



Affiliated with the
Jewish Reconstructionist
Movement

Temple B'nai Abraham

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Rabbi

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Recording Secretary

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Important Dates

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Tot Shabbat | 12/13 |
| Saturday Service | 12/14 |
| Bloodmobile | 12/23 |

"The Temple Shofar"

December, 2013

Rabbi's Message

I have been reflecting lately on a passage from the Talmud:

"R. Avin the Levi said: Whoever forces the moment, the moment forces him. But whoever yields before the moment, the moment yields before him." (Brachot 64a)

The situation that developed in our local community over the last month has been fraught with strong emotions - emotions that in an age of social media quickly overflow onto the electronic page where they are not easily recalled. Raw emotions of fear, anger, betrayal, hurt seem to bump up against each other in public forums in ways that inflict more hurt.

When it comes to faith and religion, it is difficult to be neutral. These subjects can touch on core aspects of our identities, even seeming to reach down into our souls. Mix in cherished ideologies, and local and national politics, and it can be a volatile mix indeed! In the midst of the turmoil, it can be difficult to find a pause to reflect on what to say, what to do. Feeling attacked, the instinctive response is to fight back.

But the passage from the Talmud reminds me of how important it is to take a less rigid and forceful approach to the moment. Yielding

before the moment doesn't mean abandoning values or not trying to move toward a goal. But it calls for a gentler approach and a thoughtfulness about timing. Sometimes applying brute force can be counterproductive. A wonderful example of this is quicksand - when caught in quicksand, struggling is the worst possible response. Relaxing amidst the fear and discomfort can sometimes provide breathing room for another solution to present itself.

Amidst the quicksand of local and national politics, and sometimes virulent social media, I have felt the need for a gentler approach, even as a part of me has wanted to force my will upon the situation. I can't help believing that if everyone could yield a bit before the moment, that this difficult moment would begin to yield a bit before each of us. We might find openings for real dialogues, and constructive solutions.

I have been deeply appreciative of the collaborative approach taken by the synagogue board and congregants toward this end. I have also been deeply moved by the conversations and supportive actions of members of the Interfaith Dialogue Group and other local clergy as we have sought connections and understanding instead of division. I hope these kinds of examples can begin to shift the tenor of the broader conversation.

Shalom,
Rabbi Pfau

Please see page 7 for comments prepared by Rabbi Pfau that were presented to the Bordentown Board of Education.



President's Message

As many of you are aware, our congregation and community have recently been involved in a very critical, somewhat heated and ongoing debate that has sparked national interest.

In the simplest terms, the disagreements were modern continuations of an old portfolio of arguments: "**prayer in school**" and "**church-and-state**." Again, those are the simplest terms.

The important take-away from the experience is two-fold. It has reminded our close-knit B'nai Abraham family of two very important and time-honored values: SUPPORT & TOLERANCE.

The TOLERANCE component is a straightforward and uncomplicated one. I will share with you what our "Public Affairs" division shared with the press, who were relentless:

We are proud to be members of a diverse community, and represent a position to uphold, respect, and celebrate that diversity. We encourage tolerance, civility, equality and inclusion in our congregation, community, and public schools.

The SUPPORT component proved more composite. It was a test...a test of our ability to rally and support members of our congregation and members of our community in a manner that was loyal to those in need, while managing the delicate balance of not compromising one's own personal belief and political position. I'm very proud to say that we delivered on each of these delicate challenges.

I want to acknowledge those community leaders who stood up for what they believed, those congregants who sup-

ported their fellow members, those members who found a way to show their support, and our Rabbi and Education Director who represented all parties in a thoughtful manner.

These truly are times of change and growth within our community, culture, and political landscape. And even if you choose to believe that such change and growth are subject to debate and scrutiny, the fact remains that we are a congregation of individuals are get involved, and support one another.

I'm very proud of the messages sent by B'nai Abraham during this issue-turned-almost-crisis, and I'm very proud of the way that our synagogue conducted itself – individually, and as a group. We really were put to the test in all of this. I think we Aced it.

