

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

JCNWJ Journal
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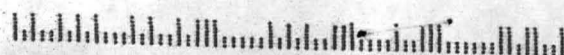
March 2002



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RABBI'S MESSAGE

You may have read the same article I read, the one about someone who lost three years worth of saved email messages. She wrote about her frantic attempts to reclaim what she had lost, about her consultations with the tech people, about the devastation she experienced at losing a part of her world. And then over time, she began to realize that if she wasn't sure what she had lost, if she barely remembered what she had, then perhaps she never needed it in the first place. And she noticed, two months after the fact, that no one had called her to complain about something that had "slipped through the cracks." And she remembered an observation made by someone in Grand Forks, N.D., after the city had been besieged by fire and flood: "Fire washes away all that is nonessential."

How do we discover what is essential about our lives? What is it that can't be washed away, that should endure? This month offers us two answers to this question. The holiday of Purim reminds us that we must know who we are, even in the midst of those who would have us deny who we are. The holiday of Passover reminds us that we must remember who we were, how we were slaves in Egypt before we were free and how that memory forever dictates how we treat the stranger. Who we were then shapes who we are today; and who we are now shapes the future of the world. What is essential to the future of the world is that we treat ourselves and each other as creatures created b'tselem Elohim, in the image of God. That can't be washed away.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

What a mild winter! For many of you, I am sure that this has been a blessing. But, for others, warm temperatures and no snow means a disappointing skiing and snowboarding season. For myself, I have been quite content enjoying the weather; however, I do have mixed feelings on the entire situation since my family has had limited participation in their long awaited, winter sports. Yet, whatever the emotions anyone may be experiencing, I believe that there is not a soul that would not welcome the arrival of spring!

Of course, the arrival of spring brings the holiday of Passover. For me, this brings mixed feelings as well. I am always elated to think of a family get-together. Being the oldest of four married children, each with two kids (half under the age of four), means sixteen to invite. And then,

I add grandma and grandpa and possibly 95 year old great grandpa George! Plus, I invite Ed's brother and wife with their four year old and the year old twins. Now, I am up to twenty-four. It has also become a tradition that my close friend Sonia and her daughter join my family at Passover. The final count of attendees is usually up to 30 once I invite any others who might not have a place to go for this holiday dinner!

My elation comes to an abrupt halt when I remember that Passover is a sit down dinner for 30! It is not cooking that bothers me (I prepare and freeze ahead of time) nor is it the space requirements (I could accommodate them in my old house as well as my new home in Long Valley); but, it is the thought of 30 dishes to wash for each course. First there are the Seder plates, then the fish plates, the soup bowls, the main course dishes, dessert plates, fruit bowls and the coffee cups with saucers (no mugs at this event). And then, add in the silverware for each course, serving platters and the wine and water glasses for everyone! Wow...that's a lot of work!

I start to revive myself after I start planning the menu. Looking for recipes that work with the Passover restrictions is fun for me. And, although I do not keep a kosher home during the year, this is the one time that I do not mix dairy and meat throughout the entire meal. This research project and cooking experience is a challenge I look forward to each year.

No one has ever been disappointed at my Seder table! Yes, sometimes my matzo balls are heavier than last year's, and the dishes always pile sky high and the little ones never sit quietly during the reading of the Haggadah but the warmth and love surrounding my dining room table is always present.

If you should find yourself without a place to spend Passover, you are welcome to join in the chaos at my house. Just give me a call and come with a dish towel!

May you all be blessed with peace and happiness as we remember and reflect on our ancestor's life in Egypt.

Shalom, Gwen

GET READY FOR THE FUN PURIM CARNIVAL, SUNDAY, MARCH 3

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2001

Save this date and plan to join us for our annual Shabbat Across America. Our evening begins with services at 6:30 pm, followed by a covered dish dinner prepared and shared by our members. Following dinner, we will enjoy a songfest with David Franklin, the soloist who sang for us at the High Holidays. The evening will conclude with our traditional oneg.

Please call Rhonda Jordan at 908-832-7731, or Laurie Hessels at 908-876-5286, by February 15, so they can coordinate what part of the dinner you may provide. Be sure to invite a family or friend who might like to consider membership in our synagogue.

FOOD VOUCHERS

Remember to support the Center by purchasing A&P and Shop Rite food vouchers. Please contact Suzanne Colby at 852-7304.

