



OUR TEMPLE

January 2008

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 44, No. 5

Notes from the first lady

President's wife offers her impressions

By Chip Karasin

Herb's muse, which has served him so well, is apparently taking a vacation. I told him in June, when he started his term as president, that I would help occasionally with these columns because I well remember, from two years for the Berks County LWV, how fast the months roll by. So — here goes — from the gayer Madame First Lady.

It is very possible that my impressions of RCOS are no different than any person's, coming to a new community, would be. If that is the case, so be it. But I would like to tell you some of my impressions.

Probably the strongest impression is that RCOS really IS a community. That is most obvious on the overwhelming volunteer days like the Food Festival, but it's al-

ways there. As a "stranger" like me gradually gets to know more and more people in the congregation, the sense of community grows, of course.

However, I vividly remember some of the earliest times when I attended services — to hear the choir. I am not Jewish. My Hebrew is limited to about 8 or 10 phrases,

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From the Rabbi's study

Temple program wins national URJ honor

Last month, I attended the national biennial conference for the Union of Reform Judaism. Nearly 5,000 people, rabbis, cantors, educators, and congregational leaders, gathered in San Diego. The conference is an opportunity for congregations to share program ideas and help us ensure our congregations are following best practices.

Rabbi Brian Michelson

One of my favorite parts of the conference is Shabbat. It is a day where the business of congregational life is set to the side and we gather as a community to celebrate. There is something awe-inspiring about participating in a service with thousands of fellow Jews who all know the words and the music. The San Diego convention center was filled with our words and music.

This year, Reform Congregation Oheb

Sholom was one of 10 congregations nationwide that was honored with a Belin Outreach award for our work on outreach. This award was for a program that I created and that continues, "Three Evenings with the Rabbi." "Three Evenings" was an opportunity for non-Jewish spouses or partners to share some fellowship, learning, and frank discussion. It was an opportunity to ask those questions they have always wanted to ask, but were hesitant to ask. It also allowed them to share how they faced various issues and experiences and to make sure that people knew that they were not the only one facing certain challenges. More than 50 percent of those members invited to participate attended one or more sessions. The majority of those who attended were able to make it to two or more sessions. In real numbers, this means that "Three Evenings" affected

between 10 and 15 percent of our total membership. As a follow-up to our first set of sessions, the group has gotten together for a barbecue for participants and their families, and we will have a second set of three evenings beginning this month.

The program was recognized because it specifically targeted just the non-Jewish spouse and tried to offer support and information to them in a nonthreatening way. In addition, the program was praised for the ease of replication by other synagogues.

As part of the award, the program will be included in the 2007 New Idea guide that was published by the URJ and used by more than 900 congregations across North America. In addition, we received \$1,000 to create an Outreach fund at RCOS. The Outreach fund will be used to defray the cost of running programs such as "Three Evenings" and other future outreach programs.

I am thrilled and honored to be able to share this exciting news with you.

January Highlights

Friday, Jan. 4 — Early Shabbat Service, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 5 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 6 — Food Festival breakfast, 10 a.m.

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

Tuesday, Jan. 22 — Fundraiser at Isaac's, 6 p.m.

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

Babysitting available for 7:45 Shabbat services.

*Bulletin sponsored by
Shirley & Gene Friedman
in memory of
Emanuel & Pauline Friedman
and by
E. Jane Sher
in memory of
her beloved husband, Bernard*

Notes from the Treasurer**An update on Temple money matters****By Karen Hogg***Treasurer*

In recent months, questions have been asked about giving stock or securities for annual commitments or pledges to RCOS. If a congregant would like to donate stock or securities to pay either of these, please call the Temple office and we will mail you a simple form that needs to be filled out either by you or your financial adviser and returned to the Temple office. We will handle the form once it is returned.

While I am on the subject of annual commitments, part of my responsibilities in my volunteer position as Treasurer of RCOS is to ensure that the RCOS finances are handled properly. The good news is that since the annual commitment requests went out last June (2007) the response has

been amazing. The congregation as a whole has responded positively.

As a congregant myself, it is difficult for me as the treasurer to collect or attempt to collect annual commitments, social hall rental fees or any other pledges from fellow congregants.

It makes life much simpler when fellow congregants either communicate with me or the RCOS bookkeeper when there are issues.

RCOS has a policy that no one will be turned away for inability to pay an annual commitment.

But at the same time, RCOS expects that those who can pay will do so in good faith.

The board has passed a policy that states if a congregant has not made an annual commitment, then one will be assigned to them based on past annual commitment

history. This information is shown on your annual commitment quarterly statement.

