

CONGREGATION DORSHEI TZEDEK

An Affiliate of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
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President's Column

Marc Steinberg, president@dorsheitzedek.org

With apologies for the repetitive nature of the subject, I want to use my airtime this month to introduce a growth framework that the board and strategic planning groups have found both soothing and helpful in thinking about how to approach community growth. (Those of you who attended the December 3 Members' Meeting can consider this a chance to revisit these ideas.)

The framework was documented in Alice Mann's book *Raising The Roof*, published by the Alban Institute. In a nutshell, Mann organizes her work around four distinct categories based on size of membership into which a congregation can be classified: Family Size, Pastoral Size, Program Size, and Corporate Size. Each size is characterized by several key traits. I've excerpted basic descriptions of the three smaller sizes:

Family size (0-50): A small congregation that operates like an extended family... organized around one or two anchoring figures. Such congregations often have part-time pastors, and their clergy tend to adopt a chaplain role—leading worship and giving pastoral care.

Pastoral size (51-150): A coalition of two or three family and friendship networks unified around the person and role of the pastor [read: Rabbi Toba]. Clergy time is largely taken up maintaining a direct pastoral relationship with each member, coordinating their work of a small leadership circle, personally conducting worship, and leading small-group programs such as Bible [read: Torah] study. The governing board usually operates like a committee, arranging much of the day-to-day life of the congregation. Members recognize each other's faces, know most people's names, and will notice if someone new is present at worship.

Program size (151-400): Known for the quality and variety of its programs. Separate programs for children, youth, couples, seniors, and other age and interest groups provide entry points for a wide range of people. The pastor's crucial role is to recruit, equip, and inspire a small circle of key program leaders—lay and ordained, paid and unpaid.

This ring of leadership might include, for example, the choir director, the church school superintendent, the youth group leader, the coordinator of lay visitors, and the head of a committee that tracks new member incorporation. Working as a team with the pastor, they reach out to involve others as program participants and as leaders. Decision-making is broadly distributed within the wider leadership circle (perhaps 50 people), and pastoral care is shared by laity.

Looking at our own congregation in this context, it seems clear that our path has followed the same direction as the organizations the book describes:

- We began as a small, family-oriented group
- We made the transition from family size to pastoral size when we hired Rabbi Toba and expanded the school.
- We are now on the outer edge of pastoral size and have incorporated some of the signifiers of a program size community.

Mann goes on to describe some of the characteristics of a group in transition and they, too, are remarkably similar to the recent doings of our community. For example:

- Congregations do not grow or decline smoothly, but

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tend to “plateau” at certain predictable levels of attendance.

- Congregations in transition from pastoral to program size can be ambivalent about growth and change.
- The pastoral-to-program size transition is described as a time of stress, where resources are stressed and congregational behavior needs to change to reach the next stage of growth.
- In order to break through an attendance plateau, a congregation must deliberately relinquish familiar patterns of behavior and begin to act as larger congregations act.
- The most important thing a congregation can do to get through the “plateau” phase successfully is to clearly define its identity and goals.

It's probably clear to you by now why we have found this model to be a source of comfort this year, for it suggests that we are not as alone as we sometimes feel. While the Board and other leaders have felt some concern as our membership size has remained static for the past few years, our surveys have shown some ambivalence towards growth, and our resources are stretched across the board, these things are healthy and normal during this time of transition. Fortunately, according to Mann, we're already doing exactly what we need to do in order to move forward by focusing our efforts on strategic planning.

As I've mentioned a few times before, the board recognizes that the community needs to find its way forward through growth and change. I think this model offers us a way to see ourselves from a larger perspective, and I hope that it will help the community as a whole to embrace the notion of becoming a fully-functioning program size congregation.

As the Board and the CDT community continue to work together towards articulating a vision for our future, I want to say that I think the idea of transitioning to a small program size congregation is as appealing as it is challenging. Looking forward, I can imagine reaching a point where our professional staff is not so overtaxed, our lay leaders and volunteers are more frequently engaged in fulfilling congregational work, and the community more broadly supports a range of programs and groups that meet its spiritual, intellectual, and life-cycle needs.

Finally, I offer you a solemn promise: my next column will be about something else entirely.

Members' Meeting

Sunday, December 3; 60 Highland Street
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm; childcare provided

We hope that at least one representative from every CDT household will join us at our first Members' Meeting of 5767! For those who'd like to schmooze before the meeting, we will begin with a potluck dinner at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. If your last name begins A-K, please bring a veggie/dairy/fish main dish. Last names L-Z, please bring a salad (green, grain salad, etc.) **Please bring enough for 12-15 people.** Drinks and dessert will be provided.

We'll begin the meeting at 6:30 pm. We will focus on next steps in our strategic planning process. Dorshei Tzedek is facing some important decisions around growth, finances, and how we develop as a Jewish community in the years ahead. **We need to hear your voice!** We hope that at least one adult member of every CDT household will join us for this important meeting.

Save the Date: the CDT Retreat is June 1-3, 2007!



Mark your calendars now!

