



THE SHOFAR
שׁוֹפָר

United Synagogue of Hoboken

NISSAN / IYAR 5777

APRIL 2017

WILL YOU PASS OVER THE RICE AND BEANS THIS PASSOVER?

by Rabbi Robert Scheinberg



Passover may be the most important holiday of the Jewish year -- and is certainly the most preparation-intensive! You can find a treasure-trove of Passover information on the USH website, including the USH Passover Supplement with the Passover schedule and detailed information about Passover observances. (http://bit.ly/ush_passover_supplement_2017) Also see <http://bit.ly/sederideasforkids2016>, a site created by the USH educational staff with suggestions for making the seder a more engaging experience for all ages!

I wanted to offer some thoughts about an opinion published by Conservative Judaism's Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards last year, regarding Passover food, that got a fair amount of news coverage. **Here is my summary of the issue.**

(Continued on page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sun. Apr. 2, 10:00am Brunch with Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger & Antwan Saca of Roots: *Fostering nonviolence among Israelis and Palestinians*

Mon. Apr 10, 7:00am Service and study session for the Fast of the First Born

Tues. Apr 11, 9:30am Passover morning services

Tues. Apr 11, 7:00pm
Congregational 2nd night seder

Wed. Apr 12, 9:30am Passover morning services

Sat. Apr 15, 8:30pm Film: *Streits: Matzo and the American Dream*

Mon. Apr 17, 9:30am Services for 7th day of Passover

Tues. Apr 18, 9:30am Services for 8th day of Passover

Friday night services 7pm

Saturday morning services
9:30am

See www.hobokensynagogue.org & USH Facebook page for more info on these and other upcoming events!

Syrian Food and Conversation

by Alicia Weinstein

On Sunday, February 26, 2017, the Refugee Committee held its first dinner at the home of Dina Rose, Todd Clear and Jaeli Rose in Jersey City. Our wonderful chef for the evening was Fadila, a Syrian refugee that we met through Bernice at Church World Service. She came with her two daughters who helped her with cooking and the translation as she is still learning English. Her younger daughter and son attend high school and ESL classes in Jersey City and her eldest daughter is mastering the language and culture through her job as a barista at a coffee bar in Exchange Place.



Fadila and her girls are extremely warm and friendly and always had smiles on their faces. The food was delicious and consisted of delicious meat and vegetarian pastries called keba, a succulent chickpea salad called Mexicano, a savory pastry called Fatira and oven cooked rice with pine nuts and hazelnuts. All of the food was fresh, yummy and plentiful. The conversation was joyous as well as realistic as to the challenges faced by many of the refugees. Many attendees felt that this dinner put a face on the refugee crisis.



What a special opportunity this was to make new friends, eat delicious food and learn first-hand what it is like to come here from a foreign land with little English and the need for new employment.

(Continued on page 2)



We had about twenty people in attendance from the committee including Lisa and Ben Zablocki, who organized and led the efforts to bring the dinner to Jersey City that evening. As you will see from the pictures, we all enjoyed our time together and are eager to help again and taste some delicious food. We hope to continue these dinners and to have them rotate among the homes of other synagogue members.

If you are interested in hosting a dinner, please contact Ben Zablocki at zablocki@sociology.rutgers.edu for more information. We hope that more members of the synagogue will be able to have the invaluable experience that we did that evening. Many thanks again to all of our hosts and committee members for their hard work. Hoping to see you at a dinner soon as I miss this delicious food already! Also, if you would like Fadila to cater a party for you, you can also contact Ben at the address listed above. I do not know how she produced all of that food on such a reasonable budget. ☆



An Invitation from USH President, Lauren Blumenfeld

Rabbi Robert Scheinberg has been the beloved rabbi at United Synagogue of Hoboken for twenty years.

My family and I have been so very fortunate to celebrate many happy occasions with him. I recall fondly the Kaplan preschool graduation ceremonies for my boys, Nate and Eli. Even more clearly, I remember when they were called to the Torah as bar mitzvahs. And then, when my parents renewed their vows on their 50th wedding anniversary, Rabbi Rob conducted the ceremony at our house and helped us celebrate. He even fired up our old Casio keyboard and the house came alive with music and song. Fantastic memories all of them!

Recently we had some sad days after the passing of Mike's mom and his brother. Rabbi Rob was there as well, helping us pull through as we struggled with what to do and what to say to each other and even providing advice on logistics.

In a sermon a few years ago, perhaps on Yom Kippur, Rob spoke of the "honey and the sting." I remember thinking at the time that I was lucky because I had really only experienced the honey part of the equation. Of course I knew that one day the sting would come too, and it did.