Charlie Weiss
Temple President

Community News & Announcements



**Film:
When
Where**

When Comedy Goes To School
Opening Friday-Sunday, November 29th through December 1st in
ACME Screening Room / 25 South Union Street / Lambertville,
NJ 08530 / (609) 397-0275

Featuring

Robert Klein, Jerry Lewis, Jerry Stiller, Sid Caesar, Jackie Mason, Mort Sahl and Larry King, Marc Maron

This documentary presents an entertaining portrait of this country's greatest generation of Jewish comedians, all of whom make appearances in the film, sharing hilarious and personal experiences.

Why are there so many Jewish comedians? In the 1970's when Jews represented 3% of the U.S. population, they made up 80% of professional comedians. Why is it that a nation which once laughed at the folk humor of Will Rogers, ended being captivated by the urbane parodies of "Seinfeld"? Is there a common denominator that made some Jewish-Americans comedy legends? What is their legacy? And in the immortal words of Butch Cassidy, "Who are those guys?"

The answer to these questions lies in the Catskill Mountains – comedy boot camp for American humor. Through archival clips and interviews and performances by comedy greats like Jerry Stiller, Sid Caesar, Larry King and Jackie Mason this entertaining exploration of American Jewish comedy pays homage to the Catskills' greats and how they influenced the next generation of Jewish comedians including Joan Rivers, Woody Allen and a very young Jerry Seinfeld.

Sisterhood Officers

Sisterhood President
Randy Bloom

Vice President
Debby Weiss

Treasurer/Financial Scty
Marcy Schwartz

Recording Secretary
Ellen Wehrman

Corresponding Secretary
Patricia Light-Tolomeo

Trustees
Susan Giachetti
Susan Roth

Sisterhood News & Announcements

Join Us: Karen Nissim, florist extraordinaire, will make Thanksgiving centerpieces with you on Monday, November 25. This is always a popular meeting and the centerpieces are beautiful. There will not be a meeting in December, but plan to gather again January 13.

The book discussion meeting for this year will be held Monday, March 10. We will read two books this year. I Am Forbidden by Anouk Markovits is a novel about being a woman in the Satmar community. Unorthodox by Deborah Feldman is a memoir about growing up in the Satmar community. Robin Affrime and I found these books to be disturbing and thought-provoking and we look forward to discussing them with you.

Be sure to read about the blood drive and volunteer to help if you can. Also, please participate in the personalized Haggadah fundraiser- it is a great gift for grandchildren or a family Seder.

Happy news: Nate and Alyson Zeitz welcomed Elliot Samuel to their family on October 18 and Josh and Angela Zeitz and big sister, Lily, welcomed Naomi Elaine to their family on October 21. Everyone, including Grandpa Carl, is thrilled!

~Randy Bloom

Get well to Charyl Morginstin- we are so happy that your surgery went well!

Blood Drive: The Temple/Sisterhood American Red Cross Blood Drive will take place Monday, December 23 from 2:30 to 7:30. There will be a bloodmobile parked in front of the Temple. The building will be open, but only for the blood drive workers and if we need a waiting area for donors. If you are able to make blood drive phone calls, put up posters, or sit at the building for any time during the day of the drive, please contact Randy immediately. In addition, if each Temple family makes an effort to provide one pint of blood, we will make our goal. Please let your family and friends know that we are having this drive and ask them to schedule a donation. The need for blood is very great throughout the year, but particularly in December. Go to redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment now. Thank you.

Haggadah fundraiser: We are doing a quick and easy Passover fundraiser this year. The Sisterhood will get 20% of the cost of your order when you order a personalized Haggadah with either a family name or first name. You order directly from www.PersonalizedHaggadahs.com. Simply place your order online and select "Temple B'nai Abraham" from a pull down menu at check out. Haggadahs will be shipped directly to the purchaser prior to Passover. Haggadahs are \$11.50 and orders should be made prior to March 30, 2014. Every child would be thrilled with a Haggadah that has his or her name on it! Randy will leave a sample Haggadah at the Temple so that you can check it out.

