



OUR TEMPLE

November 2006

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 43, No. 3

Notes from the president

It's a great time of year to volunteer

By **Scott Bram**
President

The High Holy Days and the major fall holidays are over. The next event is the Food Festival. Please support this most important fundraiser and community-inspiring event. This is our chance to showcase the Temple to the broader community. Your help and presence will make a big difference in how dynamic our congrega-

tion appears to be.

If you can, please find an area of interest where volunteers are needed and help out. You can call or e-mail Susan Gelb or Janine Ure to find out where help is needed most. There should be other fundraising activities during the year. Please make it a point to support them. As I said on Rosh Hashanah, dues and pledges do not fund all the operations of the Temple.

Profitable fundraising is a must. Your support counts!

I would also like to see as close as possible to 100 percent participation in the food certificate program. Finally, when you have a Simcha, a happy event, or you want to acknowledge someone else, please consider contributing to one of the Temple funds. If we don't support the Temple, who will? Who else should?

From the Rabbi's study

Condensed Judaism no match for real thing

The word of the hour is "condensed." Yes, the word "condensed" seems pervasive: Condensed Milk! Condensed Soup! Condensed books! Condensed Food!

Rabbi Brian Michelson

A few years ago I came across a new form of condensation: the Bible! *Reader's Digest* published its attempt to condense the Bible. They pared the text of the Torah down to 40 percent of its original contents by stripping the Bible of names, genealogy, place, and "superfluous stuff."

I concede that there are parts of the Bible I go over quickly. Frankly, I do not concentrate on the description of the Tab-

ernacle in Exodus or on the order of sacrifices in Leviticus. We do use abridged Torah textbooks in the Religious School for sound pedagogic reasons. However, I have misgivings about condensing it for adults. Surely mature people are capable of skimming peripheral or redundant material while preserving the authentic flavor of the original. While it is possible to condense food and add milk or water, the taste is never quite up to the taste of the original. I think that there are certain things in life that simply cannot be condensed. I know that *Reader's Digest* does condense great literature and books. Personally, I've tried to read such "condensed classics" and they

read like "classic comics."

I believe that religion and Jewish life cannot be condensed or watered down. No, we need the richness of Shabbat and the glory of our Holy Days. A synagogue without Torah and meaningful worship is a mockery.

Besides the fact that the taste of condensed food is not up to the real thing, it is also not nearly as nutritious. It is the same with Judaism and Torah: The richer and more vitamin-laden we make it, the more enriching, nutritious, and rewarding it becomes. Give us a rich fare of Torah and an uncondensed diet of Yiddishkeit and we will prosper. Water it down in tiny packages of powdered pablum and we'll eventually shrivel and waste away.

Condensed milk? Maybe. Condensed soup? Perhaps. Condensed Judaism and watered-down living? Never! Our faith and our heritage are too vital, too precious for that kind of treatment.

I am grateful to Rabbi Gil Rosenthal for the idea for this column

November Highlights

Friday, Nov. 3 — Early Shabbat, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 4 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Nov. 5 — Food Festival, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 10 — Second Grade Shabbat and dinner, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 11 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Nov. 19 — Brotherhood meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 23 — Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, First Unitarian Church, Reading

Friday night services at 7:45 unless otherwise noted

Babysitting available for 7:45 Shabbat services.

*Bulletin sponsored by
Hilde Gernsheimer
in memory of
Solly Gernsheimer & Fred
Jakobs and all my loved
deceased family*

Religious School News**Enjoy special family activities in November****By Judy Synnamon***Religious School administrator*

The first months of school have flown by. I am enjoying being Religious School Administrator and working with the students and teachers. I hope that your children are enjoying and learning from their experiences. I have been working very closely with our new teachers to help make their transition to our staff a smooth one.

The month of November has some special family activities to share with your children.

Nov. 5 is the Temple's Annual Food Festival. There is no Religious School that day. The building and parking lot will be full of visitors. Please volunteer your time to help. The older children are encouraged to help also. The children can clear tables, gather trays and run errands. Our Junior Choir will be performing during the Food Festival.

On Nov. 10 our Second Grade class will host their class Shabbat Service at 6 p.m. Each child will be given an opportunity to participate in the Service. There will also

be a Family Night Dinner. Details about the dinner will follow.

