and good will. All this was due to the various committees and their devoted workers under the outstanding leadership of Jeri Kozloff. Jeri was an ardent, hard working captain. All those who resolutely worked under her leadership emulated her. This produced a monumental, social success. The foods, which were mainly

homemade, were delicious. The holiday tables displayed in the library were both traditional and exquisite, the musical entertainments delightful and melodious, and the tours led by our Rabbi inspiring.

Even the scheduling was excellent and each happening was prompt. We think one of the most superior, exceptional, and unusual features of the Festival was the organization and cooperation of the volunteer servers. Rarely do we see members from kindergarten age to more than 80 years of age working so well

together. Everyone seemed eager to help, to be working in a happy frame of mind, wearing a big smile, and showing a desire to do their very best.

We want to say three cheers and more for Jeri and her entire entourage of good workers. We sincerely compliment everyone involved and know that every member of the Temple will agree. Now we look forward to next year's Jewish Food and Cultural Festival and wish for the future coordinators the joy of creating a happy and successful event.

Share the gift of life

Sunday, Dec. 8 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. donate a pint of blood and register to be a bone marrow/blood stem cell donor at the same time. Consent forms are in the office if you desire to register. Have the consent form filled out before arriving to register.



Sisterhood News

Thanks for support of Chanukah baskets

By Elyse Horowitz

We would like to thank everyone for their support of our Chanukah Basket fund-raiser. The women of Sisterhood had a great time assembling the baskets. We hope you enjoyed the gift.

All members of the congregation will be receiving a questionnaire from the Sisterhood. Please take the time to fill it out and send it back in, we would love to hear your thoughts and opinions.

Here are some dates to remember;

March 18 is the Donor Lunch, April 5 the Sisterhood Social event, Sisterhood Shabbat is April 25, and May 20 is the Spring General Meeting.

THERE IS SUCH A THING AS A FREE LUNCH! We started a great new volunteer system called Donor Dollars. For every hour you work at the Gift shop you earn \$1 toward your lunch for the Donor Luncheon in the Spring. All you need to do is volunteer your time. If you can work Tuesday afternoons 4:15-6 p.

m., Friday evenings 7:30-7:45, after services 9-9:15 p.m., and Sunday mornings 9 a.m.-noon. Please call Donna Zimmer if you can volunteer.

A big thank you to Donna Zimmer, and all the volunteers for all their hard work in the gift shop the day of the Food Festival.

The Sisterhood would like to congratulate the Food Festival committee for a job well done. We look forward to the Food Festival in 2003.

Yeah!—Boo!—VHC meeting

The meeting about the Volunteer Home Care program (VHC) held on Sunday morning, Nov. 3, was poorly attended. Boo!

The presentation made by Heather Hartmen Becker, program coordinator for VHC, was excellent. Yeah!

Despite low attendance, much was accomplished. There was enthusiasm, learning, and a good exchange of ideas. And the response to the phone calls made

prior to the meeting was encouraging. (another Yeah!)

Many people expressed an interest in finding out more about the program. It's not the swiftest idea, apparently, to schedule a meeting to introduce a program at 9:30 on a Sunday morning, so the next meeting we're planning will be during the week, there will be ample advance notice, and we're thinking of spring, 2003.

More specific information about the way the program functions will be coming to you via "Our Temple" in coming issues. Keep VHC in mind.

In the meantime, brochures about the program fundamentals (and who to contact if you're immediately interested) are available on the shelves in the back of the sanctuary.

Nancy J. Knoblauch for RCOS Social Action Committee

Come blow your
horn!

Do you enjoy hearing the shofar?

Did you ever think about blowing the shofar on the High Holidays?

I would like to offer free instruction on the shofar to anyone who is interested. The only requirement is that you bring your own shofar. Please call the Temple by Jan. 1 and leave your name and phone number.