All members are invited to the retreat this spring at Camp Ramah in Central Massachusetts, only about an hour's drive from Newton. Adults and children are welcome at

this very special event that only happens every two (or three!) years. Join together to learn, play, sing, dance, and enjoy a special experience together. Please help plan the retreat! Contact **Bill Shorr** today at 617.787.1632 or bill.shorr@gmail.com, or **Betsy Hinden** at 617.325.4716 or bhinden@rcn.com. Thanks!

Contacting Rabbi Toba: Rabbi Toba does not have regular office hours but is available to talk about any spiritual, religious, or personal issues that you might want to discuss. You can contact her at rabbid@dorsheitzedek.org or 617.965.0330 x2. If she is unavailable, there will be a rabbi on-call in case of emergency. The rabbi's voice-mail will have information on how to reach the on-call rabbi.

Shabbat Programs

Unless noted otherwise, all Shabbat programs are held at the Dorshei Tzedek prayer space: 60 Highland Street in the Second Church of Newton, West Newton.

All-ages Erev Shabbat Services and Potlucks



December 8, January 5 (2007), February 9 (special Shabbat Shira program), March 9, April 6, May 4, June 8

Once a month, we gather for a potluck vegetarian dinner, beginning with **candle-lighting at 6 pm**, followed by a musical, all-ages erev Shabbat service **at 6:45 pm**. Please bring a vegetarian/fish main dish or salad to share (enough for 10 – 12 people).

Tot Shabbat

Note that many dates have changed!

*December 2, January 27 (2007), Feb 10, March 17, April 21, May 12
10:45 - 11:30 am, Room 112, Second Church*

Tot Shabbat is for children around the ages of 3-5 and their parents. We do a little singing, a little praying, and celebrating of holidays. And, of course there will be snacks and crafts. Please call Karen Wasserman at 617-325-4716 with any questions.



Junior Congregation

*December 9, January 13 (2007), February 10, March 10, April 7, May 12
10.45 am – 12 noon*

Calling all students grades 3-7 for a wonderful Shabbat experience! Join us for Junior Congregation led by **Elana Rome**. This is a joyful, spirited, service with prayers, music, a Torah skit, and our very own Kiddush (kids only please!). We'll meet in Room 111 (first floor across from the Child Care room). Questions? Call the CDT School at 617.965.5443.

Bat Torah of Cindy Rivka Marshall

December 16, 2006

In approaching my 50th birthday, I decided to act on something I have wanted to do for years, and never did as a kid—learn to read Hebrew and leyn from the Torah. Please join me and my family on December 16, Shabbat Vayeshev and the first day of Hanukkah, as I become a Bat Torah and celebrate my birthday. We hope that the Dorshei Tzedek community will come for the service and the Kiddush lunch following.

—Cindy Rivka Marshall, Kathy Pillsbury, Jeremy and Mikayla

Bar Mitzvah of Yonatan Meschede-Krasa

Please join us on **December 2** when our son Yonatan will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah. Yonatan is an eighth grader at Oak Hill Middle School. He enjoys reading fantasy, play on the computer and design computer games, swimming, photography, and exploring the woods. For his Tikkun Olam project he is volunteering at a soup kitchen. We hope you can join us for kiddush lunch and celebration on this special occasion.—*Daniel Krasa and Tatjana Meschede*

Chesed

If you or someone in your household is ill or in need of support, please contact **Rabbi Spitzer** (617.965.0330) or **Jackie Fleischman** of the Chesed Committee (617.332-5433 or jackief@rcn.com).

Have you recently had a *mazel tov* moment? Let us know! Please notify the Newsletter Committee of life cycle events, significant accomplishments, or other moments you would like to share with the Dorshei Tzedek community. E-mail your announcement to dtnews@yahogroups.com.

For congregants experiencing financial difficulties, help is available through the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. This fund is administered solely by the rabbi and is completely confidential. If you are in need of assistance, please call **Rabbi Spitzer** at 617.965.0330 x2.

Refuah Sh'lemah

The community of Congregation Dorshei Tzedek sends blessings and prayers for healing, *refuah sh'lemah*, to **Zach Carson**, **Marcia Okun**, and **Shari Zimble**. May healing and comfort come to you and to those who care for you.

Condolences

To **Jill Volk**, on the death of her beloved grandmother, **Rose Rosen**, may her memory be for a blessing.



Mazel tov

Mazel tov to **Cindy Shulak-Rome**, on her election to the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF) Executive Committee, and to **Chayim Herzig-Marx**, on his election to the JRF Board as Northeast Regional President. We are proud of your service to the movement on our behalf!

Todah Rabah

A huge Todah Rabah to **Ally Cherkasky** for her invaluable assistance in putting membership packets together. She is the consummate volunteer!—*Marla Lichtman, CDT Administrator*

Thanks to the following members who sponsored Kiddush during November:

Jeffrey & Beth Green
Jennifer Levine
Elaine Bresnick
Linda Kramer & Alex Fried
Susan Bernstein & Jodie Siegel
Ilene Spiro & Ira Schor
Andy Diamond

CDT Chanukah Party—Fun for All Ages

Sunday, December 17, 3 pm – 5 pm, FUSN



CDT's Annual Chanukah Party will have fun activities including crafts, games, and a **crazy, yiddish magician** for children aged preschool to 6th grade, as well as lighting candles, and singing our favorite Chanukah songs with our guitar-toting Rabbi Toba!. Did we mention a *shuk* (market) with crafts, holiday gift items, and books created by/authored by CDT members? By the way, its not too late to reserve a table for the *shuk*—you can sell your favorite baked goods and give the proceeds to *tzedakah*, sell your favorite poncho designs, homemade cards, candles, dachshund jackets—anything!—and kids' creations are very welcome! **Sufganiot (jelly doughnuts)** aplenty, of course, will be our holiday treat. **So come enjoy the festivities!**

First Light: Chanukah Potlucks

Share the first night of Hanukkah with fellow members of CDT. Friday night, December 15th Potluck Shabbat dinners in members homes are now in formation in a neighborhood near you!

