

Congregation B'nai Israel

A newsletter for the members and friends of Congregation B'nai Israel

Sept./Oct. 2007

The Season of Return

Gary Wolfman, Religious Director



When I prepare and study orchestral scores in preparation for the next series of concerts, I always marvel at the difference when I am studying a piece for the first time or the second. When I return to a piece the second or third time, I not only

rediscover old themes, I find new ideas I had not found before. Invariably, I conduct and teach much more effectively and with better knowledge when I return to a piece I have conducted before. It is the same feeling I get when I return to read a book a second time. I rediscover old friends but find underlying ideas I had missed during the first reading.

In between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is the Sabbath titled the Sabbath of Return. It is based on the Haftorah reading by Hosea which reads, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God..." This Sabbath falls in the middle of our ten-day holy period where we repent for our sins and vow to be better the next year. This passage by Hosea also asks us to return to God. But how do we do this?

One thought I had was that since the high holy days seem to center on what we did wrong and repentance, what if we turned it into a positive. Positive approaches that will also help us return to God. What if we concentrated on returning to God by returning to what we most value? Let us return to the love we have for our families. Letting go of past grievances and returning to the love we originally had for all members of our family. By reaching out with love and compassion, we will not only return to our families but also return to God.

Let us return to the goodness found in each of us and reach out to those in need. Let us not help others with a feeling of obligation, but with a feeling of joy. This will help us return to God. Let us return to the beauty we discovered as we grew up in this world. Let us again look with wonder at all of God's creation and work together to make our world a greener and healthier place. Let us return to the peace we know is inside of

our souls. Let this peace influence our actions so we connect with others with care and affection.

Let me close with this quote from Rabbi Sidney Greenberg. He wrote, "Thus, this sacred season summons us not only to return to God; it summons us also to return to one another. In harmony with the Highest and in fellowship with each other we venture forth into the new year morally cleansed and spiritually renewed."

L'shana tova tikateivu!

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We Begin Again...

Julie Kurutz, President



Hi Everyone!

I hope you are enjoying the last weeks of summer. Very soon school will start and the craziness (and getting up really early...) will begin again. We also return to our very full and busy B'nai Israel schedule. We have the usual list of events planned and a few new/additional ones.

Please mark your calendars, and join us for a special service on November 2nd to honor the late Ed and Belle Rudoy. Both were long time members and very generous to our congregation. This is also a Soup & Services night, so we can enjoy dinner (6:30) and this special Shabbat service (7:30) together. I hope to see you there.

We will be adding a few more "Tot Shabbats" to our service schedule. These are short services tailored to our youngest members and their families. We celebrate with a very "hands on" service and a short and sweet oneg for everyone to enjoy together. These will be planned by Mr. Louis, Mr. Wolfman, Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Stern, and me. We invite children of all ages. Details will be coming later this fall.

Did you know our building will turn 60 years old in spring 2008? We have formed a committee to plan a special celebration. If you would like to help, please contact Sherry Taylor. We also need your help with several projects in our B'nai Israel home. The long range planning committee has many projects on the slate for the upkeep and improvement of our building. Please consider sponsoring an individual endeavor, or making a donation to the building fund in honor, or in memory of someone, or for no reason other than you feel the need and want to help. Thank you in advance.

Speaking of "building".... We will be having a B'nai Build for Habitat for Humanity. This was going to take place in June, but there were delays and the new date is Sept. 8th from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you want to help, please let me know by **Sept 1st**. We need about 10 -12 adults. The house is being built at 932 Winnebago Ave. and it is well on its way. The foundation is in, the roughed in plumbing is complete, and the basement walls are being framed. Depending on the progress they make between now and Sept 8th, we could be doing siding, insulation work, painting or landscaping. We'll know more as the date gets closer. Lunch will be provided. There will be 2-3 crew leaders that will instruct us. No experience is necessary. Hard

hats, nail pouches and all tools will be provided. Teens are welcome, but there has to be a 2:1 ratio of adults to teens.



