

A Jewish Thanksgiving

Gary Wolfman, Religious Director

Every year in the religious school we read a book titled *Molly's Pilgrim*. The book tells the story of a recent immigrant to the United States who is in elementary school. The class is given a project to make pilgrim puppets. Molly, who is Jewish, goes home and explains the project to her mother. Her Mother gets all excited as she determines that they are pilgrims who came to this country to escape persecution in Eastern Europe. So Molly makes a puppet from a clothespin and cloth that looks a lot like her mother and takes it to school. Some of the other children make fun of Molly and her puppet because it does not look like a pilgrim at all. When the teacher asks Molly about her puppet, she tearfully tells her that they are modern day pilgrims and the puppet is of her mother. The teacher then tells the whole class that it is true that Molly's puppet represents all the modern pilgrims to our country that come here for religious freedom.

As we approach the American holiday of Thanksgiving, we are reminded of this theme of religious freedom and recall where this idea originated. The Pilgrims were reading from the Bible the story of Sukkot and how the Israelites in the desert celebrated the harvest and thanked God for all the blessings that they had been given. The Pilgrims took this theme from the Torah and celebrated the ideas from the Torah in a young America.

Later this month as we celebrate this American holiday, let us also remember the many immigrants we have today that are in our country for the first time. Even in our own congregation we have members who celebrate Sukkot and Thanksgiving being new to our country. Most of us are second or third

generations that were born in this country. Let us always remember the lessons of Sukkot and Thanksgiving and be thankful for all the blessings that God has given us. Let us reach out to those new immigrants who are here for the same reasons as our grandparents or great grandparents were.

We are blessed in our greater community to have religious freedom. Let us always remember those who came before us and fought for this right and struggled so that we today can have this right. Let us also welcome those who are new to our congregation and community who have struggled for their own right of religious freedom.

The lessons of my 'mixed marriage'

Avi Stern, President

For years, I have joked that my wife Liz and I have made our "mixed marriage" work despite our differences.

While we are both Jewish, the real divide in our household is in our political leanings. Liz is the progeny of a long line of die-hard union Democrats, forged in the UAW traditions of blue-collar Michigan. They're the kind of family that proudly displayed a picture of John F. Kennedy on the mantle over the fireplace.

Me? I was weaned on the philosophy of Can-Do American Exceptionalism embodied by Ronald Reagan. While I've been known to back a Democrat or two, I generally view the world from right of center – much to wife's (and in-laws') chagrin, of course.

That's made for a combustible mix. Presidential election years are not typically the most pleasant time in our household as even the most innocuous of political conversations

risks exploding into frustrating diatribes about the perceived naiveté we see within each other. (I think we both sigh a little bit in relief once each Election Cycle is over.)

Sixteen years into our marriage, I have lost count of how many debates we've had about politicians, policy and partisanship. (At the same time, I shake my head in shame because I KNOW that I won't change her mind, nor she mine. So why get into it in the first place?!)

What amazes me, however, is that over that same period of time, I cannot recall *a single instance* in which Liz or I ever had a serious disagreement about our faith. I was born into a Conservative Jewish family, and have never questioned that it was the right religion for me. Liz came to Judaism by personal choice and is, unquestionably, the most observant Jew in our household. Regardless of how we reached this destination in our respective faith journeys, the tie that binds is far stronger than the forces that would divide us.

This matters because, I believe, our synagogue is the ultimate mixed marriage. We are a 'family of families,' 65 households (give or take) strong – a blend of liberals and conservatives, well-off and working class, white collars and blue collars, extroverts and introverts – all of whom come together because underlying all that might separate us is a single commonality: a shared faith that transcends how we vote, or our skin color, or our income or our education.

When you pray a Yahrzeit alongside me for my deceased grandparents (and I alongside you for your loved ones who have passed on), I don't care what you do in the ballot box or in the bedroom. For those few hours we share each month in our sanctuary, I draw strength from knowing that our chorus of voices – however small we may be – still sings louder than I can alone. As a Jew, I feel a little less solitude in the universe.

My hope is that you feel the same. And my hope is that Congregation B'nai Israel remains that place where you and your loved ones continue to be a part of our well-blended and diverse 'family of families.'

Finally, if you're driving through Neenah and see a yard with an Obama campaign sign (marked "HERS") alongside a Romney sign (marked "HIS"), feel free to pop in and visit with Liz and me.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE I:

In the final bulletin of the 2010-11 calendar year, we announced that Dr. Tom Ayala of Fond du Lac would visit our congregation several days each month to supplement our current religious leadership team of Gary Wolfman and Lowell Louis. Unfortunately, family circumstances as well as growing professional demands on his time precluded Tom from making this happen. Regardless, he remains a friend of B'nai Israel and we wish Tom well in all his future endeavors.