— Scott Bram

Parents, grandparents,
family members:

Are you looking for a new way to honor a special child on their birthday? You can purchase a book for our library in your child's honor. When your child's special day draws near the story will be read during Religious School and the child can be the first one to "check the book out" of the library. A special label will be placed in the book to commentate this honor.

Please contact Karen Hogg for further information and for book titles on our "wish list". **Call Karen at (610) 603-9070 or e-mail her at KarenHogg@comcast.net.**



Sisterhood Florence Frank Offering Fund

To Mr. & Mrs. Richard Yashek on their granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah
Mrs. Ethel Sherman

To Gary Levin in memory of Robert Metzger
Mrs. Sue Wolfe

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Schlanger on their 65th wedding anniversary
Mrs. Ethel Sherman
Mr. & Mrs. Ted Sherman

Dr. & Mrs. Eric Zelnick
To Mrs. Pauline Goldberg in memory of her husband, Bernard

Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Ethel Sherman
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brok
Mr. & Mrs. Naum Ger
Mr. & Mrs. George Dialectos

To Mr. & Mrs. Alan Green in memory of his sister
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Harriet Baskin

Speedy recovery to Lisa

Bratt
Mrs. Ethel Sherman
To Dr. Neil Hoffman and Mrs. Judith Kraines on the engagement of their son, Seth

Mrs. Harriet Baskin
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Helen Rappoport
Mrs. Ethel Sherman
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Schlanger
Mrs. Sue Wolfe
Mrs. Edythe Stern
Dr. & Mrs. Gerald Frank

Speedy recovery to Mr.

Leon Kaplan
Mrs. Hilde Gernsheimer & Mr. Fred Jakobs

To Mr. & Mrs. James Harrison in memory of his father, Nathan
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Hilde Gernsheimer & Mr. Fred Jakobs

Thanks for all the good wishes while recuperating
Mrs. Phyllis Symons

Thanks in recognition of my award

Dr. Neil Hoffman

Thanks for the best wishes on the engagement of our son, Seth
Judith Kraines & Dr. Neil Hoffman

Kindly send Florence Frank Offering Fund contributions to Mrs. Marilyn Frank, 2027

Important tax information

The IRS regulates end-of-the-year contributions. The general rule is that a contribution is effective when delivered. This means a contribution (cash, check or stock) delivered personally to the office or broker in January 2003 CANNOT be credited to your 2002 giving, nor deducted on your tax return for the year 2002, even if a check is backdated to 2002.

One exception – checks that are mailed and postmarked in 2002 are treated as 2002 giving and are deductible in 2002, even though not received until 2003. Please plan accordingly and see that your contributions are received in December 2002.

The above regulations pertain to all contributions made to RCOS.

Mazel Tov

to Nancy Knoblauch for being honored at the UAHC Regional Biennial. Nancy received the Scroll of Honor award for her years of service and dedication to RCOS as a volunteer who never stops. Nancy, we thank you for all you have done and all you continue to do!

Eat well . . .

and help the Temple's

Mitzvah Meal Program.

We have entered into a partnership with Panera Bread to sell coupon strips for their breads and bagels.

For \$9 you receive coupons worth \$12 for bread or bagels and we keep 50% of the purchase price.

Stop by the Temple office and purchase a combo strip of 6 mixed coupons: 3 bread coupons, 1 bagel, 1 muffin and 1 cookie coupon or purchase a strip of 6 bagel coupons (each coupon good for 3 bagels).

Enjoy delicious, fresh bread products from one of Berks County's newest bakery/cafes and help the Temple's Mitzvah Meal Program at the same

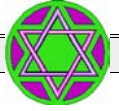
Support the Temple the Easy Way!

Buy Food Certificates good at Giant, Redner's & Weis

Call: Carole Kutscher 610-779-7590

Barbara Rosenzweig 610-775-5383

or Sue Wolfe 610-376-8117



Oneg and flowers sponsors

Flowers on the bimah and oneg on Dec. 27 are in honor of **Ed and Evelyn Goodman's** 50th wedding anniversary. Mazel Tov !!!