We all send a HUGE thank you to Debbie Dubester for her many years of teaching our youngest students. She has decided not to return to the classroom this fall, and she will be

missed by everyone. We welcome Ben Frank as our newest teacher. Thanks Ben for stepping up and joining the faculty.

Have you had a chance to look at our beautiful gardens? Thanks to Barb Kuhn and her helpers for making it so beautiful and special for all of us to enjoy.



Also, take a look at our new marquee in front of our building. It looks terrific. Thanks to Rebecca for having it produced, and thank you to the Blum family for covering the costs involved. The new marquee is in memory of Betty and Carla Blum.

We have many things happening and hope you'll join in. The end results will benefit all of us, and future generations, for many years to come. I feel so lucky to be part of this wonderful B'nai Israel family. Thanks to everyone for what you do.

Fondly, Julie ★

Space-Filling Jewish Humor Break:

Goldstein tells his friend Silver: "Life is like a bowl of tuna fish."

Silver is quiet for a moment, then says, "Why is life like a bowl of tuna fish?"

"How should I know? Am I a philosopher?"

A mother is having a very tense relationship with her 14-year-old son. Screaming and fighting are constantly going on in the house. She finally brings him to a psychoanalyst. After two sessions, the doctor calls the mother into his office.

"You son," he tells her, "has an Oedipus complex."

"Oedipus Schmedipus," the woman answers. "As long as he loves his mother."

From Lowell Louis

Rosh Hashana is just around the corner and as I have said time and time again, where has the summer gone! It is true, as we get older, time really flies by.



Having said that, the big plans our youth group had of doing all kinds of "fun" things during the summer, has also flown by. We have really been very stagnant. I am anxious for school to start. We need to get back to a routine and once again resume our activities.

Just for your information, the youth group still has a good supply of \$1 candy bars that we will be selling on the first day of Sunday School and every other opportunity where there are people gathered.

Remember, the best way to break the fast after Yom Kippur is with a candy bar purchased from our youth group. Try it, we guarantee you'll like it! It's a real mitzvah (I think).

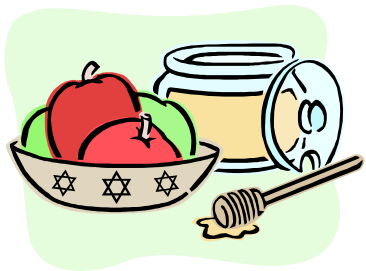
I have made a few visits to the hospital visiting with a family from Chicago whose son is a patient here at Mercy. Although the son is not affiliated with any religious group, his parents are members of a Temple from Chicago and wanted to connect with our Congregation.

My activities continue with the Oshkosh Correctional Institution on a semiweekly basis. Last month two orthodox rabbinical students from New York spent a few hours with us as they were passing through town visiting institutions throughout the state.

We now have an Israeli inmate at the Winnebago county jail and I will be meeting with him as well.

Enjoy the last days of summer and I for one am looking forward to the beginning of our Sunday School.

Shalom, Lowell



From Barbara Kuhn



Before you know it, it will be October and October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Extend a caring hand to every woman you know by just dropping a one-line note to your Congressional representatives. Sign with your name and your zip code.

Asking, crying and even begging are to no avail. Insurance companies have suggested mastectomies should be an outpatient surgery. The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act, HR758/S459 assures a woman she can have 2 days recovery time in the hospital before being sent home.

If this bill isn't passed, insurance companies will continue to be free to send women home with drainage tubes and no breast(s) in under 48 hours.

Please write:

Sen. Russell Feingold
506 Hart Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510

Sen. Herbert Kohl
330 Hart Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510

Rep. Steven Kagen
1232 Longworth House
Office Bldg
Washington DC, 20515

Tom Petri
2462 Rayburn Bldg.
Washington DC 20515.

Although this is not as effective but a step above zero is an electronic vote at

<http://www.lifetimetv.com/breastcancer/petition/signpetition.ph>

Next time you are buying stamps, add on a couple postcards so you are ready to take the 3 minutes it takes to support a cause you believe in.