Moving forward, a subcommittee of the synagogue board continues to meet with Religious Director Gary Wolfman as we collectively strive to ensure strong spiritual leadership and continuity. I'm confident that we will develop a viable long-term plan based on a shared vision for a successful synagogue. I'll continue to provide updates as this process unfolds.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE II:

Anyone who is a fan of the Packers OR food in general or BOTH AT THE SAME TIME (my personal category) should mark Sunday, Nov. 6th, on the calendar.

After the singularly spectacular success of our first B'nai Israel Packer View-a-Rama in October (a win over the Broncos), which was exceedingly well attended by a mix of longtime and newer members, we're back at it again. The Schreibers have graciously agreed to host (again!) when the Green & Gold face off against the formidable San Diego Chargers at 3:15 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 6th.

Please bring a nosh to pass and an appetite for victory!

Even if you don't like football ...

- 1.) It's a great social gathering with many folks simply choosing to kibitz in the kitchen rather than yell at the game on TV.
- 2.) If nothing else, you'll enjoy watching Dr. Jeff Glassheim try, with increasing futility, to convince us that the New York Giants are the Real Deal. ☺



Classroom Corner

Ellyn Lahr

We are off to a great start at our B'nai Israel Religious School! We currently have 21 students and 7 student aides, plus 4 teachers to fill our building with learning on Sundays.

Thank you to all of the parents and synagogue members who help with our various family events. Because of all of you, we had our Sukkah constructed in our Sanctuary once again! Thank you to Jill Anderson for organizing the family breakfast for our 10/16 Open House and to the Heimermann family for contributing goodies to the table. We also enjoyed the joyous holiday of Simchat Torah and dancing around in the Social Hall. Thank you to Liz Stern for the wonderful Oneg and for leading us in song and dance!

Upcoming dates to remember:

Adult Education 11/13 and 12/11. We begin at 10am. Lively discussion guaranteed!

Hanukkah program 12/18. Dawn Fritzell is the Chairperson for this event.

Thanks again to all of the families for sharing your time and your students with us each week.

Also, if you are interested in being a Religious School substitute, please let me know and we will add you to our list of potential subs.

Community Notes

HELP WANTED!

Our Jewish faith and the holiday of Hanukkah will be represented at this year's Oshkosh Celebration of Lights at Menominee Park in Oshkosh with a lit Menorah. In order to get this Menorah lit, we need to place the lights on it! They have a work day at Menominee Park in Oshkosh this Saturday, November 5th from 9 a.m. - Noon and again from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. If we all work together, we should have the project done in one day!

If you are interested, please contact me at felk07@sbcglobal.net. They are asking for all volunteers to meet at the service building by the volleyball courts at Menominee Park. I am going down there this week to find the exact location of our display and let you know where it is in case you can't be there by 9am. Workers of all ages and abilities can join in the fun!

For information and a schedule of events check out:

<http://www.oshkoshcelebrationoflights.org>.

Thanks!
Ellyn Lahr



The Feast of Lights By Emma Lazarus

Kindle the taper like the steadfast star
Ablaze on evening's forehead o'er the earth,
And add each night a lustre till afar
An eightfold splendor shine above thy hearth.
Clash, Israel, the cymbals, touch the lyre,
Blow the brass trumpet and the harsh-tongued horn;
Chant psalms of victory till the heart takes fire,
The Maccabean spirit leap new-born.

Remember how from wintry dawn till night,
Such songs were sung in Zion, when again
On the high altar flamed the sacred light,
And, purified from every Syrian stain,
The foam-white walls with golden shields were hung,
With crowns and silken spoils, and at the shrine,
Stood, midst their conqueror-tribe, five chieftains sprung
From one heroic stock, one seed divine.

Five branches grown from Mattathias' stem,
The Blessed John, the Keen-Eyed Jonathan,
Simon the fair, the Burst-of Spring, the Gem,
Eleazar, Help of-God; o'er all his clan
Judas the Lion-Prince, the Avenging Rod,
Towered in warrior-beauty, uncrowned king,
Armed with the breastplate and the sword of God,
Whose praise is: "He received the perishing."

They who had camped within the mountain-pass,
Couched on the rock, and tented neath the sky,
Who saw from Mizpah's heights the tangled grass
Choke the wide Temple-courts, the altar lie
Disfigured and polluted--who had flung
Their faces on the stones, and mourned aloud
And rent their garments, wailing with one tongue,
Crushed as a wind-swept bed of reeds is bowed,

Even they by one voice fired, one heart of flame,
Though broken reeds, had risen, and were men,
They rushed upon the spoiler and o'ercame,
Each arm for freedom had the strength of ten.
Now is their mourning into dancing turned,
Their sackcloth doffed for garments of delight,
Week-long the festive torches shall be burned,
Music and revelry wed day with night.

Still ours the dance, the feast, the glorious Psalm,
The mystic lights of emblem, and the Word.
Where is our Judas? Where our five-branched palm?
Where are the lion-warriors of the Lord?
Clash, Israel, the cymbals, touch the lyre,
Sound the brass trumpet and the harsh-tongued horn,
Chant hymns of victory till the heart take fire,
The Maccabean spirit leap new-born!

