



OUR TEMPLE

January 2009

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 45, No.5

Notes from the president

A journey to a family's past in Argentina

By Herb Karasin
President

Recently my family traveled on vacation to Argentina. The trip took us to a number of very remote places in the far south and near the northern part of the country. We spent the final two days in Buenos Aires. This is a large and beautiful city. I was particularly interested in going there as I was named after a great uncle who had lived in the city. When I was a child my mother would talk about her mother's sister, her aunt who lived in Buenos Aires. She and her husband had emigrated there from the Ukraine in the early 1900s and had remained there. To the best of my knowl-

edge, they had never visited the States, and I believe my mother had never met them. We have one or two photos of her, one with her husband. I know very little about them; I don't even know their names. However, he must have died before I was born, as I was named after him. I never heard of any children so I don't believe any family remains there. Still, I was interested in trying to investigate.

Before we left to go there I made an attempt to get some information. I spoke to an older cousin of mine. But she had no more information than I did. So off I went with no information; I didn't even think to take the photos.

I asked and learned where the original Jewish section of the city was; it is called Once. I went there and I learned that, though it still contains some synagogues, most of the Jews have moved. I found one synagogue, but it was closed and locked. I found a delicatessen; at least I believe it was a delicatessen because the waiter was appropriately surly. Actually he was a great character. Although the establishment was of modest size, he had an incredible ability to avoid my attempts to catch his attention. Every time he came into my view, I made facial gestures to draw his attention. He avoided them all. He cleaned three

Continued on Page 3

From the Rabbi's study

'Emergency Shoppers' program a great opportunity

Do you have an extra hour during the week? Or are you confined to your home or hesitant about driving in bad weather? If so, I have a new program that might interest you.

The program is called "Emergency Shoppers." It would allow members of the Temple

**Rabbi Brian
Michelson**

who are homebound, due to weather, health, or for any other reasons,

to call the Temple and to be matched with someone who is willing to pick up and deliver some emergency supplies. This is not meant to be a full shopping trip; rather, it is for items such as milk, eggs, and bread.

As the Jewish community in Berks County ages, the need for simple services such as this will continue to expand. It is an act that can mean so much to the recipient and make us feel good about helping others. In addition, it allows for greater personal interaction between members of the Temple and helps us truly become more than just fellow congregants but a larger extended family.

I would like to develop a list of volunteers who are willing to do these quick trips for other members. When a request comes in, we will go down our list to find someone available to help within the next day or so and put the driver/de-

livery person in direct contact with the member in need. After the delivery is made, the Temple office will follow up with the driver to make sure that there were not problems.

For the drivers, this is a very simple thing we can do to help other members of our congregation, truly to do a mitzvah, and your mileage may be tax-deductible. For those who receive the help, it can lighten the burden of worry about driving and transportation and insure that they have the opportunity to interact with another person during the day. This is a great opportunity for a family mitzvah or for mitzvah project for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah student.

As I see it, this is a win-win situation. So if you can help, please either call the Temple office or e-mail me (rabbi@ohebsholom.org) or the Temple office (office@ohebsholom.org). Once we have a list of available volunteers I will let everyone know that the program is ready to start.

January Highlights

Friday, Jan. 2 — Shabbat service, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 3 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Friday, Jan. 30 and Saturday, Jan. 31 — Scholar in residence Rabbi Stephen Wylen (see Page 2)

**All services at 7:45 p.m. unless otherwise noted
Babysitting available for 7:45 Shabbat services.**

**Bulletin sponsored by
Gene & Shirley Friedman
in memory of
Pauline & Emanuel Friedman
and in honor of our 50th
wedding anniversary**

Scholar in Residence to offer fascinating program

Rabbi Stephen M. Wylen, this year's Scholar in Residence at RCOS, will deliver a lecture on "Three Common Misconceptions About Judaism" during Shabbat services Friday, Jan. 30 at 7:45 p.m.

The next morning, Saturday, Jan. 31, Rabbi Wylen will lead a study on the con-

cept of messiah in Judaism.