On Nov. 14 at 4:15 p.m., our Religious School will be hosting a mandatory Joint Religious School Program with the students from Keshet Zion at the Jewish Community Center. This event is held in conjunction with the Book Fair.

The event is divided into two programs, one program for third to eighth graders and one program for preschool to second grade. Parents are asked to attend with their older children. In this workshop, Jewish author Robin Levinson will discuss her book "Miriam's Journey: Discovering a New World." In addition, the children will hear Hilde Gernsheimer, a RCOS member; speak about her life before she came to America. Representatives from the Berks County Genealogical Society will be sharing information. Families will be given the opportunity to complete their own genealogical backgrounds.

While older children and parents are participating in the Genealogy Workshop, the younger children, ages 4 – 7 are invited

to attend a workshop that will include Judaic stories, crafts, songs, and, of course fun. A family pizza dinner will be the culminating activity at 5:45 with all the children and parents.

There will be no charge for any program or dinner. Please register in advance for this event.

This month there is a special and exciting weekend planned for third-, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders at Camp Harlam, our region's URJ summer camp. Unfortunately, it is planned for the same weekend as our Food Festival, Nov. 3-5. There is an optional Open House from noon-3 p.m. on Sunday for families that would like to experience Camp Harlam together. Additional information is hanging on the Religious School bulletin board.

Important Dates

Nov. 5: Food Festival, No Religious School

Nov. 10: Grade 2 Service, 6 pm

Nov. 14: Joint Hebrew School Program at the JCC, 4:15 pm

Nov. 26: No Religious School

Annual membership 'pledges' or 'dues'?**By Ellen Azrael***Treasurer*

Before the High Holidays we sent out requests for an "annual pledge." In past years we requested "dues." So, why the change in terms? In conversations with other lay religious leaders we discovered that many institutions ask for support through pledges and weekly cash donations. Country clubs and gyms charge dues, with a set amount charged for the services that they provide. Churches on the other hand have weekly collections as well as special holiday appeals and lots of fundraisers. And if

the money collected doesn't satisfy their needs, they request special pledges from their members.

We don't pass the plate, and we don't have a lot of fundraisers. We simply ask for an annual pledge, and pray that the amounts pledged will be honored, and that these funds will cover most of our expenses.

If you haven't made your annual pledge yet, it's not too late. Pledges can be paid monthly, quarterly or annually, and we request all pledges be fulfilled by June 30, 2007, a month prior to the end of the fiscal year.

NEW TAX RULES ABOUT IRA DISTRIBUTIONS

If you are receiving distributions from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you might want to consider using them to pay your annual pledge. You can request that a distribution be made payable to the Temple. The check must not be distributed to you. This distribution will not be considered taxable income, but you will not be able to deduct it as a charitable deduction.

Contact your tax preparer and/or financial consultant to see whether this new rule would be to your benefit.

Check out our Gift Shop!

The holidays are coming, and it's a great time to see all the beautiful new merchandise available in the Sisterhood Gift Shop

Focus on the Food Festival

It's time to get serious about the big day

By **Jeri Kozloff**

Janine was heard to say,
 "It's almost Festival day.
 Is there enough brisket?
 We don't want to risk it
 runs out, and turn patrons away."

Are all your tickets sold?
 Your friends, colleagues, neighbors told
 They can fill their belly
 With treats from the Deli
 Kugel tastes good hot or cold.

It's not too late to bake
 mandel or apple cake
 invite someone new
 to come with you
 Treats, knowledge, and joy home to take.

Limericks are fun but this month I
 have a more serious message.

I just returned home from making
 chopped liver for the Festival with Al Di-
 amond and Herman Neugroschel. These
 two 85-year-old "dudes" have shared this
 task with me for the past four years. They
 kibitz over the liver, eggs, and onions and
 I kvell as I listen, marveling at their zest
 for life and generous spirits.

A new grandchild, a loved one lost, a
 journey, our health — all are shared as
 the grinder turns. We've bonded through
 our labor and desire to support RCOS.

I believe that this type of experience
 is what Rabbi Michelson was talking
 about in his Yom Kippur morning ser-
 mon.

