



OUR TEMPLE

December 2006

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 43, No. 4

Notes from the president

Respecting one another solves problems

By **Scott Bram**
President

During this season we celebrate Chanukah. This holiday is centered on a fight for freedom that was sparked by the complete disrespect of one people for another. Antiochus Antipater, the King of the Syrian Greeks, detested Judaism. Under his orders, the Syrian Greek army occupied Judea, forbade the teaching and practice

of Judaism, and ransacked and defiled the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Pigs were purposely allowed to roam around inside. The final insult was a statue to Zeus that was placed in the Temple in order that everyone must pay tribute to this god.

The results of these actions were three-fold. Some people complied. Some people fled. Another group chose to fight and drive out this disrespectful enemy. As the

story goes, the Syrians were driven out by the Maccabees. The Holy Temple and the country were restored. But 150 years later the descendants of the Maccabees, through inept actions and corruption, invited the Romans to come into Judea as allies. This paved the way for the eventual destruction of ancient Israel and the historical events of the following Diaspora.

Continued on Page 5

From the Rabbi's study

Give the gift of charity this Chanukah

In the middle of winter, we gather around our Menorahs, spin dreidels, eat latkes, and celebrate the festival of Chanukah. Each night of Chanukah we add a new candle, adding more light and holiness to our celebrations.

**Rabbi Brian
Michelson**

There are few things more beautiful than a Chanukiah with all its candles lit and burning

brightly. Despite the cold, it brings light and warmth into our homes in a very special way.

As we celebrate with family and friends, we must also remember that we are called upon to help add light to the world by remembering those in need. Therefore, on Wednesday, Dec. 20 (the sixth night of Chanukah), I invite you to join me and

members of synagogues from around the United States and the world by taking part in the Ner Shel Tzedakah — the candle of righteousness/charity.

Ner Shel Tzedakah is an interdenominational program that asks us to mark the sixth night of Chanukah by giving instead of receiving. On this night, please choose one of the charities listed below and send them the value of the gifts you would have exchanged that evening. In addition, I have included a special blessing that you can include when lighting your menorah that evening (page 2).

As our society wrestles with its responsibilities to the less fortunate, there is a need for people of faith to work together on Tikkun Olam—the repair of our world by reaching

out to families in crisis. Our celebrations are made richer when we remember how lucky we are in a world where so many have so little. May your Chanukah this year be filled with light, holiness, and the satisfaction that comes from helping others.

Possible organizations to donate to:

Mazon: A Jewish response to hunger — www.mazon.org — an organization that donates millions of dollars each year to help feed the hungry in the U.S., Israel, and other countries. (Mazon, 1990 S. Bundy Drive, Suite 260, Los Angeles, CA 90025)

Kids Café — A program of the Greater Berks Food Bank that provides free and prepared food and nutrition education to hungry children in our area. Our old building houses a Kid's Café. (Greater Berks Food Bank, 1011 Tuckerton Ct., Reading, PA 19605)

Fresh Air Fund — This group takes inner city children out of the city for a summer experience. It offers these children time away from the stresses of inner-city life. (The Fresh Air Fund, 633 Third Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10017)

December Highlights

Friday, Dec. 1 — Early Shabbat, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 2 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Friday, Dec. 8 — Seventh grade Shabbat, 7:45 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 9 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 10 — Brotherhood meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Book Club, 4 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 15 — Chanukah begins. Service and dinner, 6 p.m.

Friday night services at 7:45 unless otherwise noted

Babysitting available for 7:45 Shabbat services.

*Bulletin sponsored by
Gene & Shirley*

Friedman

in memory of

Emanuel and Pauline Friedman

Religious School News**Set a shining example this Chanukah****By Judy Synnamon***Religious School administrator*

It is a mitzvah to publicize the miracle of Chanukah. We do this by lighting the menorah and displaying it so that people who pass by our homes may see it shining from our windows. Chanukah offers some of the greatest challenges and opportunities to infuse our home with Jewish values. Some of these values are the value of dedication; the value of religious freedom and the value of courage. Many of us are called upon to do

a Chanukah presentation in our children's public school classrooms. Information about the holiday and universal values and ideas are wonderful to share.