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO WEATHER

Should bad weather be an issue on a Friday evening, a message will be left on the Center's answering machine by 5:30 P.M. if services have been canceled. Should bad weather be an issue on Sunday morning, a message will be left on the Center's answering machine by 7:30 A.M. if Religious School has been canceled. We will attempt the snow chain again this year as well!

Also, the WRNJ radio station will broadcast any cancellations. However, be sure to call the Center's machine for full details and updates.

NEEDED someone to provide transportation to a local nursing home from Washington to Lopatcong two afternoons a week. Please call Ruth Gorelick at 689-7422.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

Last month you received an updated membership list enclosed in the newsletter. Please check to be sure we have your correct mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number.

JCNWJ NEWSLETTER ON LINE

The future is here. We are in the electronic era. Computers are here to stay, and so is the internet. So, please take note that the April newsletter will be sent to all members who have an e-mail address via the internet. The newsletter file will be in PDF format, which is Adobe Acrobat Reader, which you may open as an attachment. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader, you can download it for free at www.adobe.com/acrobat. If you do not wish to receive the newsletter electronically, please e-mail Lynn Ganz at lrganz@earthlink.net. Members who do not have an e-mail address will receive the newsletter in the mail.

SHABBAT SERVICES will be held:
FRI, MARCH 8, Shabbat Across America, Oneg hosted by Hamburger, Margolin-Weiner, Sonzogni

FRI, MARCH 22, 7:45 pm, hosted by family of Gregory Simms in honor of his Bar Mitzvah

MAZEL TOV to **GREGORY SIMMS** on the occasion of his **BAR MITZVAH, SATURDAY, MARCH 23**. Services will begin at 10 am and the congregation is invited to attend and share with Gregory and his family in celebration of this milestone in his life.

SUNDAY SCHOOL will be held:

3/3*, 3/10, 3/17*, 3/24*

*Kindergarten will meet

LIBRARY will be available 3/17

PASSOVER begins at sundown on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27**.

PTO NEWS

Thanks to Rochelle Ostenfeld and Gina Berkowitz for spearheading baking the Hamantaschen for Purim. Special thanks to the cadre of volunteers that assisted with this fun activity: Suzanne Colby, Janice Davis, Janice Finkelstein, Karen Finkelstein, Iris Hirsch, Lori Riley, Rosalind Silber, Audrey Sonzogni and Mercedes Weiland.

Thanks to Joyce Yanow for coordinating the Passover Candy sale.

Want to get involved, think about taking the reins as PTO President. See Sandy Seidorf or Laurie Post.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Special thanks to Mr. Weiner's 4/5th grade class who generously donated \$54 from their class Tzedaka Fund to the Israeli Ambulance Fund.

Upcoming dates to remember:

March 17th - Passover craft

March 24th - Passover Model Seder

Volunteers are needed and welcome to participate in these two wonderful Sunday School Activities. See Sandy or Laurie!

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

weekend of March 15-17 at Camp Harlam.

MEN'S CLUB will meet 3/10, 9:30 am

TORAH STUDY

Saturday, March 16, 10-11:30 am

THANK YOU to everyone who attended and participated in our Lay Shabbat Service on February 22. Seventy-three people attended and about twenty-five children participated in leading different prayers in the service. A lovely Oneg was hosted by Joel and Jeri Berkowitz, Teri Resker and Roseann and Ed

Weinstein. **THANK-YOU** to Lisa Braunstein who chanted Torah and to Sharon Herson who gave a D'var Torah. And, I am sending a special thank-you to Eric Edelstein who rolled the Torah to the correct spot for Lisa. Additional appreciations go to Helene and Chelsea Friedlander. Chelsea played her guitar so beautifully and led a group of children from Mr. Weiner's and Mrs. Stanton's class in a concluding song taught to them by Helene Friedlander. **THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR A BEAUTIFUL EVENING!**

Helen Mattson
Ritual Committee Chairperson

HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY

One of our founding members, Sally Zemel will celebrate her 90th birthday on March 15. As we are a family, let's all send her a card to mark this milestone. Cards can be sent to PO Box 140, Lake Hiawatha, NJ 07034.

COOKING FOR PASSOVER

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 7 PM

All you want/need to know about preparation of traditional Passover dishes. RSVP to Barbara Meltz at 973-347-2349 or meltz@eclipse.net, by March 10.

