



OUR TEMPLE

March 2009

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 45, No.7

Notes from the president

From one president to another

By Herb Karasin
President

There is a new president; but don't worry, I am not talking about the president of the Temple. No, I am still here. I am talking about our country's president. You probably noticed that a new president took office Jan. 20; but just in case you haven't heard, I'm here to tell you that this has occurred. Now, I am not going to talk about politics; I am not going to reveal whom I supported in the election. I will keep my preferences secret; you won't hear it from me. This column is not about politics. But it is about a historic event. Also, I realize that by the time this Note is circulated, this will have been old news. But I couldn't let it pass without comment.

Of course, I refer to the fact that our new

president is of mixed racial origin. He is the son of a black African father and a white mother from Kansas. This fact is amazing. That this has occurred now, rather than at some indefinite far future point in time, is mind boggling. For example, I don't know what the betting odds may have been just a year ago that this would occur, but I for one am exceedingly lucky that I didn't meet someone offering to bet me on this outcome. I would have lost my shirt. And, I suspect, that many if not most people, would have felt the way I did. Not that there is any good rational reason that this shouldn't have happened. Certainly, there are, and have been, many highly qualified, energetic and intelligent people of every racial background who would be appropriate for this position. What is surprising is

that this fact has been accepted by enough people to have it take place. It just did not seem that we would vote for this outcome in large enough numbers to have this occur. As President Obama has said, this election says more about us, and our system, than it does about him.

Also, this election result is surprising for that additional reason that the winner did not come from a wealthy background; or come from a political dynasty. He is not even a celebrity movie star or athlete. He doesn't have anything going for him other than ability and qualifications. And that is something that, at times, we have not valued. (Keep in mind, I am not making any statement about the qualifications of his opponent or those of the other political party

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From the Rabbi's study

A time to celebrate, a time to be serious

The glorious spirit of Purim is reflected in its carnival-like nature. Other people have their annual carnivals on their calendar. Many celebrations, such as the Mardi Gras, last a full week or more. Purim is observed for only one day. The message of the holiday can be gotten across without overdoing the celebrating.

Rabbi Brian Michelson

On Purim we re-enact the events of the Biblical Scroll of Esther. The thrilling action recorded in those 10 brief chapters of Esther. Then, after the Megillah and the noisemakers set the spirit, Jews customarily adjourn to the social hall or to their homes and celebrate the victory of Mordecai and Esther over the unsuccessful plot of Haman and his henchmen. (Regarding the use of intoxicants, which was never prevalent among Jews according to

the Talmud, one may drink on Purim until he can no longer distinguish "cursed be Haman" from "blessed be Mordecai." Imbibing was allowed so as to comply with the term "mishteh-party" expressly permitted in the Bible for the yearly celebration of Purim.)

We are told that masquerading on Purim was introduced at the close of the 15th century by Italian Jewry that had been influenced by the Roman carnivals. It appears the custom of donning masks and costumes is here

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March Highlights

- Friday, March 6 — Shabbat service, 6 p.m.
 - Saturday, March 7 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.
 - Monday, March 9 — Purim celebration at Keshet Zion, 7 p.m.
 - Saturday, March 14 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.
 - Friday, March 20 — Community dinner and service at Keshet Zion, 6 p.m.
- Services Friday nights at 7:45 p.m. unless otherwise noted**

**Bulletin sponsored by
Harriet Baskin
in memory of
her husband, Alan
and by**

**Mildred & Ivan Gordon
in memory of
Kate and Nathan Gross and
Betty and David Gordon**

Religious School News**Celebrate Purim with your Temple family**By **Judy Synnamon***Religious School administrator*

Thank you to the families who attended our Parent Curriculum and Mitzvah Project

Purim is a holiday that is loved by children. We will be reading the Megillah on Monday night, March 9, at 7 p.m. at Keshar Zion. Please attend with your children, wear costumes and help celebrate the downfall of Haman with loud boos

and noisy groggers. Part of the celebration of Purim also encourages the mitzvah of tzedukah.

Is there something you can do as a family that reinforces this part of Purim also? There will be a Purim Carnival at the new JCC facility, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., on Sunday, March 8 from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. featuring arts & crafts, face painting, games, hot dogs, cotton candy and of course, lots of fun.

Please make sure you have these March activities written on your calendars:

Sunday, March 8: Purim Carnival at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing, 12:30 – 2:30 pm. Wear your costumes!!

Friday, March 14: Grade 5 will help conduct Shabbat Service at 7:45 p.m.

