



OUR TEMPLE

December 2007

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 44, No. 4

Notes from the president

Stressing our similarities during the holidays

By Herb Karasin

President

I don't recall when I learned that everyone in the world isn't Jewish. But I know I was quite young. I learned this and a series of related things in stages.

First, I learned that not everyone is Jewish! You can imagine what a shock this was for me. It seemed incredible. Why would they be something else? It didn't make any sense. But there was a bigger surprise on the way. MOST people aren't Jewish. We are a minority! This was over the top.

Then I learned that the people who aren't Jewish are divided into different groups and that each of these groups outnumber

us. What next? It was very confusing.

Looking back, it should have been obvious to me from the start. I grew up in a neighborhood of mixed religions; approximately half the families were Jewish. My best friend in those years was Dickie Godin; he lived next door. And next door was very close; this was a block of row houses in Southwest Philadelphia. I never saw Dickie in the synagogue across the street. Dickie's father, Hector, was a carpenter. Every year at Christmastime, Hector would construct the best model train set I ever saw. He erected it on a platform near their front porch where it could be seen from outside. It took up half of the room. It had houses

and streets with lights and model cars and people. Every square inch of the platform was covered with this model world. I remember it had two complete sets of tracks and trains. Best of all, it had a mountain in the corner with a tunnel that the train ran through. On top, above the mountain, was a decorated Christmas tree. Below the train platform were Christmas presents.

We shared a flight of steps into our houses. Our front porch faced theirs. I could sit in what I thought was our comparatively empty front porch and watch Dickie playing with his train set. This was hard to take. Finally, I raised the issue with my father.

Continued on Page 3

From the Rabbi's study

Loan program offers chance to change world

There is an old saying, "It is better to give than to receive." It is obvious that the author of this phrase never visited a mall in the month of December. Unfortunately,

**Rabbi Brian
Michelson**

it seems like most of us spend more time worrying about the receiving than the

giving. However, this holiday season, I want to challenge all of you to think about giving, or lending to be correct, to make the difference in the life of someone else.

At my nephew's Bar Mitzvah, he spoke

about an organization called Kiva. Kiva is an organization that supports microloans. Microloans are loans for small amounts of money that are not normally considered by banks. It is a way to provide startup money to the poor to aid them in breaking out of poverty. Holly, the girls, and I have made a loan to an entrepreneur named Gulab Agayeva in Azerbaijan. She is raising livestock to sell at a local market.

You can go to Kiva's Web site (www.Kiva.org) and lend to someone in the developing world who needs a loan for their

business — like raising goats, selling vegetables at market, or making bricks. Each loan has a picture of the entrepreneur, a description of their business and how they plan to use the loan so you know exactly how your money is being spent — and you get updates letting you know how the business is going. The best part is, when the entrepreneur pays back their loan you get your money back — and Kiva's loans are managed by microfinance institutions that have a lot of experience doing this, so you can trust that your money is being handled responsibly.

It's finally easy to actually do something about poverty — using Kiva I know exactly who my money is loaned to and what they're using it for. And most of all, I know that I'm helping them build a sustainable business that will provide income to feed, clothe, house and educate their family long after my loan is paid back.

Join me in changing the world — one loan at a time — and help us all remember that it truly is better to give than to receive. Have a very happy Chanukah.

December Highlights

Saturday, Dec. 1 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 2-Dec. 9 — Temple hosts Interfaith Hospitality Network

Friday, Dec. 7 — Chanukah service and dinner, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 8 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 16 — Men's Club, 9:30 a.m.

All services at 7:45 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Babysitting available for 7:45 Shabbat services.

Focus on the Food Festival

Latest event a smash hit of epic proportions

By **Jeri Kozloff**

“This Was a Real Great Festival”
(with apologies to Rodgers & Hammerstein)

This was a real great festival,

We're mighty glad you came.

The brisket we et

Was good, you bet,

The apple cake was the same.