More information to come via email, so please save the date. If you would like to attend or host a pot-luck on December 15, please RSVP to Ami Gordon at amisgordon@comcast.net by December 7. If you can volunteer to lead a Chanukah activity (dreidle, stories, latke- tasting contest, etc.) at one of the potlucks, please include that information in your email to Ami as well as information about the number of people in your family and any restrictions (for example, pet allergies, dietary needs).



Rosh Chodesh Celebration

Thursday December 21, 7 pm – 9 pm

Home of Linda Kramer, 29 Symmes Street, Roslindale

The celebration of the new moon is a day historically associated with women's renewal and celebration. In recent decades, *Rosh Chodesh* has become an occasion for Jewish women to gather for learning, ritual and spiritual exploration, and to mark life passages. On Thursday December 21, CDT women are invited to celebrate the new moon that coincides with the winter solstice. Please join us from 7 pm to 9 pm at the home of Linda Kramer, 29 Symmes Street in Roslindale. To RSVP or for questions contact Linda at lindalex@earthlink.net, or 617.327.6156. Newcomers are welcome at all *Rosh Chodesh* celebrations!



Tikkun Olam: Moving From Stories to Action

Esther Kohn, esthercfs@hotmail.com

December 3, 10:30 am – 12 pm

Congregational Assembly (GBIO), Temple Emmanuel

Since last spring, Dorshei Tzedek members have been telling stories about the economic and social pressures in our lives, and in doing so, have discovered that we are not alone in our everyday struggles. We've shared deep concerns—concerns about elders and children, financial insecurity, and about sources of isolation—and we've begun the challenging and miraculous process of joining our power with other members, and eventually, with other congregations in GBIO, to heal that which is broken in our society.

The following comments are broad brushstrokes of our gathering on October 29, when over thirty CDT members assembled to learn how our personal challenges stem from problems that reach beyond our individual lives.

To start us off, Ann Bookman, author of *Starting in Our Own Backyards: How Working Families Can Build Community and Survive the New Economy*, discussed how changes in work and family life over the past 60 years have led to a “mismatch” between the workforce and the workplace. Many of our personal stories can be located in this description—the challenges of balancing work and home responsibilities and the difficulty in finding quality, affordable childcare.

Ann outlined several economic trends affecting the workplace that have weakened the support employers can offer employees. For example, globalization has threatened job security in many sectors. Workers across class lines find

that retirement and job security can disappear quicker than you can say Enron. Ann's research has led her to see the need for people to work in community to rebuild the supports lacking for families.

In the second part of the program, Rebecca Gifford of GBIO, described a framework to show the process of moving from personal stories to public action. She also described three sectors that play a role in all of our lives—the public sector, the private sector, and the civic sector (of which Dorshei Tzedek and GBIO are a part.) In the effort to connect our personal stories to larger social issues, we tried to identify the “public actors” in our stories—the people who make decisions that affect our lives. It was not easy. We realized we often did not know the person or organization that might be responsible for the everyday challenges in our lives concerning our elders, children, and financial insecurity.

The last part of the meeting outlined next steps for both external and internal actions.

First, we are continuing to gather information on Elder Care, on a GBIO-wide level through house meetings and surveys. Also, you are invited (and encouraged) to attend a Temple Emmanuel meeting on **Sunday, December 3** from **10:30 am to 12 pm** for a Congregational Assembly. This is an exciting opportunity to join our voices with people from other congregations who are in a similar process of clarifying specific issues to address related to social and economic challenges.

Finally, we generated a list of creative ways to build on the resources we share in our congregation. Based on this list and further reflection, we will embark on congregational initiatives to address our concerns. We have plenty to tend to, right here in our own backyard.

Membership

Welcome New Members

We welcome **Irene Cramer** to CDT. Irene has lived in Massachusetts since 1977, but she and her 11-year-old Australian Terrier, Lucy, moved back to the Boston area just 7 years ago where they make their home in a close-knit neighborhood of Newton Upper Falls. Irene, a former mental health clinician and administrator, returned to school at Brandeis in the mid-1980s for a Ph.D. in public policy. She is now a researcher with the Veterans' Administration and Boston University School of Public Health, evaluating new models of care for the VA. She also specializes in organizational change in healthcare organizations. An avid photographer, Irene is looking forward to becoming an active participant in GBIO and other CDT initiatives once her heavy travel schedule slows down.