Wylen, spiritual leader of Temple Beth Tikvah in Wayne, N.J., is a published author and writes a column for *The Record* of Hackensack.

His books include "Settings of Silver: An Introduction to Judaism," "Jews in the

Time of Jesus" and "The Seventy Faces of Torah: The Jewish Way of Reading the Sacred Scriptures."

The program is sponsored by Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and the Jewish Federation of Reading's Education Fund.

Religious School News

Explore the Jewish Web with your children

By Judy Synnamon

Religious School administrator

Research shows that learning increasingly takes place online. Many families see the Web as the primary resource for entertainment, information, and education. A portion of this month's article will give you and your children valuable Jewish online resources to tap.

This month a newly redesigned site will be found on BabagaNewz.com. This site is primarily for the middle-school aged student. It will take a new look at interactive audio, video, and links around the Web and stay on the cutting edge of technology to best advance Jewish education. BabagaNewz is a magazine we use as part of the curriculum in 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades.

Areyut.com reinforces responsibility and accountability and the notion that every

Jew is responsible for another. It enables Jewish youth to infuse their lives with the core Jewish values of *chesed* (kindness), *tzedakah* (charity), and *tikkun olam* (social justice). It offers innovative and meaningful programs to make these values a reality for students. It highlights ways students can do good deeds. Areyut offers membership to an e-newsletter.

Many of the Religious School textbooks are ordered from Behrman House Publishing Company. Their Web site is www.behrmanhouse.com. It features information and games for families and educators. The site is very suitable for young children, and you will be able to find numerous Judaic activities to entertain and educate your child.

And last, but by no means least, is the site for Reform Jewish congregations, www.urj.org. It offers a wide array of information for adults, children and educa-

tors, delving into how Reform Judaism touches every aspect of our lives: political, social, and economic and of course religious. They also offer a subscription to an e-newsletter.

All of the sites mentioned have links to others. During these cold, long, winter days you could spend hours with (or without) your child exploring the Jewish Web. Have a great time!

January Calendar

Jan. 4: No School

Jan. 6: Welcome back to Hebrew School

Jan. 18: No School, Martin Luther King Birthday Weekend

Jan. 20: Family Dinner and Religious School Fundraiser at Isaac's Restaurant — 6 - 9 p.m.

(Please note: Sixth Grade Service will be held March 13 with the 7th Grade since the classes are combined this year.)

Next book group meeting

Sunday, Feb. 8 at 4 p.m. We will be discussing "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak.

Have you considered remembering the Temple in your will?

Save the Date

"I Remember RCOS When" continues with Jack & Jeff Gernsheimer on Feb. 27 at 7:45 PM.

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 next bulletin: Jan. 5

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www.ohebsholom.org

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Focus on the Food Festival

Numbers from 2008 festival truly staggering

Thanks to an enormous effort put forth by our members, the eighth annual Jewish Food Festival produced a record profit of \$26,232, an increase of about \$3,500 from the previous year.

The profit includes a record \$7,256 from ads in the festival program book.

At a meeting of festival volunteers Dec. 14, members agreed to invest some of the profits in new equipment, most notably an expansion of freezer space. That will enable us to sell more. Proceeds also will go to help pay down the Temple's mortgage and fund the student cantor program

This year just about all the food was gone by 3 p.m., two hours before the festival was scheduled to end. In order to make more food, we need more freezer space. Plans also are in the works to rent a tent to expand seating space and better manage lines.

Food Festival co-chairwomen Janine Ure and Susan Gelb are stepping down and are looking for successors. They are promising to offer plenty of help to allow for a smooth transition.

It's not too early to start thinking about what role you'd like to play in the next festival. Captains are needed to help coordinate various aspects of food preparation and activities on

the day of the festival itself. The more people involved, the easier it will be for everyone.

Here are some numbers from the past festival: Brisket, 974 servings sold out by 2 p.m.; Falafel, 125 servings gone in just over two hours; Latkes, 2,880 servings sold out by 1:30; Blintzes, all 600 pieces sold in just one hour; Deli, 750 servings of corned beef, pastrami and tongue gone by 3 p.m.

