



## Message from the Rabbi – October/November 2013

Dear Friends,

I leave for a one-week trip to Israel in less than a month, and, as always, I'm very excited. I have been to Israel more times than I can recall – and for many different reasons – but this will be for a new purpose. I will join women rabbis from all over (and our male supporters) in marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of a remarkable organization, Women of the Wall (WOW). I spoke about WOW at one of our services a year or so ago, so let me refresh your memory and also bring you up to date on some recent developments.

Women of the Wall, or *Nashot Hakotel* in Hebrew, is a group of Jewish women from around the world who strive to achieve full civil and religious rights in Israel, specifically, the right, as women, to wear a tallis, pray, sing, and read from the Torah collectively and out loud at the Western Wall (*Kotel*) in Jerusalem. The Western Wall is Judaism's most sacred holy site and the principal symbol of Jewish peoplehood and sovereignty.

The *Kotel* is the only remaining wall of the Second Temple, constructed approximately 2500 years ago and destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. It passed through the hands of many regional powers, almost always off-limits to Jews, until it was "liberated" by the Israeli Army in 1967. Freedom to worship at the *Kotel* is one of the most important results of the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem following the Six Day War, but this great achievement is tainted by the fact that women are prohibited from praying freely at this most holy site. The *Kotel* is governed by the ultra-Orthodox rabbinate with prayer areas segregated by gender. There is a very

large men's side, a small women's side, and strict requirements for women who are required to dress modestly and refrain from speaking or singing aloud, wearing a tallis or reading from a Torah scroll. Currently the only option open to women at the *Kotel* is silent, individual prayer.

Many non-Israeli Jews are shocked when they first learn that women who wish to pray publicly at the Wall are treated as second-class citizens. While many of the Women of the Wall seek personal fulfillment in group prayer and Torah reading at our most sacred site, many also want to achieve recognition by the legal and religious Israeli establishment for the sake of all Jewish women. From WOW literature: "Some of us, who have chosen to make Israel our home, suspect that pursuing this quest may be our greatest contribution to Israel. Our group, with a membership that is not only multi-denominational but spans the political spectrum, embodies a message of tolerance and pluralism. If, as tradition tells us, the Second Temple was destroyed because of *sinat hinam*, baseless hatred, we dare to assert that allowing our voices to be heard would be no less than a *tikkun*, a mending, of the history of intolerance."

The legal battle over the rights of women at the *Kotel* has raged for years. For the most part, the Israeli courts have ruled favorably on the women's many, many petitions. The problem occurs at the point of implementation, when local authorities, under intense pressure from the ultra-Orthodox religious establishment, have failed to properly implement judicial rulings. From time to time, alternative sites for women's public prayer have been suggested, but these proposals have mostly been denounced as discriminatory by WOW and its

supporters. When women do attempt to pray out loud at the Kotel, they are frequently cursed, spat upon, and pelted with eggs and trash by male “worshippers” on the men’s side.

“They’ve taken the keys to the holiest site and just given them to one extremist group that uses violence,” Anat Hoffman, founder of WOW, said recently, referring to the ultra-Orthodox authorities and their supporters. “We have to be vigilant and fight for every centimeter. We are equal. Israel is the only democracy in the world that by law [discriminates against women] in this way.”

Last spring, after 25 years, WOW won a very important court victory which gave women the right to pray as they wish at the *Kotel*. Since then, opponents have arranged for thousands of ultra-Orthodox young people to cram the site and prevent the women from using it, creating a new set of problems. Just last week, on October 4, nearly 200 prayed in the women’s section out loud and as a group, with tallitot and a Torah scroll. The multi-denominational prayer group prayed without police enclosures and restrictions for the first time since April 2013. But this great achievement was tainted by the abusive behavior of a large group of women and girls who surrounded Women of the Wall members, cursing, spitting and yelling throughout their prayer. At the same time, on the other side of the divide, a mass prayer was led by Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel Yitzhak Yoseph, over loud-speakers, drowning out the women’s voices and making it impossible for them to hear their own service.

So with great anticipation I leave on October 31 to join with women and men who are determined to open all aspects of Jewish life in Israel to all Jews. I understand that we will spend the week learning, debating, strategizing, lobbying, celebrating sisterhood and alliances, and of course praying together at the *Kotel*. I return the day before our service on November 7, and I look forward to sharing the experience with you then.

Have a very good month.