THANK YOU!

Space-Filling Jewish Humor Break II:

According to the Catholics, a fetus becomes a full human being at the moment of conception.

According to the Jews, a fetus remains a fetus until it graduates from medical school.

When President Dwight Eisenhower met with Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, the American president said at one point: "It is very hard to be the president of 170 million people."

Ben-Gurion responded: "It's harder to be the prime minister of 2 million prime ministers."

FROM THE BOARD

CONGREGATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICERS:

President	Julie Kurutz	(920) 989-2201 Julie_Kurutz@vfc.com
Vice President	Rebecca Welch	(920) 303-9214 rpwoatr@aol.com
Treasurer	Marty Finkler	(920) 735-0714 mdfinkler@netscape.net
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BOARD MEMBERS:

Steve Freschl	Jeff Lipschutz
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Barbara Kuhn	Avi Stern
Ellyn Lahr	Sherry Taylor
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Building and Grounds Activity by Rebecca Welch



It has been a busy summer with the synagogue grounds and building. The gutters and flat roof were cleaned out by Ken Friedman and Rebecca Welch. Thank you, Ken, for your assistance and bringing the ladder to help with the project! The light for the Tree of Life window has been permanently fixed to the back window area to keep the light focused, since it had a tendency to stray from the window.

New arborvitaes were added to the back of the parking lot to act as a natural fence for the back area. Thanks to Barbara for getting the larger trees and to the crew that assisted in planting.

A new boiler system is going to be installed this summer to help with lowering the costs of heating. The old boiler was installed in 1978. The new boiler will be smaller in size and more efficient.

A new shed will be replacing the older shed next to the back door. It will be larger and will hopefully replace the rental storage unit now used.

New book shelves are slated to be built in the computer area. There was also water damage to the paneling in the classroom hallway from a leak from the old roof over the classrooms. The panels will be replaced during the fall/winter.

The locks for the outside doors were changed due to a key being stolen from a contractor's vehicle. Please

note that if you have an old key, it will no longer fit the new locks. Please contact Rebecca Welch if you have any questions.

Please donate to the Building and Grounds fund to help us keep the Temple in good operating condition!

FIRE EXTINGUISHER REPORT

From Jeff Lipschutz

There are six fire extinguishers in the Temple. One unit is located in each of the following locations:

1. Classroom hallway
2. Gary's classroom
3. Kitchen (hiding behind the rolling cart, when the rolling cart is in its storage location)
4. Social Hall near piano
5. On the stairway landing between the Social Hall and Sanctuary
6. Gary's study

This seems sufficient for a Temple more prone to flooding than burning, and cool heads more than hot ones.



Yom Kippur Services

10 a.m.	Morning Service
1:00 p.m.	Children's Service
2:30 p.m.	Afternoon Service
3:45 p.m.	Yizker Service
4:30 p.m.	Nihlah Service
5:00 p.m.	Break the Fast

Sisterhood News

SISTERHOOD CRAFTERS GROUP

by Sue Friedman

Do you have secret piles of undone crafting projects?
Does that pile continue to grow?

Join the Group! Admit it ladies, we all tend to jump from one craft to another and somehow things just don't get finished. It merely means that we are multi-crafting talented (that's the story and we are sticking to it!).

Treat yourself to a well deserved one night per month gathering to work on those stashed projects or to start a new one. You'll find a lively group full of warmth, friendship and good humor.

The Sisterhood Crafters (an unofficial group) meet from 6-9 pm in the Temple Social Hall. The meeting dates for the rest of 2007 are as follows:

Wednesday, August 22
Monday, September 17
Wednesday, October 17
Monday, November 12
Wednesday, December 12

Bringing eats is optional, although it is universally known that chocolate makes for better crafting.

Most importantly, talent is NOT required. Come join the fun!