We are pleased to welcome **Stacey, Bruce, Rachel, and David Gore** to the congregation. They participated in their first High Holy Days at CDT this year, and very much appreciated the warm and open welcome extended to them by so many members. Ultimately they were drawn by their affinity with the Reconstructionist view of Jewish life and the vibrancy of the congregation. They have lived in Newtonville for 15 years. Stacey is originally from Long Island, and Bruce is from California.

They were members of Temple Emanuel in Newton for ten years, and Rachel became a Bat Mitzvah there. David completed his studies at the Brandeis Jewish Education Program and became a Bar Mitzvah this past June. He's excited to be a member of CDT's inaugural class of the Ma'apilim eighth grade program. Rachel is a sophomore at Newton North, and David is in eighth grade at Bigelow Middle School. They both love musical and dramatic theater and are actively involved in their schools' theatrical productions. As a family, they enjoy hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing and love all kinds of music. They believe that being part of a spiritual and cultural community is a wonderful thing, and look forward to participating and growing within CDT.

Meryl and Jonathan Sacks Say Farewell

Congregations are dynamic. We see it with each birth, wedding and shivah that we share. It happens with each member's new challenge

This month Jonathan and I are moving to New Mexico. Albuquerque drew us in with the climate, environment and economics. But I am delighted to report that there are 6 Jewish congregations not counting Rabbi Shefa Gold's C-Deep community a few miles from town.

Please come share a sunset with us. My email will stay the same—merylkahn@pobox.com, as will my professional phone number, 877.901.8589. Hasta la vista, Chaverim.

—*Meryl Kahn Sacks*

שלום

Passport to Israel: Reminder

Elaine Landes, erose116@yahoo.com

Passport to Israel payments are due by January 10, 2007. If your child was enrolled in third grade, your payment is \$200; if your child was in seventh grade at enrollment, then your payment is \$400. Checks should be made payable to: Congregation Dorshei Tzedek and sent to Marla at CDT, 60 Highland Street, West Newton, MA 02465. If your child is in tenth grade (or above), no payment is due. Questions or need more information? Please call Elaine Landes at 617.969.7703.

Adult Education

National Yiddish Book Center Tour

December 10, 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm in Amherst, MA
 Jeff Kichen, jmkich@aol.com

Together we will take a guided tour and learn how the Center has recovered over 1.5 million Yiddish books and established or strengthened Yiddish collections at more than 450 of the world's great libraries. We will view the book depository and the Center's fascinating cultural displays. There will be time to browse at the Center's gift shop and then at 2 pm we will attend an author's talk featuring Allegra Goodman in conversation with Ilan Stavans.

Allegra Goodman is the author of *Kaaterskill Falls*, *Paradise Park*, and *Intuition*. Her work has also appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Slate*, and the *American Scholar*. Named by the *New Yorker* as one of the twenty best writers under 40, she is also the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award and the *Salon* magazine award for fiction.

The National Yiddish Book Center is located on the campus of Hampshire College in Amherst and is little less than two hours from Newton. Directions to the Center can be found at www.yiddishbookcenter.org. If you are interested in car pooling with other CDT members from 60 Highland Street in Newton or from another location, send an e-mail to Jeff Kichen at jmkich@aol.com.

Marcia Freedman

"Prospects for Peace in the Middle East: The Role of American Jews"

Thursday, January 11, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm,
 CDT, 60 Highland Street, Newton

Marcia Freedman, National President of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, and former member of Knesset, will address what opportunities exist at the present time to move the peace process forward, and what stands in its way. What can we, the American Jewish community, do to secure greater engagement by our government in brokering a peace between Israel, the Palestinians, Syria, and Lebanon?

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, is the largest American Jewish grassroots organization advocating for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution. Marcia Freedman, born in New Jersey, emigrated to Israel in 1967, and served in the Knesset from 1973 – 1977. She

is the author of *Exile in the Promised Land*, a memoir, as well as numerous articles and reviews. She currently makes her home in Berkeley, CA.

Shabbat Morning Study

with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Saturday mornings at 8:45 am, 60 Highland Street
 December 9, January 20, February 10, March 10, April 7,
 May 12

Join Rabbi Spitzer for discussion of the weekly Torah portion at this once-a-month study opportunity before Shabbat morning services. No text study experience necessary! Bring your own coffee/tea and a few good questions.

Judaism and Practice

with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Wednesdays, 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm, 60 Highland Street

In this ongoing, weekly class, we are exploring a wide variety of Jewish texts with the intention of developing practices in our daily lives that cultivate greater wisdom, clarity, patience, gratitude and compassion. Topics include: blessings and morning practices; meditation; eating; Shabbat; mindful use of speech and other ethical teachings. This class is intended for folks at any level of Jewish observance (or non-observance), and with any range of comfort with all things spiritual! It is fine to join the class in progress.

Letting God In: Study and Practice

with Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Thursday mornings, 8 am – 9 am, 60 Highland Street

"Where does God live?" asked the Rabbi of Kotzk. And he answered his own question: "Where we let God in." What does it mean to "let God in," if we're not even sure if we believe in God? How do we "let God in" in the face of skepticism, rationalism, doubt? What are the obstacles to "letting God in" to our lives, our hearts? What are practices that we can cultivate to begin to experience—or to experience more deeply—a Godly presence in our lives? In this ongoing weekly class we explore these questions through text study and practice. Bring your questions, your life experience, your willingness to learn and explore! The class is still open to new members.