Rabbi Kim S. Geringer



Members of the Women of the Wall group take part in their monthly prayer session at the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City October 4, 2013. Photo by Reuters



### ???????ASK THE RABBI???????



Have a religious question that you have wanted to ask the Rabbi? Well here is your chance to submit via **email to [info@shaareyhayam.org](mailto:info@shaareyhayam.org)** , use the website or send a **letter to A Reform Jewish Community, P.O. Box 1268, Manahawkin, NJ 08050 Attention Rabbi Geringer**. The Rabbi will select some questions and they will be published, along with her answers, in the newsletter.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As I am sure you all know each year the President of the United States, shortly after the secular New Year, delivers a State of the Union Address. I decided I would use my opportunity to speak on our new year to deliver my own "state of the congregation" address. Like the real president does, I will review some areas where I feel successes should be highlighted, and some where we are still striving for improvement, and also what we can do as a collective group to help.

According to our website our congregation was founded in 2004. If we are in existence for another four months, we will be celebrating our 10 year anniversary. To me, this is success number one. We are still in business. In as much as this is the epitome of a grassroots organization, having started with nothing but the desire of a small group of people to have their own spiritual home, that is a huge accomplishment. As a result, we are able to all be here this evening to celebrate this holiday together. Our temple was founded by people who lived in southern ocean county and wanted to offer a truly reform congregation where people of all backgrounds would be welcome and feel welcome, a completely inclusive organization. I am declaring this success number two. I think we can all agree that we have been able to attract a wide array of people from differing backgrounds who want to be a part of what has been created here.

Our founders of course wanted to provide for the religious needs of Jewish people in southern Ocean County. We have an excellent Rabbi. As you can see, we have a well-attended High Holiday service in a comfortable place with live professional music, a choir, even a sound system which occasionally works correctly. We have a Hebrew school where a number of students have graduated and completed their Bnai Mitzvahs within the congregation. We have regular Shabbat services, also well attended. One of our congregants mentioned to me in his previous synagogue, from

hundreds of members only several would show on a Friday night. You may be interested to know the average attendance for a reform congregation for Friday night services is 17 people out of 100 families. Our percentage of regular attendees is more than double that. That is something we should be proud of. We have a professionally designed website with lots of hopefully accurate information.

So as for services to the community, I will declare that a success as well.

We started in the Barnegat Nursing Home multi-purpose room using that donated space. Today we are able to rent space with a sanctuary, rooms for Hebrew school, kitchen and rooms for dinners and special occasions. While that is an upgrade from the nursing home, I believe majority of us agree our goal is to have our own space. We must grade that as partial success.

Another area of what I would term partial success is membership. We have grown from a few founding members to a congregation, at one point, of nearly 100. As we stand here today, we have about 80 members. That is certainly a huge accomplishment, but I feel will not be sufficient going forward.

Mentioned in my column for our newsletter we would not do a traditional Yom Kippur appeal. I will not stand before you tonight and ask for donations. I don't want to do it and no one enjoys hearing it. But I also think that's appropriate because at the heart of things money is not our biggest issue. Please do not misunderstand; we certainly need money badly, now more than ever. But in my opinion our biggest issue, and what needs to be our focus, is membership. As I indicated, currently our membership numbers are down somewhat from our highest point.

So why do people leave? There are plenty of legitimate reasons; Money, although we certainly



make an effort to work with people if that is an issue. Someone might complete bnai mitzvah studies and not want to remain, and we try our best to retain in that situation as well. But there are other reasons. I came across a story about Jewish man who was deserted on island. When they discovered him after many years he had built a number of things, a shelter to live, other buildings and two synagogues. They asked him why two synagogues. He said "that's the one where I go to pray and observe my religion." They asked well, what's the 2nd one for, and he replied, "That's the one I wouldn't go to that place if my life depended on it." Not sure if this is unique to Jews. Some dissension is normal in any organization.

But it just seems to me people get wound up about things and immediately feel there is no alternative. Please, if you feel something is missing, work to add it-if you feel something is lacking, work to improve it-if you disagree with something, make the case for it-we are a collective and can only survive as such-we are all working ultimately for the same goal. Don't leave because there is something you are not happy about.

But the more important aspect for us is figuring out why people join, and how do we reach them. There are people much smarter than me who study these issues. Traditionally congregations increase membership by those in need of something specific coming to them. For example many of you here want to have a place to go on the HHD. Many wanted a place to have a reform Shabbat service. Personally I joined because I was looking for a Hebrew school and was happy to find one right here in my town. These are all perfectly valid and good reasons. And of course we must continue to succeed at offering these services to get members. But it is felt by many that this model alone is no longer sustainable. We cannot sit back and wait for people to come to us for a specific requirement when they have it.