Want more? We sold 40 pounds of chopped liver, 160 hot dogs, 12 dozen bialys, 220 apple cakes, 107 pounds of rugelach and 480 pounds of apple sauce.

And we could have sold much more!

PRESIDENT

Continued from Page 1

empty tables, each time carrying the debris behind the counter while I made increasing attempts to get his attention. He looked everywhere but at me. A waiter in the Lower East Side of New York couldn't have done it better. Finally, as I was about to tackle him, he looked in my direction and I was able to get the bill. He must have realized the game was over and that he had won.

Later that day, our last day there, I had more luck connecting. Near the center of the city, at the intersection of Libertad and Cordoba, I located the large central synagogue. I went there; the information I had indicated that it contained a Jewish museum. I knocked on the door, which then opened slightly. A young man asked what I

wanted, and I told him I wanted to go into the museum. He asked to see my passport. I found out later that two anti-Jewish terrorist attacks had taken place in Buenos Aires in the early 1990s, and they maintain a strict level of security. I joined a small group, and we were taken through the museum and the synagogue by a pleasant woman who has attended the synagogue for many years.

The synagogue is an imposing stone structure. The present building was completed in 1932, but there were earlier buildings on the site. It was the original synagogue in Buenos Aires. Originally it was Orthodox but now is Conservative. I suspect, but have no way of knowing, that my great aunt and uncle were members of that synagogue.

I learned that outside of Israel and New

York City, Buenos Aires contains the largest concentration of Jews in the world. There are or have been 90 synagogues in the city and surrounding area. There seems to be a flight of Jews to the suburbs, but the woman who took us through said there are a number of younger members and frequent bar and bat mitzvahs. The museum blended the feeling of Europe with the early history of Jewish settlement in Argentina. This settlement took place both in the city and in the countryside.

I came away feeling closer to the aunt and uncle I never knew. I also felt connected to this distant but similar group of Jews. However, this experience once again made me realize how the wanderings of Jews have physically separated us as a people.

January Simchas

Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Gene Friedman	Jan. 1
50th anniversary	
Mr. & Mrs. James Ullman	Jan. 9
65th anniversary	
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
25th anniversary	

Birthdays

Dr. Stuart S. Cohn	Jan. 1
Timothy Schuchart	Jan. 1

Jeffrey Weiland	Jan. 1	Scott Egolf	Jan. 19
Dr. C. Harold Cohn	Jan. 5	Pat Shore	Jan. 19
Maxine Henry	Jan. 6	Barbara Stein	Jan. 20
Adrienne Cardinal	Jan. 7	Judith Kaneff	Jan. 21
Bonnie Friedman	Jan. 7	Dr. Eric Zelnick	Jan. 21
Paul Cohn	Jan. 9	Dr. Richard Alweis	Jan. 24
Elizabeth Fishman	Jan. 13	Jeffrey Cardinal	Jan. 24
Cynthia Schuchart	Jan. 14	Robert Gilbert	Jan. 24
Michael Zamrin	Jan. 15	Martin Beckerman	Jan. 26
David Bender	Jan. 17	Peter Sellgren	Jan. 26
Holly Michelson	Jan. 17	Lee Berger	Jan. 27
Marcella Goldberg	Jan. 18	Susan Sellgren	Jan. 29
Barbara Silverberg	Jan. 18	Jayne Kleinman	Jan. 31

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of Fred Coopersmith
Sande & Neal Nevitt

In memory of Murry Knoblauch, Henry Schneider, and Saul "Marty" Miller
Nancy Knoblauch

In memory of Salmon Assayag
Renee & Harvey Seidel

In memory of Harriet Leisawitz
Renee & Harvey Seidel

In thanks to Nancy Knoblauch
Sandra & Andy Sigal

Building Fund

In honor of Jake Zelnick's engagement
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In honor of Caitlin Rothstein's wedding
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In honor of the birth of Bob & Beth Bruck's granddaughter Dana
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In honor of the birth of Jim & Shirley Ullman's great-grandson & Rick & Mindy Small's grandson Matthew
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In memory of Arthur Levinger
Norma & Marty Beckerman