National Havurah Committee Winter Retreat

December 15-17, 2006, Craigville Conference Center,
Cape Cod

The National Havurah Committee has announced the details of its 20th annual Havurah! Winter Retreat. This year's retreat features sessions with topics ranging from Social Justice and Repairing the World, to Music, Meditations, Text Study, and more. All topics are accessible with a range of Hebrew knowledge from "none" to "advanced." A complete course listing is available in the retreat brochure, available online at: www.havurah.org. A children's program, paralleling the adult's program, will be provided by experienced personnel. Meals are kosher, dairy/fish.

The retreat is being held at the Craigville Conference Center, which has hosted spiritual retreats for many denominations for over 100 years. It is comprised of a collection of quaint 1890's-style Cape-Cod houses and picturesque village lanes, located on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic. The Center has nature preserves and ponds on either side, and is located about three miles from Hyannis.

What Now? Candid Thoughts on the Middle East

with **Leonard Fein**

December 13, 7 pm – 9 pm (Doors open 6:30p m)
Temple Shalom, 175 Temple Street, West Newton
www.templeshalom.org/welcome/directions.php

Join longtime Jewish teacher, writer, analyst, and activist Leonard Fein who will share his thinking on questions such as: For those who care deeply about Israel, what are the implications of recent events in the Middle East? How do we understand Israel's actions in Lebanon and Gaza? What is the status of democracy in Israel? What actions are open to U.S. Jews who wish to see Israel thrive and believe efforts to achieve a negotiated two-state solution is the most hopeful course? This event is sponsored by Brit Tzedek v'Shalom and co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council.

Leonard Fein is the founder of *Moment* magazine, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, and the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy. His writing has covered a broad range of Jewish subjects and he currently authors a syndicated Op Ed column for the *Forward*. He has served as an advisor to many universities, Jewish organizations, presidential, and congressional campaigns.

Dorshei Tzedek Film Club



Tuesday December 12, 7:30 pm
Home of Emily Sper, 9 Frederick Street,
Newtonville

Please join us on **Tuesday December 12** for the Dorshei Tzedek Film Club next film of the season. We meet at 6:30 (optional) for soup and schmoozing. (We will supply a nice vegetarian soup and cold drinks.) The film will begin at 7:30 pm.

Our film is *Nina's Tragedies* (2005), *Ha-Asonot Shel Nina* (1 hour, 15 minutes). This film offers a serio-comic look at an Israeli teenager's coming-of-age, while centering on his attraction to his beautiful but emotionally fragile Aunt Nina, the film is an instant classic of the growing pains genre...Thematically, "Nina's Tragedies" deals with all the issues that matter: birth and death, life and love, marriage and divorce, infatuation and passion, joy and heart-break. The film constructs a topsy-turvy world that's at once real and surreal, grave and light, serious and comic. Winner of 11 Israeli Academy Awards and Best Film and Screenplay awards at the Jerusalem International Film Festival.

We have films every month. Here is our schedule:

Jan. 20: *Golub: Late Works Are the Catastrophes*
Feb. 17: *La Petite Jerusalem*
Mar. 17: *Lost Embrace*
Apr. 14: *The Sky is Falling*
May 19: *Alila*

If you have any questions, contact Stan Fleischman, 617.332.5433, stanf@rcn.com, or Emily Sper, 617.332.5033, emily@emilysper.com.

CDT Sings

Calling all singers! Did you enjoy listening to CDT Sings at High Holiday services? We'd love for you to add your voice to ours as we rehearse new songs and old favorites during the coming year. We'll be rehearsing at 3:30 pm at Elaine Bresnick's on **December 10, January 14, and February 11**. Interested in joining us now or in the future? Contact **Angela Vierling-Claassen** (angelavc@math.harvard.edu) for information and to get on the email list.



JRF News

JRF Convention Report

Our Evolving Jewish Journey: Peoplehood and the Quest for Spiritual Community

Cindy Shulak-Rome, cbsrome@comcast.net



A few weeks ago I attended my fifth JRF Convention. Occurring once every two years, I am reminded anew, each time I participate in Convention, how exciting it is to be part of the Reconstructionist movement. Our programs and calendar at Dorshei

Tzedek are so full and rich, that it is easy to forget or ignore the fact that we are part of this larger organization, which has paved the way for the values and practices of our community. But, in fact, we are affiliated with a vibrant movement where exciting things are happening and innovative thinking and planning is ongoing. Convention is the chance to get a small but intense dose of this!

For me, high points of Convention are many—this year I was particularly inspired by two programs. At the opening plenary session, we heard from four of the movement's rabbinic leaders (including our own Rabbi Toba) on their personal visions for the movement. There was discussion of the path we've traveled and the evolution of Reconstructionism, since first conceived by Mordechai Kaplan, and discussion of what it means for us to build Jewish communities of meaning and practice as our movement continues to grow and change. It was a condensed version of the "big picture" and future aspirations, and it was a treat to listen to and exchange ideas with each of these talented leaders.