So how do we reach these others? It may seem surprising, but the real reason Jews have long term affiliations with synagogues are not because of religious doctrine. It is to have a sense of community as Jews. They are looking to belong to a welcoming community. I submit to you, that describes us to a "t". But to grow membership we need to demonstrate this to others. Show others what we are about, a warm, open and inviting congregation. I am asking that this be our focus for the coming year. Our board has some new outreach projects starting but we cannot do it alone. Please help by reaching out to any prospective new members you can and showing what we are all about.

Happy New Year to all,

**Philip Miller**

#### SIMCHA TORAH SERVICES



## CONGREGATION SHA'AREY HA-YAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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<b>Past President</b>	Aaron Shapiro	609-242-2390	shap1010@comcast.net

**2013 – 2014 Board of Trustees**





## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Date	Congregant
07	Rich Goldsborough
07	Matthew Dunn
11	Blanche Spiegel
12	Filomena Jonas
25	Joe Breese
28	Sam Lewis
31	Ben Feather



## Happy Anniversary



October 2, 1988 Debbie and Alex Majewski



October 8 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Flum



October 9 Rhona and Allan Levy



October 24, 1981 Madelyn and Robert Dunn



October 31, 1967 Phyllis and M. Leonard Feather

## Yahrzeits



בראבא ימ' mei yitkadash ve יתגדל

October 7th Barbara Lewis, wife of Samuel Lewis  
 October 12th Walter Heineman, father of Syble Bleiweis  
 October 14th Fannie Bleiweis, Mother of Ernest Bleiweis  
 October 22nd Ruth Porther, Mother of Rosalie Donadio  
 October 26th Israel Bailen, Grandfather of Rosalie Donadio



## Tribute Card Sent

Mazel Tov to Sue and Mike Lifelstein on the birth of twin granddaughters, Alexa and Carly from Harriet & Phil Cohen.



## Hebrew School Corner

We are thrilled to have started our classes on a new day this year; our Hebrew school is meeting on Thursdays from 5 to 7PM. Our six students have started working on a Federation Chanukah card contest, which is the same idea that last year's students worked on for Passover, and our very own Briana Otto was the first place winner of that contest! Best of luck students for another star to come from our school. Iris Harari is leading our class and is a warm and nurturing teacher. For sure all students will be learning their Hebrew, history and "the lay of the land" of Israel.



## Membership

Help us grow our congregation and mention to your neighbors, friends and family members that are unaffiliated to be a part of our spiritual community! There are so few Jews in Southern Ocean County, we would love you to invite them as guests to our services so they can feel the pulse of our congregation and enjoy the service being led by Rabbi Geringer. If you would like to have membership information to hand out, please ask Syble Bleiweis, Joan Silverman or Cyndy Friedland for forms. "Build it and they will come..." Let's all work

together to build a Jewish community right here in our own back yard.

## TEMPLE COMMITTEES

### New Members Welcome

Temple Committees	Chair/Members
Birthdays & Anniversaries	<u>Susan Shapiro</u>
Choir	<u>Philip Altland</u> Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Pat Barndt, Madelyn Dunn, Robert Dunn, Syble Bleiweis, Rena Kreisler
Finance	Treasurer, Financial Secretary, President
Fundraising	<u>Dayna Otto</u> Pat Barndt, Syble Bleiweis, Madelyn Dunn, Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Joan Silverman
Greeters	<u>Rose Jackson &amp; Judie Levin</u> Pat Barndt, Syble Bleiweis, Hope Gardiner, Wendi Higgins, Thelma Polon, Susan Shapiro
Hospital Visits	<u>Jack Krespy</u>
Membership	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u> Syble Bleiweis, Joan Silverman
Music	<u>Philip Altland</u> Stan Jackson
Newsletter	<u>Rose Jackson</u> Hope Gardiner
Oneg & Dinners	<u>Madelyn Dunn</u> Pat Barndt, Wendi Higgins
Publicity	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u>
Religious School	<u>Cyndy Friedland/ Phil Miller</u>
Ritual	<u>Charles Flum</u> Philip Altland, Stan Jackson, Alan Levy
Sunshine	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u> Ruth Schlyen, Phyllis Blum, Harriet Cohen
Tributes	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u>
Yahrzeits	<u>Harriet Cohen</u>

# We NEED your support!

## FUND RAISING EVENTS

- Dine-a-Round 10/23 5-9pm at Kristy's. Please show flyer (attached page 10).
- ShopRite Cards are a constant fund raiser. Please contact Dayna or Syble to purchase anytime. They will always be sold at services.
- Tribute Cards can be sent on your behalf to anyone you would like, for any reason you have, for a \$5 donation. Please contact Syble.