Through all these experiences, there has been only one person, besides my husband, who knew how to amplify the joy and take away some of the pain. And of course that was Rabbi Rob. My family is fortunate to know him. And I am certain that everyone in the congregation feels as fortunate as I do.

It takes a very special person to help heal the wounds of sorrow, loss, and regret. Rabbi Rob was able to support my family for so many years, with warmth and compassion. He has a unique ability to allow us to take a step back and think and to help each of us become a better person, to make a better community and a better world.

And now it's our time to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Rabbi Rob's leading our congregation. I would like to invite all of you to a special Shabbat service to help us all to give thanks to Rabbi Scheinberg for his personal service to each of us for the last twenty years. ☆



Please consider making a donation of \$118 in his honor. Your donation will assist us in paying for our celebration, as well as creating an endowment for an annual Rabbi Robert Scheinberg Scholar Weekend.

Please make donations online using your credit card or PayPal on our website www.hobokensynagogue.org or drop off checks payable to "United Synagogue of Hoboken" and in the memo write "Rabbi Scheinberg 20th". Please send your donations by April 25, 2017 to be included in the printed program.

*~~ Please join us on Saturday, May 6th at 10am
for services and at the kiddush to follow ~~*

The background:

a. **According to Jewish law**, Jews should abstain from *hametz* (leavened products) on Passover. According to Jewish law, the only substances that can be *hametz* are wheat, barley, rye, oats, and spelt. Thus, a product that has absolutely no wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt content cannot be *hametz*.



b. **Ashkenazic Jews** (Jews from Eastern and Central Europe) have had the practice for several hundred years to also abstain from other foods on Passover, like corn, rice, and beans and other legumes. (Collectively, these additional foods are called *kitniyot*.) Several reasons have been suggested for this practice, including that it is possible to make flour out of these substances and that they could have been stored together with *hametz* or inadvertently mixed with *hametz*. These foods, however, have remained in a separate category from *hametz*. (Whereas *hametz* is actually forbidden according to Jewish law, *kitniyot* are merely customarily not eaten by Ashkenazic Jews.) In general, Sefardic and Mizrahi Jews (Jews who trace their ancestry from Spain, the Mediterranean region, and the Arab world) have not abstained from eating *kitniyot* on Passover.

c. **More than 20 years ago**, Masorti (Conservative) Judaism in Israel went on record declaring that Ashkenazic Jews need not abstain from eating *kitniyot* anymore, in the interests of the unity of the Jewish community, and in light of the fact that the original reasons for abstaining from eating *kitniyot* were questionable. (The author of this opinion was Rabbi David Golinkin, who visited our community in 2015; see http://www.responsafortoday.com/engsums/3_4.htm)

d. **This new opinion** of the Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards (2016) essentially reiterates Rabbi Golinkin's opinion: Ashkenazic Jews who want to follow the Sefardic practice of eating *kitniyot* on Passover should feel free to do so. Ashkenazic Jews who want to continue to abstain from *kitniyot* on Passover are welcome to do so.



Questions that may be on your mind

What does Rabbi Scheinberg think about this ruling?

People who would like to follow this ruling should feel free to do so. In fact, I have been telling this to people for many years. I see this as a very individual decision that will be right for some people and not right for other people -- but there is no question that in my opinion, this decision is consistent with Jewish law and practice as understood in Conservative Judaism.

How will our synagogue policies change?

We do not plan for our synagogue policies to change. Currently, we do not serve *kitniyot* at synagogue functions on Passover, and we will continue not to serve *kitniyot* at our synagogue, as there are many people from our synagogue (including Rabbi Scheinberg) who will continue to refrain from eating them.

If I want to start eating kitniyot on Passover, how can I go about this?

People who want to eat *kitniyot* on Passover according to the guidelines of the Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards will be eating **unprocessed** corn (i.e., fresh corn on the cob), rice, and fresh or dried beans. Eating canned or other processed versions of these foods is not recommended because they can include actual *hametz*.

There are increasing numbers of products available for sale in the United States that are labeled "Kosher for Passover for those who eat *kitniyot*." People who would like to follow these new guidelines should feel welcome to eat products that are so labeled. (People who want to adhere to the traditional abstention from *kitniyot* will not eat products that are labeled 'kosher for Passover for those who eat *kitniyot*.')

You can find more specific guidance in the section of the USH Passover Supplement titled 'Kitniyot,' or in the full responsum of the Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards,

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/2011-2020/Levin-Reisner-Kitniyot.pdf>

Dry Bones



Wishing You a Very Happy Pesach!