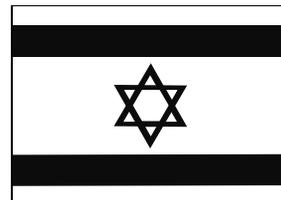
That same evening, we had the opportunity to hear from four Israelis who are creative leaders of pluralistic religious and cultural innovations in Israel. It was enlightening to hear each of them share their experiences and understanding (or lack of it!) of the war with Hezbollah this past summer. More so, I was inspired to learn about programs in Israel that are aimed towards liberal, progressive Judaism and bridging the gap between the very polarized "religious" and "secular" communities in Israel.

And, of course I can't mention JRF Convention, without talking about the *ruach* (spirit) that is so palpable when 400+ Reconstructionist Jews gather to celebrate Shabbat together. This is a most wonderful experience that really

cannot be put into words. The good news is that the next JRF Convention will be in Boston in 2008—so I am looking forward to many of us sharing in the convention experience together at that time!

Reconstructionist Teen Trip to Israel

Join Reconstructionist teens from across North America for an amazing six weeks of exploring Israel! This trip is for entering high juniors and seniors.



The trip will take place **June 26 - August 5, 2007**, including an orientation at Camp JRF, four days in Poland, and 30 days of touring and living in Israel.

After building community together at Camp JRF, participants will spend four days in Poland exploring the grandeur of Jewish life prior to World War II, touching the horror of the holocaust at concentration camps, and witnessing the rebirth of Jewish life in the 21st century. Upon arriving in Israel, they will begin a month-long interactive experience of the land and the people. Based on a civilizational approach, participants will move through history as they find ways in which Jews have lived their lives in Israel throughout the generations. They will spend time in all parts of the country as they climb, swim, sing, hike, learn, and explore their way through the country. Participants will have an opportunity to experience Shabbat in Jerusalem, see the sunrise over Masada, participate in tikkun olam projects with their Israeli peers, marvel at the natural wonders of the land, discuss the realities of life in contemporary Israel, and connect with Reconstructionist rabbis living and working in Israel. They will then bring their learning back to the Reconstructionist youth community in the United States - spending Shabbat at Camp JRF so that they can share their experiences, their stories, and their excitement about this unforgettable summer. For more information, go to <http://noarhadash.org/israel.htm>.

Tikkun Olam Opportunity: Volunteer with Dorshei Tzedek and Project Ezra on Christmas Day

Provide a break for Christian volunteers and staff so that they will be able to celebrate Christmas with family and friends. This *tikkun olam* opportunity is made possible by a unique project sponsored by the Synagogue Council. The Council's Project Ezra is a volunteer program that is aimed at promoting inter-denominational understanding, dialogue, and collaborative efforts. All Jewish volunteers (from various congregations) will be working together at sites all over Greater Boston. The sites include soup kitchens, shelters, hospitals, and nursing homes. If you would like to volunteer with Congregation Dorshei Tzedek's members, contact Emily or David Shumsky at emily.shumsky@verizon.net or 617.332.3454. We would love it for single people, couples, or families to volunteer. Children 6 and over can work with their parents. *Please indicate to us how many in your party and what are your first and second choices. Also give us your name, email and/or phone number (preferably both).*

Several shelters need our help:

- **First Church Shelter in Cambridge** (a small shelter for men) is looking for 6 volunteers to serve breakfast from 9 am to 12 pm
- **Bishop Street House in Jamaica Plain** (a small shelter for homeless women) is looking for 4 people to serve lunch at 1 pm
- **Long Island Shelter in Boston Harbor** (can be reached by car from Quincy) needs 10 people to serve lunch from 10:30 am to 3 pm. It is a very large shelter with over 375 beds. People will be decorating, organizing gifts, and serving a meal.
- **Woods Mullen Shelter in South Boston** (a large shelter with over 180 beds) is looking for 5 people to serve lunch, also from 10:30 am to 3 pm.

Carpools can be arranged for those who would like to ride with others.

“The Seventy Faces of Torah” Contemporary Judaism in the State of Israel

January 3-14, 2007

Participate in a unique and special opportunity to express our oneness with the people of Israel, to explore our diversity and to be touched by the beauty and vibrancy of the land of Israel. This trip is in celebration of the 20th anniversary of Unity Missions to New York by the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts. Mission Highlights include:

- Senior Tour Educator and Scholar-in-Residence
- Unique program focusing on the different expressions of Judaism in Israel
- Participation of Unity Mission alumni in Jerusalem and Haifa
- Customized sourcebook with readings, texts, maps
- Pre-Mission video-conference with Haifa
- Dr. Jesse Hefter, President, and Alan Teperow, Executive Director—tour leaders

Sponsored in part through a generous grant from CJP's Boston-Haifa Connection. For a brochure or additional more information, please contact: 617.244.6506, ext. 19, www.synagoguecouncil.org.