NOTE TO MEMBERS

An updated membership list is available upon request from treasurer Jim Arvesen.

CONVERSATIONS coming up in the spring-- advance preparation and R.S.V.P. needed to participate. Come to one or both.

SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 10, 7-9 P.M.

Discussion: Seeking Peace, Expanding the Conversation, A Series by Joseph Alpher. An open-ended conversation among participants based on materials to be read in advance. R.S.V.P. to Sharon Herson by February 15, so that materials can be sent to you and you will have time to read them; preparation necessary (dessert refreshments).

SAVE THE DATE AMBULANCE FOR ISRAEL

DEDICATION

APRIL 17, 2002

YOM HA'ATZMAUT (ISRAEL
INDEPENDENCE DAY)

6:45 PM

JCC 775 TALAMINI ROAD,
BRIDGEWATER

Terrorist attacks have become a regular part of life in Israel. We must not allow ourselves to stand by without taking action. Through the Federation of Hunterdon, Somerset, and Warren Counties, our congregation has pledged to help pay for an ambulance desperately needed in Israel. To meet our pledge goal and have the ambulance delivered on time, we need each member to help. Please give! A plaque will be placed on the ambulance honoring the Jewish Center for our gift.

Do not expect others to carry out this mission. As a Jew, this is your job and responsibility. Please give at least \$18 or as much as you can afford. Lives hang

in the balance.

Make your check payable to JCNWJ (write ambulance in memo section) and mail to Jim Arvesen, 43 Cokesbury-Califon Rd, Lebanon, NJ 08833. Our children are making cards and posters expressing their support and love for Israel that will be sent in the ambulance. Now, we adults must show our support!

PROGRAMS IN "THE NEIGHBORHOOD"

Poet Gerald Stern, winner of the National Book Award for *This Time: New and Selected Poems*, will read and discuss his work on Thursday, March 14, at 4:15 p.m. in Room 200 of Lehigh University's Lindermann Library. Stern's poetry has been praised for its use of paradox and irony and its passion and vision. He declares himself deeply Jewish in his vision, "albeit a post-shtetl East-Coast American-Jewish" vision. His reading will include excerpts from his latest book *American Sonnets*, in which he writes about love, childhood memories, Jewish life, and current political and social circumstances. He has published eleven books of poetry and many literary and personal essays. The program is open to the public free of charge and is sponsored by the Philip and Muriel Berman Center, Lehigh's English Dept., Humanities Center, and Friends of the University Libraries.

Ambassador Dennis Ross, who served as the Special Middle East Coordinator in the Clinton administration, will discuss "Is the Middle East Different after September 11?" on Wednesday, March 20, at 8 p.m. in Baker Hall of Lehigh's Zoellner Arts Center. Ambassador Ross, a scholar and diplomat with more than two decades of experience, is widely known for his leading role in the Middle East peace negotiations. A two-time recipient of the State Department's highest award, he also received the Presidential Medal for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service from President Clinton. Open to the public free of charge, the program is sponsored by the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation and the National Endowment of the Humanities.

For more information on Berman Center programs, call 610-758-4869 or visit the Center's website at www.lehigh.edu/~inber/programs.html

THE 5TH ANNUAL UJA OF METRO WEST BENEFIT CONCERT

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Wednesday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m.

This exciting musical program is conducted by Uriel Segal and performed by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Tickets range from \$20.00 to \$100.00. To order by phone, call 1-800-255-3476.

UAHC, NEW JERSEY WEST HUDSON VALLEY COUNCIL

PRESENTS "TRADITIONS FOR
TRANSITION - THE JEWISH WAY IN
DEATH AND MOURNING".

This seminar which covers shiva, bereavement support, making sacred decisions, and planning a funeral is being held at Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel in South Orange on April 21 at 9am-12:30pm. and costs \$10.00 in advance. For more information, call the regional UAHC office at 201-722-9090.

THIS WAS IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF THE SPEAKER. IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY READ THIS, YOU WILL FIND IT VERY ENLIGHTENING.

