



Our Temple

January 2002

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Volume 38 No. 5

Notes from the President

Some thoughts for the new year

By Ellen Azrael
President

Greetings from Boston. Of course as you read this I no longer am in Boston. Before I left for the Biennial back on Dec. 4, there were at least five topics that I wrote about, but just couldn't come up

with a final version. so as I sat after one of our many sessions a totally different thought crossed my mind.

Happy New Year! May you and your loved ones have a happy and healthy new year.

Aren't we fortunate to live in a nation

where we can freely wish one another both L'shono tova as well as happy new year. Actually there are many people in our country who celebrate a number of new years. And one might be tempted to say, "How can there be more than one

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From the Rabbi's Study

Celebrate, respect diversity in opinion

There is an old story of three blind men who come into contact with an elephant. One grabs the elephant's trunk and says that an elephant is like a fire hose. The second one takes hold of one of the elephant's legs and he declares that the elephant is like the trunk of a tree. The last man grabs the elephant's tail and decides that an elephant is like a rope. Each of them takes a hold of a different part of the animal and therefore has a different experience of what an elephant

is.

The same thing is true of our Torah. For every word and verse, there are numerous commentaries and interpretations that explain and express different understandings. I love opening the Torah commentary and sitting down to read a section and to see the wide variety of thoughts and interpretations that can be applied to each verse, each word and, sometimes, even each letter. The Rashi, Ibn Ezra and the other medieval commentators have their views and modern scholars add their own twist

to the understanding. In my opinion, part of the richness of Judaism comes from the variety of possibilities that each interpretation allows.

The only dangers arise from taking an approach of there being a single correct answer or trying to find something or justify something from the text. If you look hard enough you can find justification for almost any stance. If you are looking for it, you will find it. Good and bad, positives and negatives can be found in almost everything.

This stands, for us, as a good reminder that sometimes it is impossible for us to see all sides of an argument or stance

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January Highlights

Friday, Jan. 4 — Early Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Saturday, Jan. 5 — Shabbat Service, Congregational Hebrew Naming with Kiddush, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 8 — "Sex in the Texts" adult education begins, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 12 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Friday, Jan. 18 — Family Night with grades 3 and 4, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 20 — Men's Club, 9:30 a.m.

Friday night services at 7:45 unless otherwise noted

Babysitting available at all services

*Bulletin sponsored by
Kenn, Sharon, Kyle
& Rachel Spinrad
in memory of
Darcy Spinrad*

Inside the Bulletin of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom:

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Religious School News

An amazing experience

By **Holly Michelson, RJE**
Religious School Administrator

I purposely wrote this article late (and I apologize to our editor) so that I could include some reflections from the UAHC (Union of American Hebrew Congregations) conference I recently attended.

We were well represented with our Rabbi, our President, a member of Sisterhood, our Brotherhood president and even one of our teens attending together. It was an amazing experience. Workshops running all the time on a range of personal and professional topics; a hangar sized hall of Judaica; Jewish music, and best of all, 6,000 Jews praying, studying and singing together over Shabbat.

One of the workshops I attended dealt with establishing goals, not just for our Religious School students, but for students of all ages. And in a group of 35-40 people, the goals we tended to

agree on were all related to making Jewish Education happen in every aspect of Synagogue life. We wanted our students to have a strong Jewish Identity, however that is defined by the individual. We wanted our students to have a basic prayer literacy (which is reflected in the new series of Hebrew books we are using). We wanted to give our students, young and old, the opportunities and skills that could be used to live a Jewish life. Watch for more adult and parent education classes in the spring.

Many of you may know that we encourage each of our classes to engage in some sort of Mitzvah project or Mitzvah theme which leads to projects or trips. It is quite a sight to see the proud looks on the faces of the children after they have accomplished something they set out to do.

I'd like to encourage all of you, whether as an individual, in a group or as a family to find a Mitzvah project about

which you too can be proud.

As it gets colder out and snow and ice become a possible problem, there will inevitably be days when everyone is better off staying home. Should it become necessary to close school on a Sunday, a message will be left on the synagogue's answering machine by 8 a. m. If Tuesday is the issue, we will be following the Wyomissing School District Schedule. If they are closed on a Tuesday or are closing early on a Tuesday, we will be closed as well. If they are simply opening late, we too will be open.