I am doing my best to handle my volunteer position as RCOS treasurer. I am asking each and every congregant to do their job as a member of RCOS by making annual commitment payments OR communicating with either myself or Beth Bruck (RCOS bookkeeper) when there are issues.

All communication will remain strictly confidential. If we work together, we can make an uncomfortable situation a little more comfortable. I am just a phone call or e-mail away. I can be reached at karenhogg@comcast.net or at 610-603-9070.

Thank you for your continued support of RCOS.

My family and I wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

January Simchas**Anniversaries**

| | |
|--|---------|
| Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman | Jan. 1 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Norbert Salpeter | Jan. 16 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gilbert | Jan. 25 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Bob Ullman | Jan. 28 |
| Bonnie Friedman & Cantor Gerald Miller | Jan. 29 |

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Michael Zamrin | Jan. 15 |
| David Bender | Jan. 17 |
| Holly Michelson | Jan. 17 |
| Marcella Goldberg | Jan. 18 |
| Barbara Silverberg | Jan. 18 |
| Scott Egolf | Jan. 19 |
| Pat Shore | Jan. 19 |
| Barbara Stein | Jan. 20 |
| Judith Kaneff | Jan. 21 |
| Dr. Eric Zelnick | Jan. 21 |
| Jeffrey Cardinal | Jan. 24 |
| Robert Gilbert | Jan. 24 |
| June Winston | Jan. 25 |
| Peter Sellgren | Jan. 26 |
| Lee Berger | Jan. 27 |
| Fredrick J. Singer | Jan. 27 |
| Susan Sellgren | Jan. 29 |
| Jayne Kleinman | Jan. 31 |
| Robb Mutzel | Jan. 31 |

Birthdays

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Dr. Stuart S. Cohn | Jan. 1 |
| Timothy Schuchart | Jan. 1 |
| Jeffrey Weiland | Jan. 1 |
| Dr. C. Harold Cohn | Jan. 5 |
| Maxine Henry | Jan. 6 |
| Adrienne Cardinal | Jan. 7 |
| Bonnie Friedman | Jan. 7 |
| Paul Cohn | Jan. 9 |
| Robin Drezner | Jan. 10 |
| Elizabeth Fishman | Jan. 13 |
| Cynthia Schuchart | Jan. 14 |

Book group

Feb. 3 at 4 p.m.

We will continue our discussion of "A Tale of Love and Darkness" by Amos Oz.

Our next Tot Shabbat*is Saturday, Jan. 26 at 10 a.m.*

You can e-mail Rabbi Michelson if you would like to be included on the Tot Shabbat reminder list:
rabbi@ohebsholom.org

Religious School News**Tu B'Shevat teaches environmental lesson****By Judy Synnamon***Religious School administrator*

There will be several special activities during the month of January.

The holiday we will be celebrating is Tu B'Shevat. We will be having a Tu B'Shevat Seder for the students Jan. 20. Tu B'Shevat is the birthday of the trees. During the Seder we will drink white and purple grape juice and eat three different kinds of fruit — fruit with shells, fruit with pits and fruits that are entirely edible. We are reminded that although it is cold here, Israel is in the middle of her rainy period, and it is the perfect time to plant trees that will have their first birthday next year on Tu B'Shevat. It allows us to think about what we can do to help the environment and the world to ensure that it is just as beautiful for our children and our children's children to enjoy in the future. It also reminds us of Israel and how Jews

all around the world not only plant trees in Israel, but help Israel grow to be a stronger, more peaceful place.

Our Religious School will be attending a Joint Program hosted at Kesher Zion on Wednesday, Jan. 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. The students will make a Tu B'Shevat craft and sample some Tu B'Shevat snacks. Religious School will be cancelled at Oheb on Tuesday, Jan. 15.

The Religious School families will have another opportunity to have dinner together after Hebrew School on Tuesday, Jan. 22 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Isaac's Restaurant and Deli at the Village Square Shopping Center in Spring Ridge for another Community Night Fundraiser. Forms will be found in this bulletin.

With the start of 2008, I hope you take the opportunity to refer to the Student Handbook once again for a re-

fresher course. Please be aware of our inclement weather closing policy as written in the handbook. Also, please be aware of the attendance policy required of our students of 22 out of 30 Sundays and 25 of the 33 Tuesdays. Students who do not meet this requirement must make up assignments during the school year or over the summer for the school year to be considered successfully completed.

Dates to Remember

Friday, Jan. 11: Friday Night Service conducted by the Seventh Grade, 7:45 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 15: No Religious School

Wednesday, Jan. 16: Religious School held at Kesher Zion, 4 – 6 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 20: Tu B'Shevat Seder

Tuesday, Jan. 22: Community Social and Dinner Fundraiser at Isaac's, 6 p.m.