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Message**

We're excited – we're going to Israel!
The Reconstructionist movement is planning a trip to Israel May 14-21. We want your members to join us.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly. More information and a full trip itinerary can be found on [the RRC website](http://theRRCwebsite.com). Thank you!

Barbara G. Lissy
Assistant Vice President for Development
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
215 576 0800 x 155

Sisterhood Donations

- In memory of Sol Kushner from Sandy and Bruce SchwartzBird
- In memory of Bettie Schwartzberg from Marcy Schwartz and Rick Shain
- In memory of Loretta Klein from Susan and Tom Giachetti
- In memory of Sol Kushner from Bonnie Goldman and Steven Lederman
- In memory of Bettie Schwartzberg from Bonnie Goldman and Steven Lederman

Temple Donations

- In memory of Bettie Schwartzberg from Linda Bowker, Anita Berson, Betsy Ramos
- In memory of Viola Meskin from Michael Scolaro and Randye Bloom
- In memory of Sol Kushner from Marlene Lavine
- In memory of Bettie & Aaron Schwartzberg from Marianne and William Bird
- In memory of Joseph Rothman from Robin & Steve Affrime
- In memory of Rebecca Gale Eileen Gale
- In memory of Gerald Rosen from Michael & Marcia Rosen
- In memory of Bettie Schwarzberg from Betsy Ramos
- In memory of Sidney Klepner from Len & Liz Klepner

Yahrzeits for Winter 2013

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Nov. 29 th | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lillian Morginstin, mother of Sid Morginstin • Pauline Schwartz, grandmother of Phyllis Chudoff • Max Kamer, father of Isadore Kamer |
| Dec. 13 th | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ella Kessler, mother of Henry Kessler • Lawrence Bowker, husband of Linda Bowker and father of Jonathan Bowker |
| Dec. 20 th | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eudell Rod, friend of Linda Bowker • Evelyn Rothman, mother of Robin Affrime |
| Dec. 27 th | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanche Cantor, mother of Ray Cantor • Bernard Zeichner, father of Stan Zeichner • Julius Bloom, father of Randye Bloom • Jacob Epstein, great-uncle of Brian Epstein • Shyrle Kushner, wife of Sol Kushner • Jennie Groveman, mother-in-law of Seena Groveman |

Old Prayer Books & Kippot

Old prayer books, Talle-sim, kippot, or other religious items that are no longer needed should be buried. Please place these items into the box (by the sanctuary stairs). Items will be brought to the local Chabad House for burial. \$5 donations are appreciated.

Siddur & Tallit Donations

A new siddur (prayer book) can be purchased in honor of or in memory of someone for \$35. A tallis (prayer shawl) can be purchased for \$60. Please contact Marcia Rosen at: mjanrosen@comcast.net

Memorial Plaques

Plaques are available for \$250. To order a plaque, send the following to TBA: Marcia Rosen, Plaque Chairman
PO Box 245
Bordentown, NJ 08505
or:
mjanrosen@comcast.net.

English name of loved one, Hebrew name of loved one and date of death in the English calendar. Once the plaque has been installed, you will be billed. Plaques will not be moved from one board to the other.



Supermarket Gift Card Program

It is always the season for sharing and giving. Please share with the Temple by purchasing your gift cards from Acme or ShopRite for your New Year's celebration.

Please make checks payable to **Temple B'nai Abraham** and send to: **Marsha Dowshen / 502 Farnsworth Ave., Bordentown, NJ 08505 / (609) 298-5306**. Your cards will be sent to you the same day.

“The habit of giving only enhances the desire to give.”

~ Walt Whitman



Tot Shabbat

**Friday evenings, 6:00 PM
Coming Up: December 13th
Craft: Tzedakah Boxes**



Includes candle lighting, potluck dinner, story time, a theme-related craft and songs. If you need any additional information, or would like to volunteer to help clean up or set up, please contact Kami Knapp at: kami.knapp@googledoc.com.