Our next Fund Raising meeting will be on 10/22 at 7pm at the Silverman's home. We can always use more members. Call Dayna at 609-709-9410 to RSVP.



The Jewish Federation of Ocean County  
Invites the men and women of Ocean  
County to

### Omnibus 21st Century: America Through A Jewish Lens

Sunday, October 20, 2013

9:00am – 2:00pm

Temple Beth Or  
200 Van Zile Road  
Brick, NJ

#### Program Schedule

**9:00 – 9:30am**

Registration

**9:30 – 10:45am**

Workshops A & B Session 1\*

**11:00 – 12:15pm**

Workshops A & B Session 2\*

**12:30pm**

Lunch and Keynote Speakers

\*Each attendee will have the opportunity to participate in both workshops.

#### Keynote Address: “The Culture of Violence”

**Rabbi Shaul Prayer**

Congregation Adath Israel  
Newtown, Connecticut

**Pastor Corey Brooks**

New Beginnings Church of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

#### Workshop A

American Music & Jewish Identity  
Rabbi Arnie Samlan, M.S.W.  
Founder and Owner of Jewish Connecti

#### Workshop B

War & Peacemaking:  
The Jewish Perspective  
Rabbi Steven Bayar

Visit our website at [www.jewishoceancounty.org](http://www.jewishoceancounty.org) to register online.

Omnibus 2013 Registration

Make checks payable and mail to:  
Jewish Federation of Ocean County  
301 Madison Avenue • Lakewood, NJ 08701

For any questions please call Federation at 732-363-0530 or email [federation@ocfj.org](mailto:federation@ocfj.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Early Bird Registration  
\$30.00 per person until September 16, 2013

Special Student Rate  
\$25.00

Regular Registration  
\$36.00 per person until October 20, 2013





# b&p Business & Professional Division

The Jewish Federation of Ocean County  
Invites you to a networking breakfast and discussion with  
*Special Guest*

**Matan Hodorov**

## ***The Israeli High-Tech Industry: Its Remarkable Economic Impact***

October 24th, 2013 8:00a.m.-9:15a.m.

The Clarion Hotel

815 Rt. 37 W

Toms River, NJ 08755

**RSVP by October 18**



**Couvert \$18  
Dairy Breakfast Buffet**



## **Defending Jacob**

by **William Landay** (Goodreads Author)

3.94 · Synopsis taken from Goodreads website.

Andy Barber has been an assistant district attorney in his suburban Massachusetts county for more than twenty years. He is respected in his community, tenacious in the courtroom, and happy at home with his wife, Laurie, and son, Jacob. But when a shocking crime shatters their New England town, Andy is blindsided by what happens next: His fourteen-year-old son is charged with the murder of a fellow student.

Every parental instinct Andy has rallies to protect his boy. Jacob insists that he is innocent, and Andy believes him. Andy must. He's his father. But as damning facts and shocking revelations surface, as a marriage threatens to crumble and the trial intensifies, as the crisis reveals how little a father knows about his son, Andy will face a trial of his own—between loyalty and justice, between truth and allegation, between a past he's tried to bury and a future he cannot conceive.

Award-winning author William Landay has written the consummate novel of an embattled family in crisis—a suspenseful, character-driven mystery that is also a spellbinding tale of guilt, betrayal, and the terrifying speed at which our lives can spin out of control.

Great read. Submitted by Rose Jackson

*Join Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam's*

*"Gates of the Sea"*

*October Dine A Round*

*At*

*Kristy's Casual Dining*

*562 Route 9 North, Waretown, NJ 08758*

*Bring this flyer, your friends, family, foes (?)*

*For dinner from 5 to 9PM*

*(Please be sure to bring this flier for credit)*

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## 2013 - 2014 Temple Shaarey Hayam Service Schedule

Services Friday 7:30pm

October 11, 2013

10:00am Oct 12, 2013 -Bar Mitzvah  
of Corey Mullens

October 25, 2013

November 8, 2013

November 22, 2013

December 6, 2013

December 20, 2013

January 3, 2014

January 17, 2014 (Tu B'Shevat)

February 14, 2014

February 28, 2014

March 14, 2014

March 28, 2014

April 11, 2014

April, 17, 2014 Second Seder

April 25, 2014

May 9, 2014 Israel Independence  
Day

May 23, 2014

June 13, 2014

June 27, 2014

## SIMCHA TORAH SERVICES