Friday, March 20: Community Shabbat celebrated at Keshar Zion. Service: 6 p.m., Dinner: 6:45 (reservations for dinner requested by March 10)

Cantor Leah's Weekend Schedule

**Cantor Leah Holland will be with us
the following weekends**

February 27 – March 1	March 6 – March 8
March 27 – March 29	April 10 – April 12
May 15 – May 17	May 29 – May 31

Please join us . . .

for weekly Torah study

Mondays at noon

Emergency Shopper Program

**Are you unable to get to the store due to winter weather or other problems?
RCOS volunteers are ready to help.**

If you need help or someone to pick up a few items, please call the Temple office to get the process started.

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: March 5

COMMUNITY SHABBAT CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, MARCH 20,

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE

SERVICE: 6 P.M. DINNER: 6:45 P.M.
EVERYONE IS INVITED TO ATTEND SERVICE
AND/OR DINNER

KOSHER DELI BUFFET DINNER

ADULTS: \$14 CHILDREN: 6 – 12 \$8

CHILDREN 5 AND UNDER ARE FREE

VEGETARIAN MEAL AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
RSVP BY MARCH 10 — YOUR CHECK IS YOUR RESERVATION

*PLEASE SEND CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO THE
JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING, PO BOX
14925, READING, PA 19612-4925
INDICATE NUMBER OF ADULTS, CHILDREN,
AND YOUNGSTERS UNDER 5*

***Have you considered
remembering the Temple
in your will?***

The Temple Online

www.ohebsholom.org

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Rabbi Michelson: rabbi@ohebsholom.org

Bookkeeper Beth Bruck:

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PRESIDENT

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— I am keeping my word about avoiding stating a preference.) But it is important to take note of the fact that we seem to have stated that we value ability and qualifications.

I believe that it is safe to say that the fact that we as a people have indicated that we are willing to accept this outcome, and, in fact prefer it, means that we are willing to value and use the significant qualifications and attributes of all, regardless of racial, ethnic, sexual or religious background.

Hopefully, this says that we are no longer going to squander the scarce resource of talented and qualified people for no particularly good, rational reason. In view of the many seemingly intractable problems we continue to encounter, this is good for us as a country and good for all minority and less than favored populations.

While I am realistic enough to know that this single episode does not signal the end of prejudice and racism, it does mark a crucial milestone in that long journey. This stunning achievement denies to those who

would continue to appeal to bigotry the base stereotypes they have relied on to portray the African-American. Rather, in place we have the genuine image of this intelligent and inspired leader. Hopefully all minority populations, including Jews, which have been the victims of prejudice will likewise share the benefit of this reawakening.

Finally, I wonder if, as a fellow president with one and one years of experience, I should go to DC and give him some advice. Naw, I think I'll just let him find his own way.

RABBI

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to stay.

Almost everyone will agree that masquerading is purely for fun and merry-making. No one is permitted to be serious or introspective on Purim. We joke, we jest, we pretend, we gloat over Haman's downfall. We masquerade as weird, questionable, and grotesque individuals. We masquerade as opposites of our true selves. All this is

allowed on Purim.

Unfortunately, some of us think Purim is never over. Look how many clown away their days and never accomplish much that is worthwhile. We masquerade our way all along the social structure of our lives. We pretend to be concerned with the plight of humanity, with poverty, with war. We pretend our concern for education in general and Jewish education in particular. We play games.

We wile away the hours.

Yes, yes, joy is supposed to be a basic ingredient in the mixture of life. But life is best lived, when those who would accept its responsibilities would face up to them in joyous anticipation.

Let's celebrate Purim, live it up, have schnapps, two or even three, pretend away the whole way. But on the morrow let's not forget to remove our masks.

March Simchas

Anniversaries

Dr. & Mrs. Alan Weisberg	March 5
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Schneider	March 20
Mr. and Mrs. Rick Flynn	March 26
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Henry	March 29

Birthdays

Neil Eisenberg	March 1
Mark Nemirow	March 3
Kaye Ullman	March 5
Steve Gelb	March 8

Blair Hogg	March 9
Sandra Fishman	March 10
Mack Gibson	March 11
Barbara Bender	March 13
Dr. Mildred Gordon	March 13
Renee Seidel	March 15
Dr. Seth Rosenzweig	March 16
Dr. Scott Kaneff	March 18
Mindy Small	March 18
Dr. Benjamin Schlechter	March 20

Norma Beckerman	March 21
Louise Wiener	March 21
Evelyn Goodman	March 22
Helen Rappoport	March 23
Judy M. Schonberger	March 23
Scott Stein	March 23
Nan Kurlancheek	March 25
David Spillerman	March 25
Dr. Jonathan Primack	March 29
Albert Schneider	March 31

Book Group

We are reading "A Changed Man" by Francine Prouse. A few copies are available in the Temple office.