The Religious School will be celebrating Chanukah at a party sponsored by Keshet Zion on Dec. 20. There will be NO Hebrew School at RCOS on Dec. 19. ALL CLASSES (Grades 1 – 8) are invited to the Chanukah Party on Dec. 20 at Keshet Zion from 4:15 until 6 p.m. As part of our Chanukah festivities, our students from grades 1 through 7

will also be painting and decorating a Chanukah candle holder to use at home.

Important dates;

Friday, Dec. 8: 7:45 p.m. Grade 7 will be participating in the Shabbat Service

Friday, Dec. 15: Chanukah Family Dinner and Service, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 19: No Hebrew School
Wednesday, Dec. 20: Joint Hebrew School Program at Keshet Zion; 4:15 p.m.

Dec. 24- Jan. 2: No Religious School
Jan. 7: Welcome Back

Giving thanks**By Ellen Azrael***Treasurer*

At this time of year we have the opportunity to give thanks for all that we have received. Special thanks to our members for generous

contributions. About half of our members have responded with an increase in dues. Thank you so much!

Many of us make our end of the year contributions to charity in December. If you want

to make a contribution to the Temple in 2006, please make sure to mail your check so that the postmark is dated prior to Dec. 31, 2006.

Have a very happy Chanukah! And best wishes for a great year in 2007.

Have you considered remembering the Temple in your will?

Ner Shel Tzedakah Blessing

A blessing to recite on the 6th night of Chanukah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְלִמְדֵינוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל צְדָקָה.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Haolam, Asher Kidshanu B'mitzvotav, V'lamdeinu L'Hadlik Ner Shel Tzedakah.

Blessed are You, Eternal, our God, who makes us holy through the performance of Mitzvot, and inspires us to light the Candle of Righteousness.

As we light this "Ner Shel Tzedakah" tonight, we pray that its light will shine into the dark corners of our world, bringing relief to those suffering from the indignity and pain that accompany poverty. May our act of giving inspire others to join with us in the fight against the scourge of hunger, homelessness, need and want. Together, let us raise our voices to cry out for justice, and may that clarion call burst through the night's silence and declare that change must come.

Focus on the Food Festival**Big victory belongs to entire congregation****By Jeri Kozloff**

To my chairs Janine and Sue
I extend a hearty "thank you."
You grabbed the baton
The Festival went on
The ribbon we've won is blue

Backed by a fabulous team
The day just gathered steam
As goodies were sold
To young and old
And many a face did beam

Outsider and ritual art on display
Patrons came to stay
The gift shops were humming
Leah's guitar strumming
Shofar blowing to cap off the day.

We've certainly won this race,
Smiles belong on every face.
We went for the gold,
With work untold
Made RCOS a stronger place

Athletic metaphors are fun to use when describing a successful undertaking that took lots of preparation and coordinated effort. And as I watched our members lift boxes, run stairways, move tables, carry trays of food, and push appliances into place, I realized that the symbolism applied in a literal sense too.

I write this on the morning after the 2006 Food and Cultural Festival. An RCOS member just congratulated me on its success. "We should all congratulate each other," was my reply. Once again the hard work, talents, and financial support of a

large proportion of our members made for another wonderful event. Each year brings new experience and insight into how best to advertise, order, bake, cook, organize, set up, and operate this huge undertaking.

Look for the financial report in my next Focus on the Food Festival article.

Although we can calculate the monetary reward of this day, we'll never be able to measure the intangible gains to everyone who participates. That's the "net income" of the special moments for every member and every patron – dinner with family, seeing friends for the first time in years, hearing music that delights or uplifts, purchasing a gift for a loved one.