Our "liver trio" is a community in it-
 self. We are also part of the larger com-
 munity of RCOS and the greater Berks
 County community for whom we present
 the Food Festival.

Were you sitting in Temple that morn-
 ing making resolutions to follow the
 rabbi's advice? The Festival presents a
 perfect opportunity to do so.

Our community needs you — to cook,
 bake, sell, publicize, greet, and clean up.
 Our community opens its arms to you
 through this event, which is of enormous
 importance to the financial and emotion-
 al health of Reform Congregation Oheb
 Sholom.

There are only a few days left. Step
 forward and join the circle.

Brotherhood News

What are the duties of a Reading Hospital chaplain?

By **Art Becker**

SPEAKER: Doug Didyoung, a Reading
 Hospital Lay Chaplin, will speak to us. Mr.
 Didyoung will explain his duties, which in-
 clude patient and family counseling. This
 is often a very delicate subject. Join us for
 an interesting talk and some good food and
 fellowship....Sunday, Nov. 19 in the Social

Hall at 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP: We are still looking
 for a few good men and invite you to
 join us and help us resurrect this or-
 ganization. Consider responding fa-
 vorably to our December Membership
 Drive.

OFFICERS: We need to elect a President,
 a Secretary and a Treasurer....if you are
 looking for a challenge, consider volun-
 teering. Contact Marshall Azrael, the cur-
 rent President.

FOOD FESTIVAL: Brotherhood volun-
 teers are urgently needed. Contact Jeri Ko-
 zloff.

100th Anniversary Celebration & Oneg

As part of the celebration of our 100th anniversary of becoming a Reform congregation, we will be having a sumptuous oneg featuring recipes that are historical to our members. Please join us for this festive occasion on April 27 and share with everyone one of your family's favorite desserts.

If you have an "historical" dessert to share and/or are interested in joining our committee, please contact Jill Haas (610)927-3393 or jmhaas@comcast.net or Judith Kraines at (610) 670-1764 or jkraines@lusa.com

ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

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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 December bulletin: Nov. 5

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Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Wishing Neil Hoffman a speedy recovery
Margaret & Kalman Feinberg

A donation has been received from
Margaret & Kalman Feinberg

In appreciation for the Sisterhood's
acknowledgment of Beverly's mother's
death

Beverly and Martin Deutschman

In memory of Richard Schwartz
Nancy & Murry Knoblauch

In memory of Henrietta Nevitt
Santee & Neal Nevitt

New Building Fund

In honor of Shirley Friedman's special
birthday
Samuel & Martha Greenstein

Religious School Fund

In memory of Richard Daniels
Anne Missan

New Building Landscaping Fund

In memory of Richard Schwartz
Sue & George Viener

General Fund

In honor of Trudy Katz's special birthday

Judy Stavisky
Alan Schiff
Hilde Gernsheimer
Dr. & Mr. J. Steven Gutmann
Judith Hartman
Roz Hyman
David & Myra Loewenstein
E. Jane Sher
Edith Sommerfeld
Meyer Weiner
Barbara Worms
Gene & Shirley Friedman

Greater Temple Fund

In memory of Richard Schwartz
James & Shirley Ullman
Jeffrey & Lynn Driben

Sisterhood Florence Frank Offering Fund

To Susan Schwartz in memory of her father
Mrs. Sylvia Schiff
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brok

To Mrs. Francine Suknow for a speedy
recovery
Mrs. Sylvia Schiff

To Dr. Neal Hoffman for a speedy recovery
Dr. & Mrs. Eric Zelnick

To Sheila Lattin for a speedy recovery
Mr. & Mrs. Naum Ger

Birthday greeting to Rosalye Yashik
Mrs. Sue Wolfe

Birthday greetings to Menachem Lipskur
Mrs. Sue Wolfe

To Mrs. Beverly Deutschman in memory of
her mother
Dr. & Mrs. Eric Zelnick

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.

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.