Our hearts are warm, our bellies were full,

And we are feeling prime.

This was a real great festival,

And we all had a real good time.

This was a real great festival,

Klezmer sounds filled the air

The shofar was blown

By two of our own

New jewelry for buyers to wear

The matzah ball soup warmed many a group

Sandwiches were divine

This was a real great festival,

We all should feel real fine.

Our heads should be spinning like a “Carousel” with the success of our 7th Jewish Food Festival on Sunday, November 4. Record crowds virtually cleaned us out of food. The baked goods were gone by 3:30. At 4:30 p.m. the parking lot was still full and the fun was still going on. New features like the Chopped Liver River Band and the Middle Eastern platter were fabulously successful. Favorite events such as the shofar blowing, Ina Grapenthin’s con-

cert, and the festival table display pleased the huge numbers of returning patrons and new visitors.

There are never enough “thank you’s” to say to Sue Gelb and Janine Ure, the Festival’s co-chairs. Lots of appreciation, too, for the dozens of RCOS members who cook, bake, decorate, publicize, set up, clean up, and do the countless tasks and errands that go into making our Festival a staple of Berks County’s culinary, social, and cultural calendar.

Next month’s story will be about dollars earned and allocated. This month we revel in the intangible dividends of our wonderful Festival. Mazel Tov RCOS!!!

Everyone can share credit for festival success

By **Janine Schneider-Ure and Susan Gelb**

Food Festival co-chairs

Wow! All we can say is that was a real Festival on Nov. 4. There was music, beautiful art, great gift ideas to purchase, reminders of our wonderful heritage, great food and THOUSANDS of people! Before any program we do, we always worry we will be the only ones to attend. We didn’t have to worry this time. It was really exciting to see a line out the door of the Yashek Social Hall.

This year we wanted the Food Festival to turn a corner and become a real monetary help to the Temple. Janine and I moved forward to cut costs but increase the quality of the food. We now make 90 percent of the food in-house. We use food purveyors in place of the grocery store or food clubs and the cost difference is amazing. We cooked more of the food, but spent far less money.

Our ad book this year set the tone for the Food Festival. When Jeri Kozloff called to say the final number was \$7,100 we knew we were on the right track.

The ad book is so important to our success, not only because that money goes right to the mortgage principal but because

it gives all of us something to work toward. We cannot disappoint the advertisers. Jeri gets everyone involved in the ad campaign and Mike Pardo makes the ad book look like a million bucks. We are so lucky to have a guy with the abilities and desire to share with us right here in our R.C.O.S. community. Mike and Jeri are the winning team for the ad book.

The ads are sold, the food is cooked and the room is all set. The tables have new decorations, and we have flags draped in the lights. The food is all ready in the Social Hall. It is almost 10 a.m. What is left to do? We need volunteers to serve, clean tables and talk to our guests.

Without the volunteers, we have no Food Festival. The volunteers who rolled the rugelach, baked apple cakes, cooked or cleaned or sliced the briskets are the VIPs. The five ladies who cut 600 chicken halves into quarters, the six people who rolled 17 pounds of dough into rugelach on a Sunday morning, and the two shifts of people who cooked and cooked briskets and chicken soup all day on a Saturday are the VIPs.

If you are not there smiling while dishing out the chicken or brisket or corned beef sandwich we do not have a Food Festival.

We do not have volunteers without the

dynamic duo of Harriet Baskin and Karen Robinson. We cannot begin to plan this event without them. We are amazed by their coordination and dedication.

The “ballet” that is the Food Festival day begins and ends with you. Next year when you are called to volunteer, please say yes. Remember what our dear friend Shirley says...”Be Temple-minded.”

We would like to take a moment to thank Rabbi Brian Michelson, Holly, Naomi and Gabriella. The rabbi helped cook a week’s worth of briskets in one day. Holly, along with her sous chef Jill Haas, made all the beautiful and tasty blintzes. Naomi and Gabriella were amazing. They were chopping, stirring and helping in any way they could. On Festival Sunday, they helped to keep the Social Hall in perfect order. We appreciate their family dedication to our Temple so much.