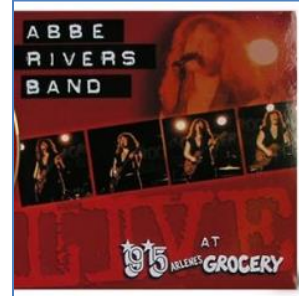
ABBE RIVERS: "LIKE WARM HONEY WITH CRUNCHY BITS"

by Jeremy Morley

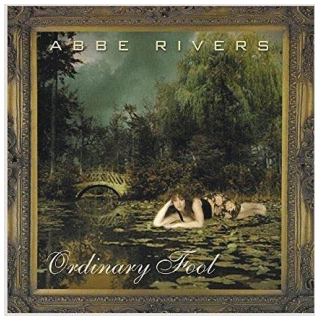
Abbe Rivers is a beloved Hoboken institution who runs a beloved Hoboken institution. She's a hippy at heart. A soulful and joyous rock singer. A talented and passionate songwriter. The owner, with husband Paul, of Empire Coffee, where they serve delicious coffee with a side of joy. A loving wife. A fab mom.... And a devoted member of the United Synagogue of Hoboken fan club.



Abbe grew up with music in her veins. She never decided to be a musician, she was just born that way. She taught herself to play the guitar, and later the drums. But mostly she sings and writes songs. Her style is her own, with bits of Janis Joplin, Melissa Etheridge and Tina Turner thrown in. She's been described as a "strong and turbulent pop/rock female urban singer-songwriter" who is "like warm honey with crunchy bits."



The list of her gigs is endless. She has played at just about every venue around New York that any musician wants to play. Big clubs, small clubs, theaters and tents, piers and gazebos, schools and parks. Her coolest venue? "CBGB's, by far."



In college, the streets were her stage. "The arch in Washington Square has great acoustics and was a particular favorite," she recalls. And the money made from busking – but with Paul and his baseball bat nearby, just in case - was often better than when she performed in West Village clubs.

Her cd, Ordinary Fool, was produced by her longtime friend Julio Fernandez, the guitarist for veteran jazz-fusion group Spyro Gyra. They recorded the tracks live to get an in-the-moment feel, as if she was on stage. The songs are raw-edged, often soulful and a little bit bluesy, true classic rock, "with a little bit of girl-group sweetness thrown in so the going doesn't get too heavy." She recorded her second cd, *The Abbe Rivers Band Live*, at the well-known Lower East Side venue, Arlene's Grocery.

Abbe also performs from time to time in *Brenda Bergman and the Bodacious Ta-Ta's*, which she says is a hipper version of Bette Midler's Harlettes. "It's sort of a drag act," Abbe explains, "except that we're really women." She regularly appears at Hoboken Arts and Music Festivals, at Maxwell's, and at other Hoboken events.



The Bodacious Ta-Ta's



Raised in Brooklyn, Abbe got a taste of Hoboken when she did gigs here at venues such as the Unicorn Bookstore and Beaten Path. She met Paul Shaytin at Brooklyn College and they have now been married for 23 years. They took over Empire Coffee in 1994 and moved here a couple of years later. Another branch of Empire is located on Ninth Avenue in Manhattan. Empire serves fresh-roasted gourmet coffee infused with lots of Abbe's personality. A reporter nailed it by saying, "The store, with its small-town feel, is like a stage for Abbe, and the buzz you get there is as likely to be fueled by her feisty attitude as by caffeine."



Empire Coffee and Tea

Abbe and Paul's son Zac is 12 years old and they are so excited about his forthcoming bar mitzvah. Having a child changed Abbe's life. "Once I had Zac I put all of the energy and emotion and heart, that I had previously put into my songwriting, into my son."

Abbe never expected to be part of a synagogue community. In fact, although her mother was Jewish, she was not raised in a Jewish environment and she had never attended a seder until she met Paul. She and Paul enrolled Zac in Kaplan when he was two years old and they have never looked back. They fell in love with the synagogue community.

(Continued on page 5)



Abbe says, “It was unlike anything that I expected. It was warm and open and creative and fun. The word “rabbi” was always scary to me but I got over that as soon as Rabbi Rob walked in with a guitar and started singing!”

She says that “It really does take a village to raise a child. Being a member of USH and giving Zac the experiences of Kaplan School and Learning Center have tied in beautifully to our life here in Hoboken. I love the strong sense of community and welcome we feel when we walk through those doors. It’s like the extended family and neighborhood I never experienced growing up. I love watching the kids grow up together. I love getting dressed up on high holy days and sharing prayers with neighbors. I LOVE our stained glass windows! (Thank you, Susie!). I love that Rabbi Rob makes Judaism so approachable and that he and his family are such great humanitarians. Grace is a delicious human. Being part of the Purim Spiel was an absolute hoot! I’ve met so many amazing people. USH is a very special place indeed.”☆



On March 4, 2017, USH held our 11th Casino Night, and another wonderful and successful evening was had by all.