Best wishes to Mr. & Mrs. Norbert
Salpeter in their new home
Mrs. B. Schneiderman

Best wishes to Trudy Katz on her special
birthday
Bob & Kaye Ullman

In memory of my sister Molly Miller
Saul "Marty" Miller

Perpetual Memorials

Nov. 1-4

Eleanor Gould
Arthur Humberg
Daniel Epstein
Sig S. Schweriner
Eugen Jaschek
Lea Rachel Heiman
I.G. Schneeberger
Jacob Weitzenkorn

Week of Nov. 5

Regina Hermann
Emily Epstein
Julia Folkman
Helen Lightman
Tessie Fried
Ervin Brok
Natalie Barnett
Max Baernkopf
Anna Miller

Week of Nov. 12

Maurice C. Isaacs
Barnett Fein
Martha M. Marcus

Henrietta Goldsmith
Hattie Jacobs
Eva N. Hyman
Morris Guggenheim

Week of Nov. 19

Betty Hausner
Joseph F. Brenner
Fred Coopersmith
Jonas Epstein
Georgene E. Goldsmith
Rose Shlionsky Sack
Elizabeth S. Sher
Charles Burns
Paul Jaslow
Max Stein

Nov. 26-Nov. 30

Louis Hirsch
Albert B. Ball
Morris H. Bash
Paulina Bernheimer
Samuel R. Liever
Albert Gilbert

Reflections on Yom Kippur

By Jeffrey Lupowitz

As I read our prayer book during Yom Kippur services, several thoughts and feelings struck me.

First, as I looked around the sanctuary, I felt so warmed to see so many people whom I appreciate and enjoy, people who, like myself, are also connecting with their heritage, celebrating and/or growing, learning and/or looking for purpose as individuals and as Jews.

I noted to myself that after many years of living in various locations and not feeling aligned with a local Jewish community, how good it feels to have grown to feel at home here with our Oheb family.

That warmth, while a significant step toward healing for me, and enjoyable, is not, however, usually enough to make the option of going to shul seem like an authentic way to really “celebrate” a “holiday.” It often feels like more of a “should” that I was raised with instead of a true connection to inspiration, spirit or G-d. That may be more appropriate for Yom Kippur, a most reflective holy day, but it seems even less “in synch” for Shabbat or other holidays.

The Yom Kippur focus of reflecting on oneself and how one’s actions affect others is an important focus, and a primary function for healthy individuals and healthy community. While seeing the opportunities

to “do better” (live more love, acceptance or appreciation, perhaps) may be important daily or weekly practices, not just for Yom Kippur, I observe that years of emphasis on “being better” have led myself and many others to another stress and perhaps separation from connection with G-d.

There is a healthy and sometimes delicate balance between focusing on how we could “be a better person” and feeling balanced, capable and enjoyably alive as who we are in this moment.

As a professional in the healing arts, I’ve learned that we harm ourselves greatly by living from so many tapes playing in our mind of what we “should” do, rather than knowing more fully who we are and feeling free to live what is joyful or inspires us. Growing and becoming a better person, a better expression of life, is a wonderful focus, yet it can also lead one to unconsciously living where the present is never really “right” or good enough, and real peace not available.

After many years of atonement, and living that way, I have come to seek more of an “at one ment”, with myself, others, and the energy of the Universal or G-d that comes through me.

Humility and atonement are still part of that, but living from a place of fear in order to do enough or be enough or to gain favor from a G-d external to myself hasn’t fully

enabled me to be the presence that those ideas purport I could be.

I’ve noticed that when I do things because I “should,” or to “make the world right,” I don’t adjust as easily to challenges, and I become stressed or strained more easily. Conversely, I can perform the same activity from a place of what is already right within myself, our community or our world, and the action flows more easily, is more enjoyable and more peacelike, and I am more flexible and resourceful with difficulties.

Is there a Jewish equivalent to the idea of a flexibly flowing balance of Yin and Yang aspects of life, male and female, self and Universal?

Realizing myself as a vessel of Universal energy seems to bring out more of me than the concept of living a particular way because I “should,” or the concept of living in order to gain favor or another year of life from a deity outside myself.

Atonement becomes At One Ment.

Thank you for being a member of our community, and as such helping to provide place and space for me to share, learn and grow. Thoughts on atonement or further At One Ment can be shared with doclupo@aol.com.

I continue to look for At One Ment in myself, our synagogue and congregation, and our larger communities as well.