Well, we hope we have hit all of the high points. We have already started planning Food Festival 2008.

We have some new ideas so be sure to come to breakfast on Jan. 6 at 10 a.m..

Oh, just in case you wanted to know.... we are still talking to each other. We still have never had an argument or disagreement. That’s all for now.

Have you considered remembering the Temple in your will?

Religious School News**Chanukah presents great learning opportunity****By Judy Synnamon***Religious School administrator*

Chanukah offers some of the greatest challenges and opportunities to infuse our homes with Jewish values. As holiday spirit pervades everything, this is a great time to welcome neighbors and classmates into our homes. When we join together for blessings, songs and games, we are reminded about the power of light as a transformative force that is able to overcome bigotry, racism, and tyranny. We are each a candle. We can reach into ourselves and reach out to each other to shed light and to dispel the powers of darkness.

Please share these ideals with your children and we can all influence the future of their world.

The Religious School will be celebrating Chanukah on Sunday, Dec. 9. We will sing Chanukah songs, play Chanukah games and of course have some traditional Chanukah food together. All congregants will have the opportunity to celebrate Chanukah together at our Chanukah Service and Dinner, Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. There will be a lighting ceremony where all members can light their menorahs from home together. There will also be special activities for the children.

Important Dates:

Friday, Dec. 7: Chanukah dinner & service
Sunday, Dec. 9: Sunday School Chanukah Party. Class time: 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. Service, Party and Snack: 10:30 – 12
Sunday, Dec. 23: No School, Winter Vacation
Tuesday, Dec. 25: No School, Winter Vacation
Sunday, Dec. 30: No School, Winter Vacation
Tuesday, Jan. 1: No School, Winter Vacation
Sunday, Jan. 6: Welcome Back Have a great holiday.

PRESIDENT*Continued from Page 1*

Why couldn't we have a big train set? His explanation was that Dickie's family was different and that I shouldn't worry about it. I naturally assumed that he meant that Hector was a carpenter. But this didn't make me feel any better.

Dad tried to make amends. He put a train set together in our basement. It was on a fairly large plywood board. There was one oval track the train ran on. It had one or two plastic houses. But the board was bare of paint and mostly empty. Dad was no carpenter. It was pretty depressing.

Of course, I never told Dad how I felt. Even at that age I knew that he tried and that was very important.

During Chanukah we, my brother and I, were given gifts just as our Christian friends were given Christmas gifts. We probably missed the major point of the holiday just, as I suspect, our Christian friends missed the real point of their holiday. For young children the holiday was meant to be

a time to receive gifts and for many parents it was an excuse to show their love for their children by spoiling them during that time of the year. This was probably true on both sides of the religious divide. All things considered, not such a bad motivation.

Now, as I look back on those days, I do it with the perspective of having a Christian wife and many close friends who are not Jewish. I have learned a lot since I was a child. One of the major lessons has been that the similarities among people, even across religious lines, are greater than their differences. I believe this to be true regardless of the religions in question.

I also believe that it is important for people to know this and to deal with one another with this in mind on a personal level and also on broader scales. It is too easy and too dangerous to forget this lesson as we play in this world.

I do have a lingering question from those days though. I wonder where Dickie is and whether he still has that great train set.

SAVE THE DATE

Keystone Community
Blood Bank at the
Temple
Sunday, Feb. 3,
9 a.m. to noon.

Contact the Temple
office to sign up and
help us save lives!

*Special thanks to
Mrs. Nancy Knoblauch, Mrs.
Mela Ger and Mrs. Rosalye
Yashek
for donating Oneg challahs
for December, January and
February.*

ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER**Editor:** Mark Nemirow**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.

