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**MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.**

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.  
Subseries 2: Dan Pekarsky, 1981-2011, undated.

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Box	Folder
78	11

Lead communities project. Milwaukee. Milwaukee institutions,  
1995 August.

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[American Jewish Archives](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) website.

August 9, 1995

Pamela Lager, Principal  
Congregation Beth Israel  
6880 North Green Bay Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53209

Dear Pam:

Thanks very much for your letter and for the Gillman article. I too very much enjoyed our conversation and am delighted by your interest in the project we discussed. I will try to be back in Milwaukee in the near-future and am hopeful that it will be possible to meet again at that time. I'll be in touch when I begin planning this trip to see if we can schedule a ~~time~~ *meeting*

Your comments about the boy who was berated in class for speaking about eating pig reminded me, as I mentioned, of Philip Roth's short story entitled "The Conversion of the Jews." They also reminded me of an article by anthropologist David Schoen that describes the opposite phenomenon: namely, a tacit agreement on the part of everyone in the classroom he observed not to puncture the myth that they all led lives that resemble how Conservative Jews are "supposed to" be. I thought you might find it of interest, but, unfortunately, the only copy I could locate on short notice is barely legible. I'll look for a better one!

All the best until we are in touch again.

Sincerely,

Daniel Pekarsky



August 9, 1995

Rabbi Lee Buckman  
Congregation Beth Israel  
6880 North Green Bay Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53209

Dear Lee:

Thanks for your note. I was very pleased with our conversation the other day - and also by the very fine follow-up conversation I had with Pam Lager the next day. She was very, very pleased that you had stressed the need to consult with her about the desirability and direction of goals-related work with the school. As she may have mentioned to you, she is interested in the project we've been discussing (subject to the important and very reasonable proviso that it be carried out in ways that are respectful of the School's teachers). She and I have discussed the possibility of being in touch in the near-future concerning an area within the life of the Congregation's educational program that will be worth looking at more carefully, and then beginning to think about how to best approach it. It may be worthwhile for all of us to have a conversation about who should be involved (and at what stages) in deliberations concerning the way this process should evolve. In the meantime, the fact that both you and Pam seem enthusiastic about this project is very exciting to me, and I am looking forward to working together on it (at a pace and in a way that feels both comfortable and productive).

I haven't yet had a chance to look systematically at Ismar Schorsch's "The Sacred Cluster," but hope to get to it very soon and to pass on whatever thoughts I have. I am intrigued by the way you proposed to use the seven values articulated in this article with your board; it seems to have the potential for encouraging them to think seriously about it means - and means for them - to be Jews. If I have an anxiety, it's that half-an-hour may not be enough to stimulate in-depth study of and reflection on the issues you will be raising. (Though it may be unrealistic, I've wondered whether it would be possible and desirable to schedule three or so more extended special study sessions for your Board across the year.) I am also excited by your idea that it might make sense to meet with the Congregation's Chavurot (and with a parents group) around the same kinds of issues projected for Board discussions. Taken

together, these various efforts might, if successful, help create a congregational atmosphere that encourages thoughtful reflection about basic matters.

I will be in touch with you soon and am hopeful that we can meet again in Milwaukee in the near-future. I hope that your trip to Ramah was rewarding. Let's be in touch soon.

B'Shalom,

Daniel Pekarsky

August 8, 1995

Doris Shneidman, Principal  
Milwaukee Jewish Day School  
5401 N. Santa Monica  
Milwaukee, WI 53217

Dear Doris:

I found our meeting the other day very productive, and I am hopeful that it will prove a springboard to some fruitful, shared efforts. I was, by the way, delighted to hear from you about the impact that the spring seminars have had.

As I understand the conclusions of our conversation, we will begin with two initiatives: first, I will be involved at some level with the group planning the Jerusalem-programming for this year; I will try to use this as an opportunity to stimulate some serious deliberation concerning the proper place of Jerusalem in the curriculum and in our consciousness. Second, I will meet with the Planning Committee that emerged out of the spring Goals Seminars to help think about ways of engaging the School's Board in thinking seriously about questions relating to institutional vision and goals.

I look forward to hearing from you so that we can arrange dates for my involvement with these initiatives. Following our conversation, I tentatively blocked off Monday evening, September 18 as a time to meet with your Planning Committee; please confirm this as soon as possible. It may also be pertinent for you to know that I will be unavailable from August 24 through Labor Day.

I hope all is well.

Sincerely,

Daniel Pekarsky

August 9, 1995

Jay Roth, Executive Vice President  
JCC  
6255 North Santa Monica Blvd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53217

Dear Jay:

I found both of our meetings last week very interesting and enjoyable, and I am grateful for your prompt summary of the second meeting. In general, I found the summary very much on target, and I was struck by how much we accomplished.

With respect to the part that I will be coordinating in January and February, I have a number of reactions. First, I was very pleased that your description of the agenda for the proposed sessions included my interest in dealing with Jewish texts that may help to illuminate what is at stake. Assuming that there is enough time to digest the texts and to reflect on the light they shed on contemporary Jewish realities and choices, I think using them has the potential to enrich the process of deliberation considerably.

The issue of time just alluded to gets at my main concern about the program; that is, as I reflect on it, I am concerned about whether two sessions are sufficient to do full justice to the ambitious challenges you propose for these sessions. We'll find out!

I also want to underscore something that you mention in your summary (points E. and F.) - namely, that these sessions need to be viewed as the beginning of a process rather than as an end-point. ~~In part, this means that great care needs to be taken to decide through what strategies and programs and at what pace what is decided upon will be introduced into the life of the camp.~~ ~~This is a critical part of the process and needs to be developed and then monitored very carefully.~~ ~~In part, it also means that the process of implementation will offer opportunities to revisit and to better understand some of the goals and values that emerge out of our meetings in January and February.~~

On a somewhat different matter, your formulation of the agenda for the January and February meetings was a bit unclear to me in spots. For example, I'm not sure I entirely understand the relationship you posit between "vision", "values", and

→ identify

with work through what

VISION  
STATEMENT

to serve  
a larger  
purpose

The vision of the JCC movement is to maximize the use of the programs and services, the position in the community, and the accessibility of the Jewish Community Center to welcome all Jews, to help each Jew move along a continuum of Jewish growth, and to build Jewish memories. The ultimate goal is to create a community of learning Jews who are consciously Jewish; who are respectful of Jewish differences; who are knowledgeable of and committed to Jewish values and practice; who participate in synagogue life and in Jewish communal and cultural life; who make Israel a central component in their identities as Jews; and who manifest their Jewishness in lifestyle, life choices, and life commitment, thus creating a Jewish community capable of continuing creative renewal.

Fictitious  
Comments

Jay, Board Retreat Packet.

1. lead to something → review w/  
Comm. Tree / Staff
2. interactive
3. of theoretical vs. practical