CONGREGATION SISTERHOOD BOARD

OFFICERS:

President	Jill Anderson	(920) 733-4384 artofsea@wmconnect.com
Co-President	Lorrene Schreiber	(920) 231-9684 lmschreib@aol.com
Vice President	Kathy Blum	(920) 231-9684
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Members At Large	Audrey Gorwitz Char Sigman	(920) 235-0047 (920) 734- 2479
Gift Shop	Sue Friedman	(920) 235-6766 santa2353@hotmail.com

SISTERHOOD MEETING HOSTESSES:

Dates and Times TBA

September	Sue Friedman & Kaye Slater
October	Judy Phillips - couples book discussion
November	Caren Podair Benzer & Francois Kagen
December	Char Sigman - Hanukkah Bingo
January	Lorrene Schreiber - annual retreat
February	Barb Kuhn

Brotherhood News

Do you have an opinion on the impending presidential election? How about that status of Midwestern Jewry? Heck, did you think the film "Superbad" was the movie-going event of the summer season?

Our monthly Brotherhood gatherings are the forum in which all three of these subjects (and a half dozen more, during a typical meal) will get a fair hearing. It's a chance to discuss matters – great and small – with your fellow XY-chromosomal congregational peers.

A date and location for our kick-off dinner of the autumn season has not yet been determined, but we'll most likely be making that determination when Religious School convenes again on Sept. 9th. Look for an announcement at that time.

And wherever/whenever we choose to break bread, come prepared to say what's on your mind and hear what's on others.

Thanks, Avi Stern

Space-Filling Jewish Humor Break III:

Moses comes down from Mount Sinai. "I have good news and bad news," he tells the masses gathered below. "The good news is I got Him down to ten. The bad news is, adultery is still in."



Congregational Calendar

September 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Michael and Alex Swanson's Bar and Bar Mitzvah
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 B'nai Build for Habitat for Humanity 8 – 4 p.m.
9 Religious School 9:00 a.m.	10	11	12 Rosh Hashanah 7:30 p.m. Services	13 Rosh Hashanah 10:00 a.m. Services	14	15
16 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed.	17	18	19	20	21 Kol Nidre 7:30 p.m. Services	22 Yom Kippur 10:00 p.m. Services Begin – *see article for details*
23 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Open House	24	25	26 Set up Sukkah 7:00 p.m.	27	28 Sukkot and Shabbat Services 7:30 p.m.	29
30						

October 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Simchat Torah and Shabbat Services 7:30 p.m.	6
7 Religious School 9:00 a.m.	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10 a.m.	15	16	17	18	19 Shabbat Services 7:30 p.m.	20
21 Religious School 9:00 a.m.	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

What's Nu?

Mazel Tov to ...

Dorothy and Uri Vaisman, who were very thrilled to welcome their 9th grandchild, a boy, born to Ilan (Alan) and Tali Vaisman, on Saturday, May 19th in Haifa, Israel. The boy was named Har'el (Vaisman), brother to Carmel (Vaisman).

Rick and Kaye Slater, who are pleased to announce the marriage of their son David Michael to Zoryanna Dopko. The couple took their vows on May 20, 2007 at Sonnenberg Gardens in Canandaigua, NY. They are living in Ithaca, NY, attending graduate school at Cornell University.

Michele Missner, who won second place in the watercolor category at the Winnebagoland Art Fair in June. Her paintings are on display for the month of August in the Music -Drama Center at Lawrence University in conjunction with the Attic Theatre season

Michele Missner had her painting "A touch of blue" juried into the Secura Exhibit in Appleton. She won a honorable mention and the painting was sold.

The congregation gratefully acknowledges the following contributions...

In memory of **Belle Rudoy** from Audrey Gorwitz.

In loving memory of **Belle Rudoy** from Marc & Kathleen Blum and family

In memory of **Edward H. Rudoy** by Dr. Marc C. & Kathleen M. Blum.

In memory of **Ed Rudoy** from Joe & Audrey Gorwitz

In honor of **Ed Klug's** college graduation and his promotion at Stifel Nicolaus & Company from Steve Freschl.