So "Yeh Team" for a great effort and winning result. And for bigger and better; "Wait 'til next year!!"

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF
R.C.O.S. WHO HELPED TO MAKE THE
2006 FOOD FESTIVAL A GREAT SUCCESS.
GET READY!! IT'S TIME TO PLAN FOR 2007!!!
JANINE, JERI AND SUSAN**

Save the Date for 2007 — Nov. 4

Temple book group

"When I Lived in Modern Times" by Linda Grant

Dec. 10 at 4 p.m.

Please note change in date

ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

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Assistant editor: Donna Oaks

*To get an item in the bulletin, contact Mark at
Marknem@aol.com or 610-370-2533, or contact
the Temple office.*

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The Temple Online

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**Rabbi's
Discretionary
Fund**

In appreciation of the use of
the Temple's facilities
World Affairs Council of
Reading & Berks County

Wishing everyone a happy and
healthy Chanukah season
Saul "Marty" Miller

Library Fund
In memory of Valerie
Smith, aunt of Barbara
Silverberg
Susan Schlanger

Building Fund
In honor of Al Diamond's
great-grandchild
Mrs. Harriet Baskin

In honor of Shirley
Friedman's special birthday
Harriet Baskin
Alan & Loretta Green

Judy & Steve Greenstein
Avery & Susan Kelner
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig
Harriet & Marvin Sachs
Jeanne Luckenbill
Dr. & Mrs. Eric Zelnick

In honor of Sue Schlanger's
birthday and retirement
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig
In memory of Rachael Yaffee's
sister
Rosalye Yashek

In memory of Victoria Levine
Rosalye Yashek

In memory of Eugen Jaschek
Rosalye Yashek

**Landscaping Fund
Holocaust Garden**
In honor of Charles &
Carolyn Sunstein's 65th
wedding anniversary
Bob & Kaye Ullman

**HOSPITALITY NETWORK
STILL GOING STRONG**

Come join us at RCOS in giving a family a warm,
welcoming, home for the week.
Next hosting week: Jan. 7-14. Many volunteering
opportunities available.

UPCOMING TRAINING SESSIONS:

Sunday, Dec. 10 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 28 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Be part of this wonderful mitzvah.

*To sign up or for more information contact Holly or
Janine at rcosihn@ecologyfund.net*

**Sisterhood Florence
Frank Offering Fund**

Best wishes to Sue Schlanger on her retirement

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Joseph Schlanger

To Murry Knoblauch for a speedy recovery

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Friedman

Thanks to everyone for good wishes on my special birthday

Shirley Friedman

*Kindly send Florence Frank Offering Fund contributions to Mrs.
Marilyn Frank, Phoebe Village, 9 Reading Ave., Wernersville, PA
19565; or Mrs. Shirley Friedman, 107 Primrose Lane, Wyomissing,
PA 19610.*

**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.

In Honor of Al Diamond's
great-grandson
Maxine & Dick Henry

To wish good health to Fran
Suknow
Bobbie Singer

To Patricia Goldstein in
memory of Barbara Krug
Bobbie Singer

In memory of Janet Bender,
mother of Dave Bender
Barbara & Michael Perilstein

To Trudy Katz to celebrate
her 90th birthday
Bobbie Singer

Perpetual Memorials

Dec. 1-9

Nathan Mendelsohn
Rose Ehrlich Liefert
Dr. Julius Goldsmith
Solomon Weil
Leopold Loeb
Samuel R. Lurio
Helen Winston Quartner
Dr. Samuel Goldsmith

Bertha Guggenheim
Abraham W. Loeb

Dec. 17-24

David Hermann
Julius L. Cohen
Carlyn Liefert
Deborah B. Schweriner
Bernard Bash
Harry J. Bash
Albert M. Salas
Irene R. Salpeter
Dr. William Holzman

Dec. 10-17

Simon Falkowitz
Edith Sondheim
H. Robert Gilbert
Herman Folkman
Josephine Miller
Bertha Knoblauch
Dora Kins
Goldye B. Curson

Dec. 24-31

Johanna Gernsheimer
Dora Sondheim
J. Harold Fisher

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News of note from the student cantor

By Leah Holland

Student cantor

Junior Choir's Phenomenal Debut

Yishar koach (way to go!) to junior choir members Gabriella Michelson, Naomi Michelson, Ari Spillerman, Johanna Ure, and Hannah Walker on a sensational performance at this year's Food Festival. Look for them Dec. 17 as they participate in Shabbat services during the celebration of Chanukah.