Guest speaker

Friday, March 27 at 7:45 p.m.
Jay Worrall, executive director of Reading/Berks Habitat for Humanity

It wouldn't be Purim or Pesach ...

without a visit to the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Check out our items for the upcoming holidays and year round

Music on your mind?

A group of members is trying to bring music, in some form, back to the Temple. Anyone with interest or ideas should contact Mimi Gavigan.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of Lee Fishman
Phyllis Bressler
Evelyn & Jay Lipschutz
Alexis Barbieri
Shirley & Jim Ullman
Bill & Dannie Sedlis

In memory of her father
Susan Sellgren

In memory of Paul Isenberg
Raie & Gerald Fogelman

With thanks to the Rabbi and many members for their good wishes on her recent special birthday
Ruth & Hal Cohn

With thanks for all the good wishes on her "coming of age"
Barbara Silverberg

In honor of Holly Michelson's special birthday
Bonnie Friedman & Gerald Miller
Roseann & Allen Michelson

In honor of Gene & Shirley Friedman's 50th wedding anniversary
Roseann & Allen Michelson

In honor of Jack's Bar Mitzvah—George & Sue Viener's grandson
Barbara Nazimov

In memory of Renee's mother, Esther Assayag
Renee & Harvey Seidel

Building Fund

In memory of the Yahrzeit of David Beckerman
Norma & Marty Beckerman

In memory of the Yahrzeit of Eugene Riegler
Norma & Marty Beckerman

Wishing Gerald Sigal a speedy recovery
Sandra & Andrew Sigal

Greater Temple Fund

In memory of Lee Fishman
Jeff & Lynn Driben

In honor of Sarah Pardo's engagement
Jeff & Lynn Driben

Liever Fund

In honor of Gene & Shirley Friedman's 50th wedding anniversary
The Bram Family

In memory of Sara Cohn
The Bram Family

In memory of Elizabeth Fishman
The Bram Family

In memory of Marty Miller
The Bram Family

In memory of Paul Schonberger's aunt & cousin
The Bram Family

General Fund

In honor of Gene & Shirley Friedman's 50th Wedding Anniversary
Yoni & Lorri Oziri

In memory of Lee Fishman
George & Sue Viener

Soup Kitchen Fund

In honor of Gene & Shirley Friedman's 50th wedding anniversary
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In honor of Sarah Pardo's engagement
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In honor of Hal Cohn's 85th birthday
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In memory of Sara Cohn
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

In memory of Lee Fishman
Seth & Barbara Rosenzweig

I would like to express my extreme appreciation for the many expressions of get-well wishes I received while in the hospital.

Ellen Azrael

MARCH 15 IS UJA SUPER SUNDAY IN READING

WHEN THE PHONE RINGS ON SUPER SUNDAY, PLEASE ANSWER IT. USE YOUR POWER TO HELP CREATE A BETTER WORLD.

VISA AND MASTERCARD NOW ACCEPTED FOR MINIMUM GIFT OF \$25

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March 1-7
Frances Silberstein
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Adeline Reidenberg
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Bessie Meyer
Roy P. Hirshland

March 8-14
Jeanette Miller Brenner
Betty Herman
Jean Gilbert
Irving Popkin
Kathryn H. Soltau
Rachel Loeb Stein

March 15-21
Solly L. Katz
Esther Aal
Jane Henry
Eugene H. Meyer
Emanuel Hammel
Henry Loeb

March 22-31
Darcy Lou Spinrad
Jettchen Katz
Hilda Klevansky
Raymond Hammel
Lucy Jaschek
Evelyn Imber
Joseph Schlanger
Jochen Jaschek
Harold I. Miller

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need volunteers to help with dinner at Kennedy House

Easter Sunday, April 12

Adults and members of the confirmation class are encouraged to volunteer.

Volunteers are needed from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Monetary donations would be appreciated to help offset the cost of the meal.

Please contact Barbara Rosenzweig, 610-775-5383

Florence Frank Offering Fund

To Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Cohn in memory of his mother Sara
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brok

To Mr. and Mrs. Gene Friedman in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary
Mrs. Dorothy Schlanger
Rev. Tiff and Lynn Bates

To Mrs. Barbara Stein on her birthday
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.

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