Deadline for January bulletin: Dec. 5**The Temple Online**www.ohebsholom.orgOffice: office@ohebsholom.orgRabbi Michelson: rabbi@ohebsholom.orgBookkeeper Beth Bruck: bookkeeper@ohebsholom.orgCantor Joanna Alexander: cantor@ohebsholom.org

Camp Harlam alumni to gather in Philadelphia

Are you over 21 and a former camper at Camp Harlam?

Then join Camp Harlam Alumni at the World Cafe Live (3025 Walnut St., Philadelphia) Dec. 19 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

for a free Happy Hour event!

There will be light eats, drinks, and a raffle that includes 2 free tickets to the World Café.

Please RSVP by Dec. 14. To RSVP

contact Nina Golboro at ngolboro@urj.org.

You can check out the venue at www.worldcafelive.com. You must be 21 or older to attend this event.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In gratitude for the birthday wishes
Saul "Marty" Miller

In memory of Renee's brother,
Salmon Assayag
Renee & Harvey Seidel

In memory of Viola L. Satinsky
Barbara & Michael Perilstein.

Building Fund

For the speedy recovery of Phyllis
Goldstan
Helen Rappoport

In celebration of Shirley
Friedman's birthday
Gordon & Jeanne Luckenbill

In memory of the Yahrzeit of
Arthur Levinger, father of Norma
Beckerman
Norma & Marty Beckerman

In memory of my mother,
Victoria Levine
Rosalye Yashek

Music Fund

In honor of the release of Todd
Elliott Bornstein's first album
Allison & Kurt Althouse
Anne & Alan Seltzer

General Fund

In honor of Jeffrey Hogg's Bar
Mitzvah
George & Sue Viener

Landscaping Fund

In memory of Sandy Solmon's
father
Kaye & Bob Ullman

In memory of Mike Farrara's
father
Anne & Alan Seltzer

Wishing Phyllis Goldstan a
speedy recovery
Sue & Herb Wachs

To my many friends and acquaintances:

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the many notes and wishes of congratulations upon my recent "special" birthday. Your kindnesses make the number "90" easier to take!!

Saul "Marty" Miller

To The RCOS Community,

We would like to take this opportunity to send our sincere gratitude for all your concern, notes of good cheer & encouragement over the past months. God has given us the strength to see this through by blessing us with the love and support of our family and friends. Michael and I have felt fortunate to have found a spiritual home at RCOS. Please continue to keep him in your prayers.

*Happy Chanukah
and a Happy and Healthy New Year!*

Jeanine, Alison & Jessica Levy

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.

Wishing everyone a Happy & Sweet, a Healthy & Sweet, a Prosperous & Sweet Chanukah Season
Saul "Marty" Miller

Wishing Phyllis Goldstan a speedy recovery
Sylvia Schiff

Circle the Date -

Sunday, December 2, 2007, 2 p.m.

at the JCC

Intergenerational UJA 2008 Women's
Division Event

Author Joyce Antler and her
daughter Comedian Lauren Antler

Perpetual Memorials

Dec. 1-8

Nathan Mendelsohn
Rose Ehrlich Liefert
Dr. Julius Goldsmith
Samuel R. Lurio
Helen Winston Quartner
Dr. Samuel Goldsmith

Dec. 16-22

David Hermann
Carlyn Liefert
Deborah B. Schweriner
Bernard Bash
Harry J. Bash
Josephine Miller
Albert M. Salas
Dora Kins

Dec. 9-15

Simon Falkowitz
Edith Sondheim
H. Robert Gilbert
Herman Folkman
Solomon Weil
Leopold Loeb
Bertha Knoblauch
Bertha Guggenheim
Abraham W. Loeb

Goldye B. Curson
Irene R. Salpeter

Dec. 23-31

Julius L. Cohen
Johanna Gernsheimer
Dora Sondheim
J. Harold Fisher
Dr. William Holzman