Mazel Tov!

... to Ben Frank and family. Ben and the kids recently returned from a two day visit to New York City where they participated in the taping of a segment on stay-at-home dads for the Martha Stewart Show.

The episode will air on Tuesday, November 29th on the Hallmark Channel. Will Ben share his bagel-making secrets with a national audience? Tune in to find out!

CORRECTION

The calendar in the September/October newsletter listed a Shavuot and Yizkor service on May 25th. There will be no service on that date. Instead, there will be a Shabbat and Shavuot service on May 19th.

Congregation Board of Trustees

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Jason Hirschberg	Lorraine Schreiber
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November

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
		1	2	3	4 Tot Shabbat 6:30 p.m. Shabbat Service 7:00 p.m.	5
6 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting	7	8	9	10	11	12 Shabbat Service 10:00 a.m.
13 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed 10:00 a.m.	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Religious School 9:00 a.m.	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

2011

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1	2	3
4 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting	5	6	7	8	9 Soup & Service 6:15 p.m. Shabbat Service 7:00 p.m.	10
11 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed 10:00 a.m.	12	13	14	15	16 Pre-Hanukkah Service 7:00 p.m.	17
18 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Hanukkah Program	19	20 Hanukkah begins at sundown	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

2011

Yahrzeits

November 2011			
Date	Loved One	Member's Name	Relationship
11/3	Alex Edward Horwitz	Member	Member
11/4	Bertha Israel	Member	Member
11/6	Jolan Friedmann	Agnes Ganch	Mother
11/6	Ella Urdan	Member	Member
11/6	Isaac Segal	Member	Member
11/7	Rachel Penn	Member	Member
11/8	Fanny Block	Member	Member
11/10	Sara Gordon	Member	Member
11/10	Rose Gordon	Member	Member
11/11	Gordon Grossman	Julie Kurutz	Father
11/11	Rose Nelson Schrentzel	Member	Member
11/11	David Dubesterm	Member	Member
11/11	Mary Olevsky	Member	Member
11/11	Freida Green	Member	Member
11/11	Oscar Kronfeld	Marilyn Pheil	Father
11/12	Rebecca Gazerowitz	Member	Member
11/13	Julius Simon	Member	Member
11/15	Sam Levinsohn	Member	Member
11/16	Joseph Ellegant	Member	Member
11/17	Ida Wasserman	Member	Member
11/17	Louis M. Urette	Debra Dubester	Father
11/18	Fruma Zimmerman	Member	Member
11/19	Irene Homsky	Member	Member
11/19	Ben Gordan	Member	Member
11/21	Lucille Goldstein	Sherry Taylor	Mother
11/24	Alex Blumenfeld	Lowell Louis	Uncle
11/25	Fruma Zimmerman	Dr. Marc Blum	Great Aunt
11/26	Stanley B. Cohen	Paul Cohen	Father
11/27	David Ansfield	Paul Ansfield	Father
11/28	Eva Goldstein	Avi Stern	Grandmother
11/30	Esther Beegun	Sally Gloyd	Mother

December 2011			
Date	Loved One	Member's Name	Relationship
12/1	Dorothy Robineau	Member	Member
12/1	Bernard Katz	Member	Member
12/1	Meyer Green	Member	Member
12/1	Julius Klein	Member	Member
12/1	Sophie Bensman	Member	Member
12/1	Sarah Lowe	Member	Member
12/1	Louis Gorwitz	Member	Member
12/1	Samuel Plotkin	Member	Member
12/1	David Miller	Dr. Marc Blum	Great Grandfather
12/1	Morris Zimmerman	Dr. Marc Blum	Grandfather
12/1	Isadore Block	Member	Member
12/1	Leah Levine	Member	Member
12/1	Harold Round	Claire Round	Husband
12/1	Esther Harris	Helen Sue Ginsberg	Mother
12/1	Mendel Levkovitch	Member	Member
12/1	Samuel Richman	Member	Member
12/1	Sylvia Richman	Sidney M. Richman	Aunt
12/1	Libby Levine	Member	Member
12/1	William Weinstein	Member	Member
12/1	Harry Rudoy	Member	Member
12/1	Nora Pitman	Member	Member
12/1	Ann Edelson	Member	Member
12/1	Harry Olevsky	Member	Member
12/1	Max Dubester	Peter Dubester	Father
12/1	Harry Pump	Member	Member
12/1	Helen Golden	Lorraine Schreiber	Mother
12/1	Libian Borsuk	Member	Member
12/1	Abe Levinson	Member	Member
12/1	Harry Levine	Member	Member
12/1	Jacob Rakita	Member	Member
12/1	Rycca Schreiber	Brian Schreiber	Mother

This Yahrzeit list reflects all the information we have received from members and some from the synagogue Yahrzeit plaques. Please forgive any errors or deletions – just let us know and it will be corrected. Yahrzeits can be sent to Liz Stern at (920) 727-9797 or lstern@new.rr.com.

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