In memory of Frances Beckerman
Norma & Marty Beckerman

Greater Temple Fund

In memory of Saul "Marty" Miller
Floyd & Mildred Rutenberg
Maurice & Janet Levin

For the Life of the Temple

In memory of Saul "Marty" Miller
Donna Oaks

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 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Goldberg's daughter's wedding
Mitzi Wernick

In memory of Harriet Leisawitz
Bobbie Singer
Judy & Lee Katz

In honor of Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Goldberg's granddaughter's wedding
Mitzi Wernick

Wishing Judith Kaneff a speedy recovery
Sandra Sigal

Thanks to Mrs. Renee Seidel for sponsoring the challahs in January

Are you interested...

in a daytime Torah discussion during the week? Rabbi Michelson is considering starting a weekly Torah discussion group over lunchtime on Mondays. If you would be interested in participating, please let the Temple office know. If we have five or six people we can give this program a try.

Florence Frank Offering Fund

Congratulations to Dr. and Mrs. Eric Zelnick on the engagement of their son

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Friedman
Mrs. Barbara Stein

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.

Education for adults

Adult forum – **Sunday, Jan. 11** from 11 a.m. to noon.
We will be discussing the issue of divorce.

Adult Basic Hebrew class starts **Sunday, Jan. 25** from 11 a.m. to noon
Registration is required:
\$30 members/\$60 non-members.
Price includes a textbook

Perpetual Memorials

Jan. 1-3
Claire Dershwin
Irving Bash
Samuel Frankel
Anna Baerncopf
Benjamin W. Loeb

Henrietta Weitzenkorn
Jonas Sondheim
Norman B. Dunitz
Fred Katz
Ella Brok
Josephine Meyers
Dora Lurio Greenberg
Emanuel W. Loeb
Adolph Loewenstein

Julius Curson
Nettie Loeb
Bertha Loeb
Bessie Knoblauch
Morris Knoblauch
Norman M Regner

Jan. 4-10
Frieda Goldstein
Sidney Spinrad
Beth Frankel
Louis S. Levy
Helen Simmons
Margaret Gilbert

Jan. 18-24
Carry Abrams
Elias Schulhoff
Goldie Natanblut
Fannie Loeb

Jan. 25-31
Maurice Meier
Leo Camp
Morris Weil
Leo J. Sondheim
Frances Steinberg
Ida Salberg Rapp
Rose Griesemer
Mayme Bock
Julius Goldstein
Edmond E. Eschwege

Jan. 11-17
Pauline Friedman
Elaine Dunitz
Levi Weitzenkorn

Jacob Gernsheimer
Estela M. Cohen
Sarah Fisher
William Crane

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A Scholar in Residence program:

3 Common
Misunderstandings
about Judaism

with Rabbi Stephen M. Wylen

Friday, January 30, 2009

7:45 PM

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

555 Warwick Drive

Wyomissing, PA 19610

Rabbi Stephen M. Wylen is the religious leader of Temple Beth Tikvah in Wayne, NJ, and writes a monthly column for The Record, Hackensack, NJ. He is also the author of Settings of Silver and The Jews in the Time of Jesus.

This program is sponsored by Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and the Jewish Education Fund of the Jewish Federation of Reading

Social action alive and well without committee

Dear Super Mensch, the president no congregation has ever had and probably never will:

Recently I phoned the president of my congregation and told him it pains me that we have no functioning social action committee, a group near and dear to my heart. Mind you, I didn't offer to do anything about it, just to share my pain — which he feels, too

Then I began to think about all the things that go on in our Temple (Oheb Sholom, Wyomissing, Pa.) that are related to social action or are social actionesque, even without a running committee. I realized we have a kind of chairless wonder going.

For example, we have a crew that serves faithfully once a month at the local soup kitchen, has done for years, and has a current coordinator (Barb Rosenzweig) who does her best to see to it any leftovers from our social events make it to the soup kitchen reserve shelf, or provide a special treat — and she's been "current" for a long time.