**Nediv Lev
General Fund**

(including donations to the Nadiv Lev campaign)

Diana & Richard Fisher-Gomberg

Lauren Gibbs

*In gratitude to Ewa Maniawski Tuschman for her wise
and caring compassion*

In memory of Edward F. and Hilda S. Kook

Ora Gladstone & Mitchell Silver

*With appreciation to CDT for the friendships that enrich my
life, and for our remarkable Rabbi Toba,
from whom I always learn*

Alissa & Gerald Leonard

*In awe of the gorgeous Torah reading table built by Joel
Reider and the 7th grade boys; In appreciation of the
choir's melodic participation in High Holy Day services*

Lisa Port-White

Jo Radner & Susan Lanser

In honor of the Bat Torah of Cindy Rivka Marshall

Jamie Tessler

*In loving memory of my father, Ted Tessler, on his 25th
yahrtzeit. Your guidance and love remain strong
inside our hearts.*

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Deborah Issokson

Thank you for a lovely Yom Kippur service

Barbara & Jerry Zolit

*In honor of Rabbi Toba and the Dorshei Tzedek commu-
nity for the comfort and support they have given our family.*

*There are many ways to financially support Congregation
Dorshei Tzedek: through contributions to the General
Fund, or to targeted funds such as the School or the Holy
Book Funds. Donations can also be made to the Rabbi's
Discretionary Fund. This fund is not part of the congrega-
tion's operating expenses and is administered solely by
the rabbi. Monies in this fund are used for tzedakah in the
greater community, for special needs of the congregation
(e.g., to buy books or help pay for an adult education pro-
gram), and, most importantly, to help out congregants in
need. These additional contributions should also be made
out to Congregation Dorshei Tzedek, but marked as in-
tended for the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.*

Jewish Vocational Service Employment Help: The Career Moves program at Jewish Vocational Services has redirected its mission to focus on those members of the Jewish community most in need. They are providing low/no-cost customized employment and counseling services to anyone dealing with unemployment or underemployment. They offer coaching, resume, and interview prep, networking contacts, peer support groups, job leads and referrals to employers. For more information, contact Judy Bottkol at jbottkol@jvs-boston.org, or call 617.399.3162.

Jewish Family & Children's Service offers a variety of support groups, including groups for new mothers, gay and lesbian parents of infants, adoption resources, and other services. Visit their website for more information: www.jfcsboston.org.



December Calendar



Date	Time	Event	Kiddush, Notes
Sat Dec 2	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service Bar Mitzvah of Yonatan Meschede-Krasa	<i>Sanctuary Clean-up:</i> Andrew Schiff & Susan Manheim (<i>see page 4</i>)
Sat Dec 2	10 am - 12 pm	Kitah Aleph / Kitah Bet Family Program	FUSN
Sat Dec 2	10 am - 10:45 am	Tot Shabbat	60 Highland St: childcare room 112 (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sun Dec 3	10:30 am - 12 pm	Congregational Assembly (GBIO)	Temple Emanuel: 385 Ward Street, Newton Centre (<i>see page 6</i>)
Sun Dec 3	5 pm - 8:30 pm	New Member Orientation, Potluck Dinner and Members' Meeting 60 Highland St	(<i>Members-Only Event</i>) Lilly Platt, Cheryl Sachs Board Members are requested to attend; new members encouraged to attend! Childcare provided, from 6:30-8:30 pm, in Room 112 (<i>see page 2</i>)
Wed Dec 6	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Dec 7	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Fri Dec 8	6 pm - 8 pm	All Ages Potluck and Erev Shabbat Family Service	Richard Fisher Gomberg, Linda Hsu (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sat Dec 9	8:45 am - 9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Torah Study with Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Sat Dec 9	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service	Barbara Shatkin & Andy Littman, Linette Liebling, Stephen Zisk
Sat Dec 9	10 am - 12 pm	Kitah Aleph / Kitah Bet Classes	FUSN
Sat Dec 9	10:45 am - 12 pm	Junior Congregation with Elana Rome	60 Highland St: Room 111 (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sun Dec 10	12:30 pm - 4 pm	An Afternoon at the National Yiddish Book Center Amherst, Massachusetts	(<i>see page 8</i>)
Sun Dec 10	2 pm - 4 pm	Gan Family Program #3	FUSN
Sun Dec 10	2 pm - 4 pm	Vav Family Program	FUSN
Sun Dec 10	7:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	<i>Members-Only Event</i> , 60 Highland St: Parlor
Wed Dec 13	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Dec 14	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Dec 14	7:30 pm	CDT Strategic Planning Education Subcommittee	60 Highland Street: Living Room
Fri Dec 15		Chanukah Potluck Dinners in Members' Homes	(<i>see page 5</i>)
Fri Dec 15	8 pm - 9:30 pm	Erev Shabbat Adult Service	Terry Traub, Liz Reisberg (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sat Dec 16	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service Bat Torah of Cindy Marshall	<i>Sanctuary Clean-Up:</i> Linda & Peter Katz, Angela & Dorea Vierling-Claassen (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sat Dec 16	10 am - 12 pm	Kitah Aleph / Kitah Bet Family Program	FUSN
Sun Dec 17	3 pm - 5 pm	Chanukah Party	<i>Set up:</i> Ruth & Michael Super, Allyson Cherkasky, Jeff Marcus; <i>Clean up:</i> Sharon Sevransky & Jeff Goldman, Rachel Greenberg, Ilana Mainelli FUSN (<i>see page 5</i>)
Tue Dec 19	5:15 pm - 5:45 pm	Rosh Chodesh Assembly - Maccabiah	FUSN
Wed Dec 20	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Dec 21	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Sat Dec 23		<i>NO SCHOOL - Winter Recess For The Whole School Until 1/1/07</i>	
Sat Dec 23	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service	Erica Streit-Kaplan & James Kaplan, Elizabeth Carver & Bryn Austin
Wed Dec 27	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Dec 28	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Sat Dec 30	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service	Meryl Epstein & Trish Nuzzola, Jackie & Stan Fleischman, Mei See Sandson