Important Dates:

School Resumes on January 6th.

Kindergarten Dates and Confirmation Dates: January 6th & 20th

3rd/4th Grade Shabbat Service and Family Dinner: January 18th

RABBI

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when we have our own strongly held opinions.

Judaism, however, teaches us that monolithic points of view are dangerous. Even the Babylonian Talmud, one of the greatest works of legal interpretation known to the Jewish people, records the variety of minority and differing opinions that arise on a wide variety of topics.

This is where the U.S. Supreme Court practice of having opinions written by a variety of the Justices has its origins.

We record the "other" side, because we never know when circumstances might change and the minority opinion will become the prevailing view.

As we begin this new secular year, may this be a lesson for each of us. We should remember to celebrate diversity in

thought and opinion.

There is nothing wrong with discussing the differences, as long as we remain open and respectful of differing points of view.

If we do, then the year ahead will be one that is filled with greater peace and happiness for us and for the entire world.

Oneg and Flowers

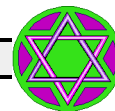
Honor a special occasion by sponsoring an Oneg, purchasing pulpit flowers or a fruit basket to be donated to the Greater Berks Food Bank.

Call Ellice Gunter at 610-775-4448.

Sponsors

Help plan the 2002 Food Festival

There will be a planning meeting Sunday, Jan. 13 at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to join in the early stages of planning another successful event.



Sisterhood News

Join some old and new friends for coffee

By Elyse Horowitz

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays. The Sisterhood will be having a coffee klatch on Wednesday Jan. 23, at 10:30. This will be a good opportunity for all the women of Sisterhood to catch up with old and new friends. If you are not a member of

Sisterhood, come by, have some coffee and cake and some good conversation. We hope to see you there.

The Sisterhood is calling for nominations for the Board for the following officers; President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President, Treasurer, Recording

Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary. Please call Marilyn Frank with your nominations by Feb. 1.

Keep sending in your Pushke coupons so you have a chance to win one of our great prizes. The prizes will include jewelry and gift certificates for a nice dinner and Borders.

Men's Club News

Stay on the lookout for exciting new ideas

By Marshall Azrael

Men's Club president

The Temple Men's Club wishes you a happy secular new year. During the seasonal break, we had a chance to catch our breath from blowing out all the Chanukah candles last month.

Speaking of last month, a major highlight for our Temple President, Rabbi, Religious School Administrator, our NFTY leader, Marilyn Frank and I, was the joint UAHC, Brotherhood, Sisterhood & NFTY conference in Boston. There was a tremendous amount of information we learned to invigorate and reinforce our Temple programs as

well as some new ideas to explore. We will be sharing these ideas in the very near future. Just like the Chanukah story, a key element to strengthen our Temple will be to rededicate our efforts with a covenant of commitment.

Our Men's Club program for January features Stan Ramati from our Jewish Federation. He will talk about Jews in Crisis. So, mark Sunday, Jan. 20, on your calendar to share breakfast with your Temple Family.

Our meetings coincide with religious school on Sunday at 9:30 a.m., so parents can schmooze among friends, and enjoy some lox and bagels. Call if you have

any questions. As always, new ideas to broaden the programs of the Men's Club are always welcome. Please contact me to share your ideas.

Our next meeting is on Feb. 17.

If you want to share your ideas or to become more active in the Men's Club, contact our officers:

Marshall Azrael, President
Sidney Symons, Vice President
Milton Mendelsohn, Treasurer
Arthur Becker, Past President

NEWSLETTER

STAFF

Mark Nemirow—Editor

Sidney L. Symons—Advertising/Sponsorships
Manager

Lynn Bates — Assistant Editor

To get an item in the bulletin, call Mark at 610-370-2533 (Marknem@aol.com) or the Temple office, 610-375-6043.

Deadline for the next issue is Jan. 5.

Religious School Parents

Join us on Feb. 3 from 9 to 12

---enjoy a fresh bagel and coffee

---read the New York Times

--- meet other Religious School parents

---exchange news with Holly Michelson

---or just relax!!

We will continue to meet the 1st Sunday of each month during the school year.



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.