In honor of **Marshall Missner's** retirement from Audrey Gorwitz

In honor of **Jessica Weindling's** bat mitzvah from her grandmother, Susan Weindling-Pitzele.

In honor of the marriage of **Rebecca Sorkin** and Phil Sullivan from Mr and Mrs. Sorkin.

Thank you to...

Helen Sue Ginsberg who donated the lovely Rosh Hashanah flowers on the bimah in memory of her husband, Tom Ginsberg.

Gary Wolfman, Laura Sindberg, Marc Blum, Fred and Ellen Lahr, Ken Friedman, Nate and Sharman Kitzis, Dan Krhin and Sandy Ansfield for taking the time to contribute to our lovely garden. Sandy Ansfield has continued to assist with giving the new trees the additional water they need.

In July several congregation members brought shovels, gloves and their enthusiasm to plant a lovely row of arborvitae across the back lot line. Even though it was tough digging through well-solidified gravel, they managed to get that row in in one evening! Additional transplanting and planting was done to complete the project.

In spite of July's heat, this won't last forever. Go for a slow and thoughtful walk around our building while taking some deep breaths. Good for your blood pressure -- good for your soul. --

by Barb Kuhn

Barbara Kuhn for her dedication to and rich talent with B'nai Israel's beautiful grounds.

Ed Rudoy- In Memoriam

Ed Rudoy, a former long-time member of our congregation and father to Helaine Lasky passed away in Florida. The obituary was in the Oshkosh Northwestern as follows:

Edward H. Rudoy passed away at the age of 96 on Wednesday, July 25, 2007, at his home in Hollywood, Florida. He was the son of Harry and Bessie Rudoy of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and was preceded in death by his parents; his sisters Ida, Gertrude, and Lillian; and his wife Belle. He is survived by his sister Mary Lerner; daughter Helaine Lasky; his son Dean Rudoy; his grandsons Mark Lasky, Jason Lasky, and Bradford Lasky; his granddaughters-in-law Kristen Lasky and Courtney Lasky; and his great-grandchildren Drew Lasky, Beau Lasky, and Maeve Lasky.

All memorial requests are directed to the Edward and Belle Rudoy Fund and the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Rudoy family.

Y A H R Z E I T S

This Yahrzeit list is a work in progress. It currently reflects all the information I have received from members and some from the synagogue Yahrzeit plaques. Please forgive any errors or deletions – just let me know and it will be corrected.

Listed below are two possible dates for each person's Yahrzeit. The "secular date" represents the Gregorian calendar date on which the loved one passed away. That date will stay the same each year. The "Hebrew date" represents the Hebrew calendar date of passing – this date will change each secular year due to the lunar Hebrew calendar.

Members may choose which date they would like their loved one(s) to be commemorated on. Knowing this information would help determine when the loved ones' names are read at services and published in this Newsletter.

Thank you to all members who submitted their Yahrzeit form in the mail over the summer. If anyone would like to submit new or updated information and let me know your commemoration preference (Secular or traditional Hebrew date for your loved ones), contact me at: 920-727-9797 or stern@new.rr.com. I would be glad to hear from you!