Tikkun Olam / Social Action

TBA continues to make meaningful contributions to hunger relief in our area, and YOU can be part of it! Here are ways to help:

- Donating boxes of granola bars or cans of tuna or chicken for our monthly contribution to grocery bags for motel residents.
- Any non-perishable food items are welcome for the St. Mary's Food Pantry, just place them in the baskets at the temple.
- We deliver hot meals prepared by the Friends Meeting in Crosswicks to the Pine Motel on the first Thurs. of every month.

All of these efforts are interfaith collaborations with area worship centers. Together we can make a difference!

Monthly Oneg Hosts

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| December 14 th | Karen & Neil Nissim / Lamonsoff |
| December 20 th | Caldwell / Rosenthal |
| January 18 th | Morginstin / Eric & Kristi Schwartz |
| January 24 th | Osman / Ramos |

Fundraising

EXCITING NEWS!!

We have finally begun the temple and sisterhood fundraiser cookbook. The first Temple B'nai Abraham cookbook was printed in the 1970s, the second in 1987, and now we will commemorate our centennial year. We are working with a company called Morris Press and have the ability to type recipes directly into the website with a specific password that denotes our project. Anyone will have the ability to type their recipes into the project and then a small committee will review the recipes and do final editing. This will help us avoid 6 brisket recipes and 20 brownie recipes. It is important that the book be well balanced with a variety of appetizers, vegetables, soups, salads, entrees, and desserts. We might also want to have a specific area for Holiday fare. If you are interested in working with Randye and Robin on this cookbook, please send us an email to let us know how you would like to help [Randye: mikerandy@gmail.com; Robin: raffrime@gmail.com].

If you have a recipe that you would like to be considered for the cookbook, go to www.typensave.com and insert the **username: TBAS** and the **password: plate294**. Anyone can contribute a recipe and we highly

encourage you to put in recipes from your treasured family traditions. A few guidelines: Recipes must be able to be made kosher so no pork, ham, or bacon, and the recipe cannot include both meat and milk together. That said, recipes can be adjusted to be made kosher. If you have a recipe that you would like to share, but aren't sure if it is kosher or how it can be adapted, please contact us. This is a labor of love and we will be more than happy to help you.

We encourage everyone in the Temple B'nai Abraham community to be a part of this fundraiser by contributing recipes. In order for this to be a successful fundraiser and to cover the first printing, each member or family of temple and/or sisterhood will be responsible for buying a minimum of 5 books that the member can either give as gifts or sell to friends and family. The exact cost per book is not yet determined, but we hope to keep it in the \$10.00 range. This cookbook will represent the entire Temple B'nai Abraham community and family and friends - so please join in and share your best recipes.



“As a child my family’s menu consisted of two choices: take it or leave it.”

~ Buddy Hackett

Donations

Temple Cards - If you wish to have a Temple joy or sorrow card sent in honor or memory of someone, please contact Randye Bloom by e-mail or phone. She will need the name and address of the person receiving the card, the occasion, and name of the honoree or deceased. The minimum donation is five dollars. There are get well cards as well as cards for any occasion. The donation for the card may be sent directly to Mike Rosen with a notation of what it is for and the check is payable to the Temple.

Other Announcements

- For Hanukkah and other gifts please visit our “gift shop” for Hanukkah candles, menorahs, etc.
- **We would like to thank Rabbi Julie for her leadership and guidance in the complex situation of the school district issue, and also for speaking on the Interfaith panel.**

Rabbi's Message to the BOE

Good evening. My name is Julie Pfau, and I am the Rabbi of Temple B'nai Abraham here in Bordentown – a community I've served in various capacities since 2006. I am here tonight to respectfully request that the board stand by the decision to keep religious songs from public school concerts.

As a religious leader, and as a lover of music, I know that song is a powerful way to forge and express a spiritual connection, and to deeply internalize messages about God and about the human relationship with the divine. Music is one of the most powerful vehicles for prayer, and it is used in many traditions and in a variety of forms for this very reason. In perhaps countless churches around the world, singing hymns and songs praising Jesus is an act of worship and religious devotion.