To sponsor flowers, a food basket or oneg, call Ellice Gunter at 610-775-4448

Attention all members with e-mail

Because e-mail can be a great way to keep everyone up to date, please see that the office has your e-mail address. If you would like to be included in our e-mail list, please e-mail Lynn at office@ohebsholom.org. If you change your address we need to know this as well.

Silent Auction Dinner

on **Saturday Feb. 8** for all ages

You won't want to miss this evening of good food, wonderful entertainment and great items in the auction.

The great food has been arranged. Now we need your help with the wonderful entertainment and great items for the auction.

Please call **Ira Gelman, 610-369-1117** or the office if you would like to help with this fun event or have items to donate.

Perpetual Memorials

Dec. 6 and 7

Helen Winston Quartner
Samuel R. Lurio
Rose Ehrlich Liefert
Samuel Goldsmith

Dec. 13

Julius Goldsmith
Nathan Mendelsohn
Leopold Loeb
Solomon Weil
Bertha Knoblauch
Edith Sondheim
Herman Falkowitz
Herman Folkman
Abraham W. Loeb
Bertha Guggenheim

Dec. 20

Goldye B. Curson

Dora Kins

Josephine Miller

Deborah B. Schweriner

Carlyn Liefert

Bernard Bash

David Hermann

Irene R. Salpeter

Harry J. Bash

Albert M. Salas

Dec. 27

Julius L. Cohen

William Holzman

Johanna Gernsheimer

Jan. 3 and 4

Dora Sondheim

J. Harold Fisher

Samuel Frankel

Irving Bash

Anna Baerncopf

Claire Dershwin

Helen Simmons



Just one volunteer, just one hour

By Debra Toole

Volunteer Coordinator

Home Health Care Management

I was delighted to represent the Berks Visiting Nurse Association at your Social Action Fair. Berks VNA is one of five local agencies that make up Home Health Care Management, and they are making an enormous difference in people's lives thanks to the dedication of a wonderful corps of volunteers. Last year, our agencies' combined volunteer hours totaled 10, 873 hours!

There are almost countless ways to volunteer, and I'd like to describe some specific areas in which volunteers facilitate daily programming and make that enormous impact on people's lives.

In-house clerical: Volunteers come to our offices weekly and undertake such tasks as copying, filing, assembling packets, or making phone calls. We would not be able to operate effectively without this kind of help.

Hospice program: Without the ongoing services of our trained hospice volunteers, we would be unable to

provide a complete program to those who need it. There are many ways that volunteers make a difference in the care of hospice clients. Sometimes these folks accept assignments of fieldwork in which they provide companionship to the client or respite to families. Other volunteers help us maintain our records by registering visit or bereavement hours in our database in order to ensure proper documentation. Telephone calls, gardening or running errands are additional ways in which hospice volunteers contribute. Training is required to become a certified hospice volunteer and volunteer training sessions are now being scheduled for the fall.

Hospice Craft Club is a newly created hospice group and began operating this year. Its objective is to spread sunshine to hospice clients and their families by presenting them with a token gift during a nursing or volunteer visit. Volunteers are always welcome to join us for this creative event.

Flu program: This program is run through the efforts of volunteers, who

offer and administer the influenza vaccine at various public locations. They help us fulfill our company's mission of protecting our community. Clerks and licensed staff are still needed to help facilitate this year's program. Training sessions are required, and CPR certification is available to those who are interested.

At-Home Assignments: Not everyone can come to another location. And some people like the flexibility of fitting things in around other responsibilities. This has made at-home assignments increasingly popular. Many volunteers take on projects they can complete during leisure time at home. These include such things as telephone surveys, mailings, and artwork.

Volunteers are the heart's blood of our organization. They give from the heart and truly want to make a difference. And they do. Just one volunteer can touch several hearts in just one encounter. I'd be happy to provide more information. I can be reached at 610-378-0481 x3153.



REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM
 Affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations since 1907
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