Are you in 2nd to 7th grade and interested in joining the junior choir? Choir rehearsals will be held Sundays: Jan. 21,

Feb. 25, March 18, and April 29. The choir will participate in services Feb. 2 for Shabbat Shira and May 18 for Confirmation. For more information, please contact me at cantor@ohebsholom.org.

What does it mean to be a Reform Jew?

As RCOS approaches its 100th anniversary as a Reform congregation, take some time to become familiar with the ABC's of the Reform movement: URJ, UAHC, UPB, GOP, GOR, CCAR, ACC, HUC-JIR, and NFTY. Learn about the good old German guys who started the Reform Jewish "revolution" — Abraham

Geiger, Israel Jacobson, Samuel Holdheim, and others. Engage in debates about kippot, keeping a kosher home, mixed marriage, and gender-sensitive language.

This adult education course will meet on five Saturdays (Jan. 20, Feb. 3, Feb. 24, March 3, and March 17) from noon to 1:30 p.m. We will cover a wide range of topics in Reform Jewish history while enjoying Shabbat lunch together — an opportunity not to be missed. Cost of the course is \$60 (includes book, other course materials, and lunch). Contact the Temple office to register.

PRESIDENT

Continued from Page 1

The lesson here is centered on disrespect and the problems a lack of respect causes. When we don't treat each other right, we can expect one of the three aforementioned responses from the person or persons we are offending. Most of the time people will walk away and have little or nothing to do with us again. Here at the Temple we have seen many examples of that behavior.

Over the years, parents have left because of issues with their children. Teachers have left because of issues with administration; families have left because of issues with fellow congregants, the rabbi, or president. Board members have resigned due to disrespect they received or even just witnessed being done to others. There have been Temple staff members who have left or almost left because of a perceived lack of respect from others here at the Temple. Depending upon whom you speak to, their reasons may or may not be valid. However, the feeling was strong enough for people to take action.

Does this mean that we are in danger of losing our congregation? Certainly not. Overall we are a wonderful, caring family whose presence within this Temple and in the wider community is felt nearly every day. However, there have been enough events and hurt feelings that something needs to be said. We need to do a better job at being more respectful of others. We need to think before we speak or reply to someone, making sure we communicate our feelings without anger. Furthermore, before we ask someone to help us "now," we need to find out if they have the time "now." We are mostly volunteers. However, everyone obviously deserves respect and consideration. The Talmud mentions respect as one of the most important paths to peace.

Our prayer book repeatedly speaks of being respectful to others. Furthermore, since everyone makes mistakes, it is important to admit a wrong and be sorry for it. The next step is to learn from it and not to repeat it. Do you know why the prayer book repeats these messages of courtesy and respect

throughout the service? It is because very few people listen the first time!!

Oheb Sholom means "lovers of peace." I have always tried to keep peace in "the family." I am that way with my personal, business, and congregational families. I would like all of you to act as "kind and gentle" Maccabees and help rid us of what disrespect we occasionally show for each other. Be kind and of good cheer, slow to anger, and quick to forgive.

Help us create a larger environment where people can't wait to volunteer their time and energy. The Social Action Committee recently had to disband due to a lack of volunteers. They have contributed to our presence in the outside community. Would you please help me revive this committee? Call the Temple office and give your name to Donna if you would like to join the Social Action Committee. I will re-establish the committee when we have enough committed people. I thank you all for helping to make our Temple a rewarding place to learn, live, and share our Judaism.