Despite freezing temperatures and the Hoboken LepreCon celebration, attendance was high, and the casino was jumping with excitement.

So many people to thank for our success, starting with our amazing, dedicated committee. Thanks to Cindy Altberger, Susan Chait, Rhonda Strosberg, Marni Kriegel, Pamela Strell, Karen Jurman, Gene Steinhardt and Anita Jones-Belle.

Additional thanks to Harriet Taub, David Plotka, Ken Schept, and Jackie Danicki for all of your help. Thanks to Events Plus, Amanda Joshi, Ahmed Tigani, and Ed Madigan, who always make us feel welcome at the Hoboken Elks.

A very special thanks to Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, Rachelle Grossman, Grace Gurman-Chan, Myrna Kasser, Kathy Prussack, Ron Rosenberg, and Lauren Blumenfeld.

Mike Alexis, Christian Gonzalez and Christopher Coromina: We are very lucky to have such a wonderful crew assisting us.

Laura Forino: Simply said, you are the best!

To all of our volunteers before, during and after Casino Night: Jason Altberger, Lauren Calmas, Lexi Coen, Marilyn Freiser, Vivian Greene, Suzanne Heyman, Harry Kafka, Brian Kempner, Russell Kriegel, Louise Kurtz, Adam Laden, Mike Marcello, Rochelle Ohring, Howard Olah-Reiken, Susan Schept, Yvonne Silver, Tracey Schnabel and Adam Strosberg.

And to the USH and Hoboken community for your many years of support...Thank You!

Gary Spector – Casino Night Chair

We owe so much of the success of Casino Night to our numerous sponsors. Many of you have been with us since our very first year, and we are very thankful for your continued support.

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March 11 Rabbi Scheinberg and Rabbi Naomi Kalish in honor of Adina's 18th birthday
March 18 Todd Clear and Dina Rose to honor refugees and immigrants
March 25 Robert and Pamela Strell in honor of Asher's bar mitzvah

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Asher Strell on his bar mitzvah and to his parents, Robert and Pamela Strell and siblings, Coby and Sylvie
Gila Bensason and Cori Namer in honor of the birth of their daughter, Yuval and to her sister, Lior
Jim and Alicia Weinstein on their 20th wedding anniversary celebrated on March 15th
David and Rachel Kalisky, (Shalom Baby class) on the birth of their son, Ethan Noah
Grace Gurman-Chan and Ken Chan on the bar mitzvah of Jade Shelby Elizabeth Chan
Sandy Grossman and Steven Rubin on the bnai mitzvah of Ben and Zack Rubin

CONDOLENCES TO:

Michael Blumenfeld on the loss of his brother, Corey Blumenfeld, and to Mike's wife Lauren, and their children Nathan and Eli
Pierre Kahn on the loss of his grandmother, Nicole Kahn, and to Pierre's wife Aurelie and daughters Elsa and Lauren.
The Calmas family on the loss of Albert Schickler, uncle of Lauren Calmas
Drew Moss on the loss of his mother, Susan Moss, and to Drew's wife Liana, children Hannah and Elle, and father Stewart
Grace Gurman-Chan and her family on the loss of Sheila Weiss, aunt of Grace Gurman-Chan

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Gretchen and Paul Scheiman



Community Seder Tues., April 11, 7:00pm

Join us for our community 2nd night seder! People of all ages, and all levels of familiarity with Passover, are welcome to join us for this traditional seder, led by Rabbi Rob Scheinberg. Come ready to participate!

The meal will be catered, but we need your help for the many other tasks that need to be accomplished. Please choose at least one task for which you can volunteer -- this is the only way we can keep the cost down.

Space is limited! Contact the synagogue office by March 31 (office@hobokensynagogue.org or 201-659-4000). All reservations must be accompanied by full payment. (Please contact Rabbi Scheinberg, 201-855-6696 or rabbi@hobokensynagogue.org, if the cost of the Seder presents a hardship -- we will do our best to accommodate everyone's needs.)



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I would like to volunteer for the following:

- ☐ Helping to kasher the kitchen (Sun., April 9, 10am)
- ☐ Set up the room for the event (after services, Tues., April 11, 12:30pm)
- ☐ Pre-seder food set-up (Tues., 5:30pm)
- ☐ Clean up food as soon as dinner is done
- ☐ Bring leftover food to the Hoboken Homeless Shelter (on Wed. April 12)
- ☐ Serve food during dinner
- ☐ Clean up after seder

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