Let's make no mistake about it – proclaiming Christ as messiah, in song or otherwise, is a profound statement of faith. It is NOT a neutral act. To claim, as some have done over the past weeks, that it isn't a big deal, that anyone should be able to do it without any trouble, is an attempt to portray this statement of faith as somehow meaningless. Doing so is a hollowing out of the Christian faith and the Christian message. It devalues it, it belittles it. I can't even understand why a Christian would want to hollow out the beautiful meaning of a song that exists to deliver the power of their gospel.

But either way, whether it is portrayed as mere empty words, or whether it is portrayed as an expression of a powerful connection to God, asking children of other religions, or of no religion, to make the proclamation of Christ as messiah as a part of a public school curriculum is inappropriate.

I am wearing my rabbinic hat right now, but I want to switch hats for a moment – In addition to being a Rabbi here in Bordentown, I am also an Instructor and PhD student in the Department of Religion at Temple University. I not only study many world religions, but am in a position where I teach world religions to students in a secular educational setting. I can tell you that teaching *about* religion looks very different.

As an Instructor, it is not appropriate for me to ask my students to *engage in* any particular religious practice as part of their learning process. We might ask students to observe some religious services of their choosing; we might study a hymn or a prayer or a chant; but we do not require students to say the prayers or sing the hymns or chant the mantras. ***Students are able to approach the material from whatever spiritual and emotional distance feels safe and appropriate to them.*** If a student happens to feel a particular level of religious devotion as they study some material connected to their faith, of course they have that right. Wonderful. ***But that choice should be theirs.*** If this is true for college students, how much more so should it be true for elementary school children!

Although I am passionately interested in the legalities, and would love to address them, I am not going to do that right now. Because I don't see this as merely a legal matter – ***I see it as a matter of profound respect for the individual student. Which is not only an ethical issue, but is also the foundation for good pedagogy, for good teaching practice.*** Much as I consider it absolutely vital to respect and preserve the physical boundaries of my students, so too do I consider it vital to preserve and respect the spiritual boundaries of my students. Students should be provided a safe space to learn and grow, and violating boundaries is counterproductive to that goal, and contrary to the educational philosophy of student-centered learning. ***I can see no positive educational purpose, secular or otherwise, in violating those boundaries.***

It doesn't matter what *my* beliefs are – I have many outlets for expressing my religious devotion outside of the classroom, outside of the school. So too do Christians. This is not about a war on Christmas, regardless of what Sarah Palin might argue in her forthcoming book or what the Alliance Defending Freedom might try to claim. Even if we wanted one, it would fail! Christmas is everywhere; it's not going anywhere! And I can tell you that many members of the Jewish community find a great deal of beauty in the symbolism and music of this season, and are happy to celebrate the more cultural aspects of Christmas along with their neighbors and loved ones. For those who are celebrating their savior – please do so with joy and devotion! Sing of it in your churches, go caroling, sing along with the radio (after all, these songs will be on continuously for the next month or so)!

But why, *why* would you, as part of a public school curriculum, expect an elementary school student to either engage in a practice that is a violation of her or his religious beliefs, or alternately, to be excluded, set apart, and potentially stigmatized by refusing to participate?!

It isn't good pedagogy, and frankly, I don't think it's very kind.



**TEMPLE
B'NAI ABRAHAM**

58 Crosswicks
PO Box 245
Bordentown, NJ 08505
609.298.1527
www.bnai-abraham.org

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shabbat morning services begin at 10:00 a.m. (when there are B'nai Mitzvah, services begin at 9:30 a.m.)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">December, 2013 ~ Kislev / Tevet</p> | | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| No Hebrew School Chanukah: 5 candles | Chanukah: 6 candles | Chanukah: 7 candles | Chanukah: 8 candles | 4:30 pm Hebrew School | 7:30 pm Shabbat Services | |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School | | | | 4:30 pm Hebrew School | 6:00 pm Tot Shabbat | 10:00 am Shabbat Morning Services |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 9 am Sunday School 10 am Hebrew School | | | | 4:30 pm Hebrew School | 7:30 pm Shabbat Services | |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| No Hebrew School |  | | | No Hebrew School | 7:30 pm Shabbat Services | |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| No Hebrew School | | | | 4:30 pm Hebrew School | 7:30 pm Shabbat Services | |