December Simchas

Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Martin Beckerman	Dec. 3	Paul Schonberger	Dec. 12
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Egolf	Dec. 18	Lionel Asher	Dec. 13
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Robinson	Dec. 22	MaryAnn Becker	Dec. 14
Dr. & Mrs. Eric Zelnick	Dec. 22	Joseph Goldstein	Dec. 14
Rabbi & Mrs. Brian Michelson	Dec. 23	Jack Gernsheimer	Dec. 15
Drs. Scott and Linda Bram	Dec. 28	Jeffry Gernsheimer	Dec. 15
Mr. & Mrs. Naum Ger	Dec. 30	Stewart Goodman	Dec. 17
Mr. & Mrs. Mack Gibson	Dec. 31	Karl Hausman	Dec. 17
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Goodman	Dec. 31	Dr. Lee Radosh	Dec. 17

Birthdays

Albert Diamond	Dec. 1	Rick Langlois	Dec. 18
Mark W Robinson	Dec. 1	Dr. Alan Weisberg	Dec. 20
Dr. Jeffrey B. Weizer	Dec. 6	Robert Shapiro	Dec. 21
Leah Soloff	Dec. 9	Bruce Ure	Dec. 28
		Dr. Michael Perilstein	Dec. 29
		Hugh Beck	Dec. 31
		Jill Haas	Dec. 31



It's almost Chanukah!!

Visit the *Sisterhood Gift Shop* for all your Chanukah and other gift giving needs.

We have Judaic and non-Judaic items for everyone on your list.



Plenty of gelt and driedels for the children and their classmates.



Did you say, menorah? We have it all.

*Shop early
for the best selection.*

Save money on taxes in 2007

In 2007 you can make charitable contributions directly from your IRA without taking a taxable withdrawal first.

If you are over 70 1/2, you are required to take an IRA distribution each year. This Minimum Required Distribution must be included in your federal and state income when you file your tax returns.

Now, instead of personally taking that distribution, you can ask your IRA custodian to make a qualified charitable distribution to a public charity such as Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom.

You can pay your annual commitment or the pledge for The Life of The Temple with these funds. You cannot pay for goods or services with this contribution.

The IRA "qualified charitable distribution" rule is set to expire Dec. 31. RCOS is a 501c(3) organization. The Temple's tax ID is 23-1664967.

You can have your contribution mailed to:

**Reform Congregation
Oheb Sholom
555 Warwick Drive
Wyomissing, PA 19610**

Please contact your IRA custodian with any questions and to find out more about the benefits of the "qualified charitable distribution" rule.

If you have any questions or need further information, please call RCOS Treasurer, Karen Hogg, 610-603-9070.

NEWS FROM THE UNION

Chanukah O Chanukah!

While you light your candles at your home this season, you can join with Reform Jews across the continent in marking the holiday in very special ways, teaching your children that the holiday is not simply about presents, but about their role in the world today.

- Ner Shel Tzedakah: on the sixth night (Sunday, Dec. 9), donate the value of the gifts (or the gifts themselves) that might be exchanged to organizations that assist the poor. One possibility: the Nothing but Nets project.

To learn about the lessons to be gained, visit http://urj.org/csa/projects/ner_shel_tzedakah/

- Israel at 60: As we approach the 60th anniversary of Israel's founding, dedicate the candle lighting to deepening your family's connection to Israel, reading the following prayer out loud:

The Chanukah Jewish Parent Page

Download the newest Jewish Parent Page on Chanukah. Like all of this year's pages, the Chanukah page is Israel themed to celebrate Israel's 60th Anniversary.

So log on today to for activities, readings and prayers to share with your entire family this Chanukah. www.urj.org/educate/parent.

JOIN US FOR THE Taglit birthright israel: KESHER ISRAEL CONNECTION



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Trips occur two times a year;
December/January and May/June.

- Open to 18-26 year olds, who are Jewish and who have never been to Israel on an educational peer group experience

**Be in touch with the
KESHER College Department
at kesheraisraeltrip@urj.org,
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for more information and
registration dates.**



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