<u>August-07</u>				
Secular Date	Hebrew Date	Loved One	Member's Name	Relationship
	19-Aug	Milton Deitch	Jeffrey Glassheim	Grandfather
19-Sep	28-Aug	Joseph Nacinovich	Angie Lipschutz	Father
	29-Aug	Charles Ellsworth	Paulette Glassheim	Grandfather
23-Aug		Simon Horwitz	Member	Member
26-Aug		Nathan Harris	Helen Sue Ginsberg	Father
26-Aug	5-Aug	Alice M. Round	Claire Round	Daughter
27-Aug		Sylvia L. Robineau	Member	Member
28-Aug		Louis Busch	Member	Member
28-Aug		Annette Hirschberg	Sidney Hirschberg	Wife
29-Aug		Rebecca Balkansky	Member	Member
29-Aug		Julius Stern	Member	Member
30-Aug	5-Sep	Esther Missner	Marshall Missner	Mother
<u>September-07</u>				
Secular Date	Hebrew Date	Loved One	Member's Name	Relationship
1-Sep		Dr. William Ginsberg	Helen Sue Ginsberg	Father-in-law
1-Sep	7-Sep	Leonard Glassheim	Jeffrey Glassheim	Grandfather
3-Sep		Marion Bronn	Member	Member
3-Sep		Max Slafsky	Member	Member
6-Sep		Max H. Baker	Member	Member
7-Sep		Ida Plotkin	Member	Member
7-Sep	8-Sep	Mary Miller	Dr. Marc Blum	Great Grandmother
9-Sep		Morris Block	Member	Member
9-Sep		Jacob Rosenstein	Member	Member
9-Sep		Yetta Rosenstein	Member	Member
10-Sep		Rabbi Louis M. Edelson	Member	Member
12-Sep		Aaron Pitman	Member	Member
13-Sep		Morey Misles	Myra Misles-Krhin	Father
17-Sep		Max Richman	Member	Member
18-Sep		Phillip Israel	Member	Member
19-Sep	12-Sep	Janis Stein	Char Sigman	Mother
	13-Sep	Abraham Beegun	Sally Gloyd	Father
	16-Sep	Betty Pheil	Moshe Pheil	Mother
20-Sep		Michael I. Solomon	Member	Member
	21-Sep	Sol Rabinowitz	Susan Hegedus	Father
22-Sep		Ethel G. Primakow	Member	Member
23-Sep		Yetta Slafsky	Member	Member

<u>September-07</u>				
Secular Date	Hebrew Date	Loved One	Member's Name	Relationship
24-Sep		Fannie Richman	Member	Member
25-Sep		Julius Richman	Member	Member
<u>October-07</u>				
Secular Date	Hebrew Date	Loved One	Member's Name	Relationship
2-Oct		Dorothy Levin Osborn	Member	Member
3-Oct		Morris J. Axelrod	Member	Member
3-Oct	4-Oct	Edward Edenbaum	Brian Schreiber	Grandfather
4-Oct		Leo Homsky	Member	Member
4-Oct		Annette Dubester	Peter Dubester	Sister
5-Oct		Harry S. Hirschberg	Sidney Hirschberg	Father
6-Oct		Charles Levinsohn	Member	Member
7-Oct		Ethel Nemschoff	Member	Member
7-Oct		Claris Elsie Levin	Member	Member
8-Oct	7-Oct	Dora Sigman	Bob Sigman	Mother
13-Oct	15-Oct	Walter Hirsch	Sharman Kitzis	Stepfather
17-Oct		Ross A. Nemschoff	Member	Member
17-Oct		Beatrice Baker Urdan	Member	Member
18-Oct		Mary Cook	Member	Member
19-Oct		Minnie Ress	Member	Member
	20-Oct	Jolan Friedmann	Agnes Ganch	Mother
20-Oct		Samuel Marcus	Member	Member
21-Oct		Kala Borsuk	Member	Member
	22-Oct	Rachel Penn	Member	Member
29-Oct	24-Oct	Harvey Perlman	Barry Perlman	Father
	26-Oct	Oscar Kronfeld	Marilyn Pheil	Father
26-Oct		Eva Carron	Member	Member
31-Oct	28-Oct	Daniel Missner	Marshall Missner	Father

Next Newsletter

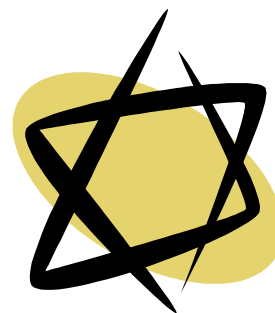
Liz and Avi Stern, Editors

Please submit your article(s) for the **November/December 2007** newsletter to us by **October 20th**. Be sure to include information about events taking place during (or close to) November, December and even January.