The husband of another congregant (David Walker) coordinates a monthly meal program at the homeless shelter (Opportunity House) for which he and congregation volunteers shop-for-and-prepare the food that's served at noon on a Sunday. It's her

job, but the community relations coordinator for Opportunity House (Lorri Oziri) is one of our congregants and eminently qualified for the job.

Our congregation is part of an interfaith program helping families that are down on their luck, to regroup, find jobs, get a new lease on life (initiated by Rabbi Brian and Holly Michelson).

One of our members (Dorie Karp) undertook to enter a therapy dog training program. She and her Daisy (as reported in our November newsletter) are making visits regularly to local hospitals and rehab centers, and she's made an open offer to all congregants to contact her about any ill or shut-ins who might enjoy a visit.

We were represented by congregants and a speaker (Alan Seltzer) at this year's interfaith Thanksgiving service at the Unitarian Universalist Church. We've been participating in this service for many years and were host congregation in 2007.

Your correspondent is involved with a new group calling itself the Berks Intercultural Alliance, and chairing its subcommittee on faith initiatives. The overall mission of the BICA is to facilitate healthy intercultural community relations through education, training and advocacy, by partnering

and cooperating with likeminded groups, and by using existing resources when possible. Our president's wife, Chip Karasin, is co-chair of the BICA.

And while they can't be called social action projects per se, both our rummage sale (Adrienne Cardinal) and our food festival (Jeri Kozloff, Janine Ure and Susan Gelb) have a social action component. They are widely anticipated and appreciated throughout the community and enhance a positive image of our way of life. The food festival this year (our eighth) was a dazzling success.

And I could go on. I fear I might miss something, somebody — Oh, yes! We are sharing our facilities with the Jewish Community Center preschool and our neighbor First Church of the Brethren while they build. Reciprocity — we used their old place 10 years ago while we were building our beautiful synagogue.

Super Mensch — we're not so bad off social actionwise — but it would be great to have a chair and a committee. We know you are one in a trillion or more.

When it comes right down to it, we're quite well off in such a lot of ways we must be thankful — but never complacent, right?

Yours for a good 5769/2009,
Nancy J. Knoblauch

NEWS FROM THE UNION

Reform Judaism blog

If you've never ventured into the world of blogging, now's the chance to get your feet wet. Check out the new Reform Movement blog at www.RJ.org, which is a place to read facts, opposing opinions, calls to action and interesting tidbits from the greater Jewish world. New information is posted daily on the site, which is a platform for Reform Jews to come together to chat, opine, kibbitz and learn in an online community. Log on and chime in today — www.RJ.org.

Teens can travel with NFTY

NFTY in Israel provides a number of summer travel programs in Israel and Europe for URJ teens ages 15-18. Designed specifically for young people from Reform synagogues, these renowned trips combine travel, learning, fun and adventure with Jewish identity building. Participants come home from the

summer of a lifetime connected to the land, people and history of Israel and with the ability to connect their NFTY in Israel summer experience with their home communities. NFTY supports a full time staff of youth program and travel logistics professionals in Israel and in North America. For more information visit www.NFTYIsrael.org or call (845)987-6300 x 6351.

Reform leaders meeting in Israel

Join the world's largest and most exhilarating international gathering of Reform Jewish leaders at CONNECTIONS 2009, the 34th convention of the World Union for Progressive Judaism March 18-23.

Learn, travel and schmooze with your peers from dozens of other countries in the global Reform family. Soak up the spirituality of Jerusalem. Experience the heartbeat of Israel in Tel Aviv, celebrating its 100th birthday.

Visit the CONNECTIONS 2009 web

site at www.kenes/connections2009 for details and to register.

Become a lay leader in religious life

If you volunteer in our congregation's religious life and want to acquire more competence and experience in the areas of ritual observance, worship, and Jewish education, then the Had'rachah Seminar sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism may be just what you need. Your community will benefit when you return with new skills to support communal worship, life-cycle events and educational opportunities.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie and Rabbi Aaron Panken are among the esteemed faculty at the week-long session, which will be held May 12-19 at URJ Kutz Camp in Warwick, NY. For more information and to obtain an application form, see www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah or contact the URJ Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at 212-650-4193, worship@urj.org.

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