This year President's Day will celebrated on Monday, February 18, 2002. It is then that we honor all of our past President's and especially George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. But did you know that we, as Jews in America, have special reason to respect George Washington? During the cold winter months at Valley Forge when American soldiers were freezing and running out of food. General Washington's financial advisor and assistant was Hyam Solomon. It was Solomon who marshaled all the Jews in America to provide money and aid to the stranded American troops which helped turn the course of history. It was George Washington who said that America should never forget the help given by the Jewish people

If you take out a one dollar bill and turn it over you will notice that the stars above the eagle's head are all six pointed Stars of David and that the tail feathers of the eagle resembles menorah. This was not by happenstance but at the insistence of Washington.

NOAH'S ARK

Everything I need to know, I learned from Noah's Ark...
ONE: Don't miss the boat.

TWO: Remember that we are all in the same boat.

THREE: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

FOUR: Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

FIVE: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

SIX: Build your future on high ground.

SEVEN: For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

EIGHT: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

NINE: When you're stressed, float awhile.

TEN: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

ELEVEN: No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

DON'T COUNT ME OUT

Laverne Bardy Pollak

I was impatiently stopped at a traffic light. The light finally turned yellow and I instantly assumed the posture of an adrenalin-charged NASCAR racer, poised and anxious to accelerate, when an elderly woman stepped off of the curb and began her slow and deliberate step-by-step pilgrimage across the street. The light turned green and she had not yet even reached my car. I waited.

I drew a deep, agitated breath while impulsively strumming my fingers on the steering wheel. I had places to go and people to see. But, as she struggled to make her way across the street, lifting and lowering her metal walker before each halting step, something clutched at my heart. She was old; really old. Her hair was thin and white with isolated, wispy strands falling over her eyes and down her neck. Her face was ashen and deeply creased and her bony, thickly blue-veined hands trembled under her own weight as she leaned heavily on her walker. Her body was shrunken and bowed over as she shuffled past the front of my car, delaying my start by, perhaps, a full fifteen seconds.

I drove away with her image emblazoned in my mind and unable to erase it. That woman had once been somebody's little girl, joyfully frolicking in fields of lavender. She had danced to the Charleston and to Swing, and was courted by handsome young men in Model T Fords and Buick Roadmasters. She'd been a young wife filled with hope, and a mother who rocked and nursed her babies during black-outs while listening intently to Franklin D. Roosevelt's Fireside Chats. She'd cooked and scrubbed without any of today's modern kitchen conveniences, during a time when there were no televisions or computers to occupy her children long enough to give her moments of quiet serenity. She'd lived through wars, survived the depression, and experienced the loss of many loved ones.

How could she have known what indignities lay in store for her – that one day each of her crippling, calculated steps would cause traffic to be delayed, while hurried, mindless bodies honked impatiently enroute to some allegedly important business meeting, fun-filled luncheon or forbidden rendezvous?

Would she have conducted her life any differently had she thoroughly understood the inevitable cruelty of her future? Could she have averted this travesty of fairness if she'd done things differently? If she'd laughed more? Loved more? Prayed more?

I looked deep into my soul and blinked rapidly to hold back tears. Was I sad for this pitiful stranger or was I actually sad for myself? I couldn't untangle my feelings. That woman could easily be me one day, and there wasn't a damn thing I could do about it.

I drove mindlessly, unable to lift the thick fog from my heart, when suddenly I had a change of perspective. Perhaps I was reflecting and interjecting my own fears. This old woman may not have been unhappy at all. Beneath her leathery camouflage may well have been the joyful heart and buoyant soul of a thoroughly fulfilled woman; a woman who celebrated life to the max, who embraced each day, reveled in every sunset, and loved from the depths of her being. Such a woman would be content in her golden years, confident and fully satisfied that she had thoroughly consumed the contents of her cherished gift of life.

I found this thought comforting. There would be no escaping the inevitable final act, but I drew tremendous solace from the knowledge that I live an incredibly rich and full life, surround myself with beloved friends, am always cognizant of the wonders each day brings, and have loved with great depth and passion.

Should the day come when I am forced to stop traffic as I cross the road with my walker, please do not feel sorry for me. My bones will be tired, my skin will no longer be taut and my body may be contorted, but my heart will be smiling broadly, for I will be deeply ensconced in the memories of my full, rich life; a life void of regrets for what I should have done.

I will have done it all!

IF YOU FIND ANY ERRORS IN THIS NEWSLETTER, THEN I TAKE THIS AS A COMPLIMENT, BECAUSE THEN I KNOW YOU HAVE TAKEN THE TIME TO READ IT.