To Edith Brown in memory of her sister Sara
Maxine and Dick Henry

To Albert Diamond in honor of his special birthday
Maxine and Dick Henry

Mrs. Joyce Goldberg with wishes for a speedy recovery
Jodi Beck Stoudt

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of Jerry's Bar Mitzvah
The Zimmer Family

In honor of Michael's Bar Mitzvah
The Rosenzweig Family

Sunshine!

Doesn't everyone need a sprinkle of sunshine on their birthday?

If you would like to receive a birthday card on or near your birthday, please contact Adrienne Cardinal at 610-370-0058 or email her at mymelodyac@aol.com.

Of course, we always welcome donations to help defray the cost of cards and postage.

When someone does send a donation, we print their name in the monthly bulletin!

I am always willing to sprinkle some sunshine!

New Building Fund

Yahrzeit in memory of Richard's father, Eugen Jaschek
Richard and Rosalye Yashek

Yahrzeit in memory of Rosalye's mother, Victoria Levine
Rosalye and Richard Yashek

To Richard Yashek with wishes for continued good health
Frances and Eugene Mendelsohn

To Shirley Friedman in celebration of her special birthday
Ruth and Conrad Heisman

To Dr. and Mrs. S. Ronald Miller in honor of the birth of new grandson, Jonathan David
Dr. and Mrs. Eric Zelnick

Yahrzeit in memory of Frances Beckerman
Norma, Marty, Andy and Erica Beckerman

General Fund

To Shirley Friedman in honor of her special birthday
Judy and Barry Rieberman

Greater Temple Fund

To Mildred Lurio in memory of her son, Lee Lurio
Helen Rappoport

To Edith Brown in memory of her sister Sara
Bernard and Jane Sher

Jacobs Religious

School Fund

To Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig in honor of Michael's Bar Mitzvah
The Bram Family

To Adrienne and Jeffrey Cardinal in honor of Jordan's Bar Mitzvah
The Bram Family

To Donna and Mitch Zimmer in honor of Jerry's Bar Mitzvah
The Bram family

Landscaping Garden of Eden

To Harry Pollack on his special birthday
Jane & Bernie Sher

New Building Landscaping Fund

To Jeri Kozloff and the Food Festival Committee in honor of a terrific job
Dr. Scott and Linda Bram and family

To Barbara Stein in memory of her brother Morton Gumpel
Dr. Scott and Linda Bram and family

Arthur Hammel Endowment Fund

To Richard Yashek with wishes for a speedy recovery
Sylvia Schiff

Birthday Greetings

Elaine Backer
Josephine Luria

Our son Adam and I were overwhelmed with all your cards, notes, calls and contributions during our illnesses. Our sincere thanks to all of you.

Sue and George Viener.
(a contribution has been made to the New Building Fund)

Thank you for all the good wishes to me during my recent illness. Each one was a joy to receive. The greetings were meaningful and did help me to recover.



PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 1)

beginning of a new year, and if there are numerous beginning dates, which one is the right one!" Even the IRS can't answer that one, because there are many people

whose tax years are fiscal, which don't begin on Jan. 1.

There are many issues that have no "right" answers. Black is sometimes gray, and white has many shades. We need to

look at many of those gray issues in the upcoming year to see how we can be a more effective and viable Jewish institution. Til February, I hope to see you at services and special events.

If you are gifting stock to the Temple. . .

please tell us by phone, or send a note describing the security, including name, amount and date of transfer.

If you do this, we'll be able to credit your account and keep our books in order.

When we get a confirmation of a stock gift, the donor's name is not listed. When you fail to make our bookkeeper aware of your gifting a stock, it's like sending cash in an unmarked envelope.

Please take a few minutes and make us aware that a gift is coming our way.

Your help with this is very appreciated.

Any questions? Please call Beth at 610-375-6043.

Perpetual Memorials

January 4-5

Samuel Frankel
Anna Baerncopf
Claire Dershwin
Benjamin W. Loeb
Helen Simmons
Louis S. Levy
Ella Brok

January 11

Margaret Gilbert
Frieda Goldstein
Sidney Spinrad
Herman Fogelman
Elizabeth Frankel
Norman M. Dunitz
Henrietta Weitzenkorn
Dora Lurio Greenberg
Josephine Meyers

January 18

Adolph Loewenstein
Fred Katz
Jonas Sondheim
Elaine Dunitz
Pauline Friedman
Levi Weitzenkorn
Ella Brok
Norman M. Regner
Sarah Fisher