PRESIDENT*Continued from Page 1*

and I don't really know what they mean. But I can say them. And I do. And so do a whole lot of others at the service. People chime in with the bits they know. The familiar gets woven into the unfamiliar, and perhaps, hopefully, it all becomes more familiar.

Each time I came, I had this dilemma — whom to sit with? Someone who really knows Hebrew and the service or a friend — a tolerant, helpful friend? That, of course, was always my preference, and there were many, many tolerant, helpful friends. Thank you all. You know who you are.

Another important impression that I always have, is that the prayers and sometimes the poems in the services are relevant.

They are relevant to me and to the world I know. There are lyrical prayers for the environment and for the natural world that always resonate. There are prayers for social justice, for our responsibilities as citizens, for our obligations to the people we care about. They are NOT just words that get repeated every week. Sometimes they are comforting. Sometimes they are challenging. Sometimes they are reassuring. Sometimes they are beautiful. I "get" something from the service. Almost always. Your services are something of which you can be proud. They are important.

I have a lot more impressions, but Herb may need help on other columns, so I will leave them for later.

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!

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

NEWS FROM THE UNION

Nothing but nets

As part of its efforts to combat extreme poverty and preventable disease through the world, the Union for Reform Judaism is urging its members to purchase 50,000 insecticide-treated bed nets to fight malaria in Africa through the Nothing But Nets campaign. For just \$10, you can protect an

entire family!

Log onto www.urj.org/nets and take action today!

An Israel family experience

Are you ready to take your relationship with Israel to the next level? The Reform Family Experience moves you beyond the tour bus to connect to Israel in an entirely

new way!

This highly subsidized program is designed for individuals, couples or families with children grades 5-12, who are considering making aliyah. The majority of participants will have been to Israel before and are looking for a more integrated Israeli experience.

Florence Frank Offering Fund

To Mrs. Doris Paine in memory of her husband the Rev. Dr. R. Howard Paine
Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Symons

To Mr. and Mrs. David Kozloff on the birth of their granddaughter
Dr. and Mrs. Eric Zelnick
Mr. and Mrs. Gene 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.

A 5000 Year-old Language

in Five "Easy" Sessions

This adult Hebrew program will begin Tuesday, Jan. 22.
Members; \$30/non-Members \$50—this includes the cost of the textbook.
The class is limited to 12 students, so call the office early to reserve your space.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of Fred Coopersmith
Sande & Neal Nevitt

Building Fund

For the Yahrzeits of Charles Burns & Bernard Singer
Barbara Singer

For the Yahrzeit of Frances Beckerman

Marty & Norma Beckerman

For the recent arrival of Meyer & Jane Weiner's grandson
Harriet Baskin

For the engage of Jayne Kleinman's son, Ben Katz
Harriet Baskin

For Rich Roeberg's generosity & kindness
Donna Oaks

Wishing Norma Dashe a wonderful birthday
Gene & Shirley Friedman

Music Fund

For the recent arrival of Dave & Jeri Kozloff's granddaughter
Harriet Baskin

Religious School Fund

For Linda Bram's speedy recovery
The Religious School Committee

In memory of Henry M. Schneider & Murry Knoblauch
Nancy Knoblauch

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 memory of my dear nice Jane
Sylvia Gross

Perpetual Memorials

Jan. 1-5

Claire Dershwin
Louis S. Levy
Irving Bash
Helen Simmons
Samuel Frankel
Anna Baerncopf
Benjamin W. Loeb

Adolph Loewenstein
Norman M Regner

Jan. 6-12

Frieda Goldstein
Sidney Spinrad
Beth Frankel
Henrietta Weitzenkorn
Norman B. Dunitz
Josephine Meyers
Dora Lurio Greenberg
Margaret Gilbert

Jan. 20-26

Carry Abrams
Leo Camp
Elias Schulhoff
Goldie Natanblut
Ida Salberg Rapp
Fannie Loeb
Jacob Gernsheimer
Estela M. Cohen
William Crane
Julius Curson
Nettie Loeb
Bertha Loeb
Bessie Knoblauch
Morris Knoblauch

Jan. 13-19

Pauline Friedman
Elaine Dunitz
Levi Weitzenkorn
Jonas Sondheim
Fred Katz
Ella Brok
Sarah Fisher
Emanuel W. Loeb

Jan. 27-31

Maurice Meier
Morris Weil
Leo J. Sondheim
Frances Steinberg
Rose Griesemer
Mayme Bock
Julius Goldstein
Edmond E. Eschwege

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