Let’s make a difference

Rebecca “Becky” Stricker, 30, is a local resident, a loving wife and the mother of a 3-year-old son. In 2004, Becky was diagnosed with a brain tumor. She successfully underwent brain surgery along with aggressive chemotherapy and radiation to remove the tumor. Last summer doctors found another tumor, this one inoperable. Becky is enrolled in clinical trials at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md., and has received consultation from a neurologist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in California. Though there is no known cure for this form of tumor, there is **HOPE!**

Friends of Becky Fundraiser — Vendor Sale and Silent Auction

Dec. 3, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

100 percent of the profits will go directly to the Rebecca H. Stricker Assistance Fund at Wachovia Bank. These funds will be given to the Stricker Family to help with the mounting travel and treatment costs incurred while Becky receives the medical treatment needed to beat this condition.

For information on this fundraiser, contact Fran at 484-955-1761 or franruss@epix.net

For those who wish to make a donation, an account has been established at Wachovia Bank.

Checks must be made payable to “Rebecca H. Stricker Assistance Fund.”

News from the Union for Reform Judaism

Want to receive a weekly update of news of the Jewish World? Now, as a benefit of our congregation's membership in the Union for Reform Judaism, you can receive a free subscription to the Weekly Briefing, an e-mail of news about the Union and the greater Jewish world. Produced in cooperation with JTA: The Global News Service of the Jewish People, the Weekly Briefing is delivered to your inbox every Friday. To subscribe, go to www.urj.org/subscribe.

The Feb. 16-20 NFTY Convention in

Philadelphia will be the greatest gathering of Reform Jewish teens in the world! It's a time to experience the power of Reform Judaism with more than a thousand of their peers from across North America. They will study with the leaders of the Movement, participate in engaging workshop sessions that they choose, and celebrate being Jewish at live concerts, song sessions, in prayer and with this remarkable community. Details are available online at www.NFTY.org/convention or call the NFTY Convention and Youth Workers Conference hotline

212.650.4130 for more information.

Thinking ahead, why not make this year the year you join families around the county in fighting poverty by devoting the sixth night to Ner Shel Tzedah. On this night – which falls on December 20th this year – donate the value of your gifts, or the gifts themselves, to an organization that assists the poor. To learn more about this and other ideas for Chanukah, go to www.rac.org/poverty or www.rac.org/chanukah.

Temple book group

“When I Lived in Modern Times” by
Linda Grant,

Dec. 3 at 4 p.m.

Spread the news

Your Temple bulletin still
needs sponsors for issues in
the coming year, including the
December issue.

Contact the Temple office for
details

November Simchas

Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Schonberger	Nov. 5
Dr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Driben	Nov. 6
Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Goldberg	Nov. 6
Eric S. Shocket & Amanda G. Black	Nov. 6
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Saidman	Nov. 12
Mr. & Mrs. Allen Michelson	Nov. 18
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Becker	Nov. 23
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Haas	Nov. 27

Birthdays

Dr. Jeffrey Nemeroff	Nov. 2
Michael Levy	Nov. 3
Jamie Zamrin	Nov. 3
Sarah Mutzel	Nov. 4
Amanda G. Black	Nov. 5
Jamie Weisberg	Nov. 5
David Gavigan	Nov. 6
Hope Silverman	Nov. 7
Lisa Messina	Nov. 10

Samantha Stein	Nov. 10
Sara Saidman	Nov. 12
Dr. Michael Haas	Nov. 14
Cindy D. Chronister	Nov. 15
Miriam Gavigan	Nov. 15
Sue Wachs	Nov. 16
Lisa Nemeroff	Nov. 17
Dana Rosenzweig	Nov. 17
Jerry Zimmer	Nov. 18
Jesse Cooper	Nov. 20
Jeffrey Hogg	Nov. 21
Meg Synnamon	Nov. 21
Noah Levine	Nov. 23
Maximilian Wolf	Nov. 23
Robert Lindy	Nov. 24
Stephen R. Waldman	Nov. 24
Patricia Frankel	Nov. 27
Ruby Allison Nemeroff	Nov. 27
Phyllis Symons	Nov. 29
Karen Lutz	Nov. 30

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Alan G. Weitzman, Rabbi Emeritus

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