January 25

Fannie Loeb
Elias Schulhoff
William Crane
Bessie Knoblauch
Goldie Natanblut
Cary Abrams
Irving Bash
Julius Curson
Jacob Gernsheimer
Morris Knoblauch

Bertha Loeb
Estela M. Cohen
Ida Salberg Rapp
Leo Camp

February 1-2

Edmond E. Eschwge
Maurice Meier
Mayme Brok
Morris Weil
Julius Goldstein
Rose Griesemer
Leo J. Sondheim
William Bash
Ernest E. Israel
Leon Reidenberg
Julia Ehrlich



Sisterhood Florence Frank Offering Fund

To Jeri Kozloff and Sandy Sigal for a job well done with the food festival

Mr. & Mrs. Murry Knoblauch

To Edith Brown in memory of her sister Sara

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Diamond

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Irvin Suknow in honor of her great-grandson

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Diamond

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Richard Gordon in honor of her grandson

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Diamond

To Frank Costanzo in memory of his father

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Diamond

For a speedy recovery to Naum Ger

Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Harriet Baskin

For a speedy recovery to Richard Yashek

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Sherman

Congratulations to Gene Friedman on becoming Temple first vice president

Mr. & Mrs. Murry Knoblauch

Congratulations to Ellen Azrael on becoming Temple president

Mr. & Mrs. Murry Knoblauch
To Este Neugroschell on her birthday

Mrs. Sue Wolfe
Mrs. Edythe Stern

Many thanks for get well wishes after my recent accident

Mrs. Rachel Yaffee

To Mr. & Mrs. Bob Kiley in memory of Sylvia Abrams

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Sherman
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Schlanger

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brok on their granddaughter's bat mitzvah

Hilde Gernsheimer & Fred Jakobs

Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman
Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Glen Brok on their daughter's bat mitzvah

Hilde Gernsheimer & Fred Jakobs

Congratulations to Shirley Friedman on her special birthday

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brok

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

It's time to update your "green" directory

Please make the following corrections to entries in the directory:

Harrison, Nathan - Ruth, change phone number to read 610-374-1474

Heisman, Conrad - Ruth, change area code to 845

Mendelsohn Laura, Country Meadows, 1800 Tulpehocken Rd. #34, Wyomissing, 19610

Please add the following new members to your directory:

Adam & Robin Altman, 1413 Old Mill Rd, Wyomissing, 19610, 610-208-0000

Marc Caplan, 130 Victoria Lane, Wyomissing, 19610, 610-670-6232

Brett & Cindy Chronister, 501 Martins Rd, Sinking Spring, 19608, 610-678-8208

Nimrod & Janice Goldshtain, 109-H Colonial Drive, Reading, 19607, 610-775-1875

Michael & Jill Haas, 116 Coventry Lane, Wyomissing, 19610, 610-927-3393

Jo Cohen & Edward Hamilton, 35 Beech Lane, Reading, 19606, 610-929-2624

Melvyn & Robin Jacobson, 600 N. Fifth St., Reading 19601, 610-478-8744

Richard & Linda Langlois, 1080 Fox Run, Reading, 19606, 610-779-9459

Karen McCracken & Mark Robinson, 12 Wyomissing Blvd, Wyomissing, 19610, 610-373-0305

Benjamin & Ivy Schlechter, 114 Coventry Lane, Wyomissing, 19610 610-670-7072

Paul and Judy Schonberger, 548 Monocacy Hill Rd, Birdsboro, 19508, 610-582-6894

Fredrick & Julie Singer, 15 Jeffrey Road, Reading, 19601, 610-478-7047

Andrew & Laurie Waxler, 1218 Van Steffy Ave. Wyomissing, 19610 610-376-6122

Alan & Susan Weisberg, 138 Grande Blvd. Sinking Spring, 19608, 610-670-4555

Alison Welsh, 120 Grande Blvd., Sinking Spring 19608, 610-927-2287

William & Bethanne Wolf, 101 Valley Drive, Birdsboro, 19508, 610 370-5141

Sinai Academy invites you to our

Comedy Night and Fundraising Gala

Join us for a fun evening of **Dinner and Comedy** (arranged by David Stein productions)

Saturday, Jan. 26, 7-11 p.m., Jewish Community Center Ballroom

"Laugh a lot on Tu B'Shevat"

\$30 per person, \$25 for seniors and teens Free raffle ticket with every admission



One woman's social action helps improve many lives

Harriet Baskin presented this at the Social Action Sabbath in November.