It's almost Chanukah!

Visit the Sisterhood gift shop for all your holiday needs.

New menorahs, Judaic and non-Judaic gifts, presents for the children and adults alike and of course; Dreidels and Gelt. The gift shop is proud to carry two new lines — Liztech and Nanette Originals. Stop by and ask Sandy or Linda to show you these magnificent mezuzahs, pins, earrings and other gifts. Shop us first, you'll be glad you did!

Thanks for your support of our Temple's gift shop.

The World of Jewish Music: Constancy and Creativity in Changing Cultures

Thursday, Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.
at the Temple

Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman is professor of music and education at Gratz College in Melrose Park, where she coordinates academic programs in Jewish music and directs the renowned Tyson Music Department. A graduate of Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, she holds degrees in general music, Jewish music, Jewish history, and education. Dr. Edelman is well regarded as a lecturer and writer on a wide variety of topics relating to the nature and history of Jewish music. Her book, "Discovering Jewish Music," was published by the Jewish Publication Society in 2003.

Avoid the Crowded Malls and Help Make a difference!



Holiday Showcase

Featuring the Hottest
2006 Holiday
Collections from
quality vendors!

Sunday, December 3, 2006
10:00am until 2:00pm

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

555 Warwick Drive Wyomissing Hills

Directions: State Hill R, left on Vista Rd (at Starbucks),
Make first right on Warwick.



Skin Care, Make-Up, Food, Jewelry,
Accessories, Crafts and Much More! Also
featuring a Chinese Auction .

Vendors include: Arbonne, Big Yellow Box, Home Interiors, Lia Sophia, Southern Living, Tastefully Simple, Studio Inox Metal Art Studio, Avon & many, many more!



All donated profits will go to the
"Rebecca H. Stricker Assistance Fund"
(For young mother and teacher battling inoperable brain tumor)
- Sponsored by "Friends of Becky"

Your patronage WILL make a big difference!

December Simchas

Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Toney	Dec. 9
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Jacoby	Dec. 10
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Egolf	Dec. 18
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Robinson	Dec. 22
Rabbi & Mrs. Brian Michelson	Dec. 23
Mr. & Mrs. David Morris	Dec. 25
Drs. Scott & Linda Bram	Dec. 28
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Aarons	Dec. 29
Mr. & Mrs. Naum Ger	Dec. 30
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Goodman	Dec. 31

Birthdays

Mark W. Robinson	Dec. 1
Kevin Altman	Dec. 4
Jordan Seidel	Dec. 4
Mindy Seidel	Dec. 4
Hannah Walker	Dec. 4
Chase M. Weizer	Dec. 4
Samantha Lopez	Dec. 6
Dr. Jeffrey B. Weizer	Dec. 6
Leah Soloff	Dec. 9
Ryan Egolf	Dec. 10
Sarah Brok	Dec. 11

Ben Seltzer	Dec. 11
Paul H. Schonberger	Dec. 12
Lionel Asher	Dec. 13
MaryAnn Becker	Dec. 14
Joseph Goldstein	Dec. 14
Matthew Eisenberg	Dec. 15
Jack Gernsheimer	Dec. 15
Mr. Jeffrey Gernsheimer	Dec. 15
Kelli Zimmerman	Dec. 15
Sara Flynn	Dec. 17
Stewart Goodman	Dec. 17
James Greene	Dec. 17
Karl Hausman	Dec. 17
Dr. Lee Radosh	Dec. 17
Michael Chwiecko	Dec. 18
Rick Langlois	Dec. 18
Dr. Alan Weisberg	Dec. 20
Abby Gelb	Dec. 21
Joshua Seidel	Dec. 21
Bruce J. Ure Jr.	Dec. 28
Dr. Michael Perilstein	Dec. 29
Elliott Asher	Dec. 30
Jill Haas	Dec. 31

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM

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