Everyone is welcome to submit articles. Send yours via e-mail to lstern@new.rr.com or through the USPS to:

Avi and Liz Stern
764 Kensington Rd.
Neeah, WI, 54956.

Give us a call at (920) 727-9797 to share any news or for any questions or concerns. ★



JEWIS IN THE NEWS

Note from the Editors: *The following commentary began as a friendly e-mail from the editor of the Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter to the editor of The Fond du Lac Reporter. Avi thought the tale was so good that he told his colleague, Steve Reed, to make it a column in the newspaper. That's what he did, and it ran in July.*

Witness to the generosity of strangers

Weary of conflict? Discouraged by the news from Baghdad and the County Board room? Ready for someone in a checkout line or line of traffic to smile and wave you through?

To restore your faith in humanity, if only by a smidge, I offer the following:

My son and his bride planned a very small, simple wedding for last Sunday morning in a quiet urban park in suburban New York City. Matt and Suzanne are graduate students in White Plains. Their campus lies about 12 miles north of Yankee Stadium.

They live within walking distance of a Wal-Mart, a farmer's market and the site of the courthouse where the Declaration of Independence was read publicly in New York for the first time on July 11, 1776.

They have completed the first, tough year of law school and are committed to one another, to making a positive difference, to a healthy lifestyle, and, of course, to paying off their student loans.

The only guests invited to the wedding were the parents and sister of the bride, who drove up from suburban Washington, D.C., and the parents of the groom, who drove from Manitowoc to Milwaukee, flew to Chicago and from there to New York in the plane that replaced the one that broke down as it taxied from the gate to the runway. Everyone has travel tales and I don't mean for this to be one - even though our luggage booked separate passage and arrived agonizingly late.

The ceremony was scheduled for 11 a.m. pondside at Silver Lake Preserve. Though outdoors and informal, the ceremony was religious. Rabbi Tom Weiner had interviewed the couple, whose faiths share a common root that branched millennia ago only to see two of its children joined ecumenically in the 21st century.

Bride, groom and family members showed up around 10:30 a.m. The rabbi followed around 10:45. As the rabbi had explained, the couple would need two adult, non-family witnesses to sign certain civil and religious documents.

No other cars or people were in the parking lot or in the park when we arrived. By 10:55, we of the wedding party remained the sole, visible occupants of the 236-acre park.

Bride and groom were ready to jump into their car and drive until they found adults who might serve as witnesses. We were assembled some 50 yards from the parking lot when, at last, one car pulled in. It was too far away and its windows too darkly tinted for us to be able to count occupants. Presumably, one was an adult. I prayed silently for two.

Mom-driver and a young child emerged and started walking in our general direction. Long pause. The passenger door opened. Dad and two more kids emerged. We saw them as prospective witnesses. Bride and groom hotfooted it toward the parking lot to make inquiry, the rabbi trailing in their wake.

Introductions are made, circumstances explained, witnessing requested. The arriving couple was thrilled: It's a Jewish ceremony; they're Jewish; they're able to provide a needed service. Papers were signed. Amid everyone expressing gratitude and wishing one another well, the man reached into his wallet and shoved bills toward my son.

The couples retreated pondside where the ceremony was performed. Toasts, tears, the smashing of the wine glass, followed. The witnesses had lingered nearby, but by now had departed.

We found our way to the parking lot where a note from the mother-wife-witness expressed, again, their gratitude at being asked to play a role, and, again, wishing the newlyweds all the best.

My son remembered the push of cash. He checked his pocket. Five \$20s -- evidence of the spontaneous generosity of a total stranger, likely creating an indelible memory for all present.

And, had there been no cash or merely one Abe instead of five Andrew Jacksons, the generous sentiment would not have been diminished.

Tis enough to inspire a crusty Midwestern editor to practice reciprocal generosity and kindness toward a future stranger.

I wish you a good day, a good life, hope for the present and for your future and that of your children. I hope we meet someday. I hope I don't forget what I observed last Sunday and how I felt, and still do.

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