Social action — another name for volunteer work — is certainly not limited to the people on our Social Action Committee. Many of you are, and have been, involved in all kinds of volunteer endeavors — and the fact that we all continue to do so is a reflection of our feeling that what we are doing is both worthwhile and personally satisfying.

I would like to speak briefly about my experiences as a tutor for the Literacy Council. Tutors are trained to aid either basic English students who need extra help, or ESL students who are learning English as a second language. My students have been the latter — immigrants to the U.S.

My first student was a young Polish woman with a husband, two elementary age children and a full-time factory job. Her primary motivation was to help her children with their homework, although along the way I found myself — a nice Jewish girl — helping her with her son's catechism lesson. Some months later I

added a three-generation Russian family, where I worked primarily with the grandparents. And sometime later that year I added another couple from Russia while their regular tutor was unavailable for several months.

Where do you start when you don't speak each other's language? They were all past the need for dolls to point to body parts, gender, clothing, etc. We began with Emergency English — the very practical things newcomers must learn — words like *danger* and *poison*. They learned how to read medicine bottles, how to tell a doctor what hurts, calling 911, making an appointment, using a phone book, telling time, learning money, how to use a bank and write a check, shopping for food and clothing, filling out an employment form, looking at classified ads, taking a bus, understanding directions.

As they progressed through grammar, I relearned things I had long forgotten about why we speak as we do, and I came to realize how difficult this language is and how few rules and how many

exceptions it has. There always a lot of laughs, and great disappointment that the letter from Publisher's Clearing House was not the gateway to unexpected riches! I balanced out catechism lessons with some instruction on pronunciation of the Hebrew Torah blessings. My Russian grandfather student wrote a beautiful speech in English for his grandson's bar mitzvah. Along the way I became friends with all my students and their families. What was most exciting was to see them become United States citizens and to know that I had helped them attain that goal — and they all voted!

My association with my literacy students and the tutoring program greatly enriched my life. Now I'm ready to get started with a new student, perhaps from a different culture, and I expect that the adventure will continue.

Whatever your volunteer interests, I wish you also a satisfying adventure, and a feeling of making a difference.

Library Work Day Scheduled

Sunday, Jan. 6, is the date set aside to work on our Library. Volunteers are needed to help sort, stack and arrange. We'll begin at 9 a.m. and work till noon (or so).

Do you have the morning free to come and help? We have many beautiful new books that we would love to get on the shelves for Temple members to enjoy.

Please call Lynn in the Temple office to let us know you are helping. Our goal is a baker's dozen of volunteers!!

P.S. — You don't have to know the Dewey Decimal System.

"Sex in the Texts: The Jewish View of Human Sexuality"

Tuesdays, Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 & Feb. 4

7:30 - 9:00 PM @ RCOS

\$15 members/\$30 non-members. Call the office to reserve your space.

Book group

meets Sunday, Jan. 13
at 4 p.m.

Book available through
Temple office



READING JCC - FEDERATION SPONSORED BLOOD DRIVE

LET'S DEMONSTRATE OUR SUPPORT FOR ADAM VIENER,
RECIPIENT OF MANY TRANSFUSIONS DUE TO ILLNESS.
LET'S RENEW OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE
AND CIVIC PRIDE BY HELPING REPLENISH OUR LOCAL BLOOD SUPPLY.

TUESDAY, JAN. 29 - 7 A.M. TO 11 A.M. WEDNESDAY, JAN. 30 - 3 P.M. TO 7 P.M.
THURSDAY, JAN. 31 - 6 P.M. TO 10 P.M. AT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

STAFFED BY KEYSTONE BLOOD BANK.
CHAIRPERSON - JON WACHS

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JCC- Federation, 1700 City Line Street, Reading, PA 19604

YES! I will Give Blood Pledge card

(First Name) (Middle Name) (Last Name)

(Street Address)

(City) (State) (Zip)

(Home Phone Number) (Business Phone Number)

I prefer to donate blood:

Tuesday, January 29, at (time) _____

Wednesday, January 30, at (time) _____

Thursday, January 31, at (time) _____

(You will receive a confirmation notice with your day and time.)