Members: The complete Kiddush and holiday assignment schedule is available in the members' calendar at our website. Please check and see which of the days you requested we were able to schedule you for. **Please make sure to put the dates in your calendar!** Note that parents of 5th, 6th 7th and 8th graders help out with B'nei Mitzvah sanctuary clean-up and Kiddushes. Thanks for your help this year!—*The Kiddush Committee: Marla Lichtman and Ellen Pashall*

Events and services are held at The Second Church, 60 Highland Street, West Newton, unless otherwise noted. During Rabbi Toba's weekends off, members of the congregation will lead services. Free childcare is available during Shabbat morning services in the large classroom near the office on the first floor. **No Fragrances, Please:** So that Dorshei Tzedek services and events are accessible to all of our members and guests, we ask that people refrain from wearing fragrances (perfume, scented oils, cologne, etc.) to all Dorshei Tzedek events. While pleasant to some, these fragrances can cause illness to those who are chemically sensitive. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility.



January Calendar



Date	Time	Event	Kiddush, Notes
Tue Jan 2		<i>CLASSES RESUME</i>	
Wed Jan 3	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Jan 4	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Fri Jan 5	6 pm - 8 pm	All Ages Potluck and Erev Shabbat Family Service	Meg Wilcox & Robert Warren, Jodie & Alex Sugerman-Brozan (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sat Jan 6	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service	Carol Sklar, Stephanie Bennett & Joshua Breindel, Ayala Galton
Sat Jan 6	10 am - 12 pm	Kitah Aleph, Kitah Bet Classes	FUSN
Sun Jan 7	2 pm - 4 pm	Gan Family Program #4	FUSN
Wed Jan 10	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Jan 11	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Sat Jan 13		<i>NO SCHOOL</i>	
Sat Jan 13	9:45 am - 12 pm	MLK Shabbat Service	Lisa Samelson & Paul Hattis, Deb Albenberg <i>Yahrtzeit of William Samelson</i>
Sat Jan 13	10:45 am - 12 pm	Junior Congregation	60 Highland St: Room 111 (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sun Jan 14	2 pm - 4 pm	Kitah Zayin Family Program	FUSN
Wed Jan 17	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Jan 18	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Fri Jan 19	8 pm - 9:30 pm	Erev Shabbat Adult Service	JoAnn Share & Rochelle Weichman, Ellie Goldberg (In Honor of Reva's Birthday)
Sat Jan 20	8:45 am - 9:45 am	Shabbat Morning Torah Study with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Sat Jan 20	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service Bat Mitzvah of Sasha Grodsky	<i>Set up:</i> Abby Cohen & Stuart Snyder, Steve & Theresa Siegel; <i>Clean up:</i> Ami & Jonathan Gordon, Hara Klein & Eleni Carr
Sat Jan 20	10 am - 12 pm	Kitah Aleph, Kit Bet Classes	FUSN
Sun Jan 21	7:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	<i>Members-Only Event</i> , 60 Highland St: Parlor
Tue Jan 23	5:15 pm - 5:45 pm	Rosh Chodesh Assembly	1326 Washington St: Parish Hall
Wed Jan 24	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Thu Jan 25	8 am - 9 am	Letting God In: Study & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)
Sat Jan 27	9:45 am - 12 pm	Shabbat Morning Service	Ilene Spiro & Ira Schor, Sherry Katz, Ora Gladstone
Sat Jan 27	10 am - 12 pm	Kitah Aleph, Kitah Bet Classes	FUSN
Sat Jan 27	10 am - 10:45 am	Tot Shabbat	60 Highland St: room 112 (<i>see page 3</i>)
Wed Jan 31	5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Judaism & Practice with Rabbi Toba Spitzer	60 Highland St: Library (<i>see page 8</i>)

Climate Change Initiative

Dorshei Tzedek recently joined a climate change initiative sponsored jointly by the JRF and COEJL (the Coalition On Environment and Jewish Life). We will begin active participation by encouraging CDT households to substitute energy-saving light bulbs: these bulbs purchased through the JRF/COEJL will be for sale at the Chanukah Shuk. Look for other updates in the coming months!

From the JRF website (<http://www2.jrf.org/to/environment.php>):

JRF, in keeping with our own movement's resolution on the environment*, our commitment as a Jewish People, and as stewards of the health and welfare of the planet, has joined as a sponsor and coalition member of The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) (www.coejl.org) and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), www.jewishpublicaffairs.org) and the Religious Action Center (rac.org/), "Climate Change Campaign" to address the global warming crisis. This is one of those calls to action that can change how North American Jewry responds to the daunting environmental problems confronting us and future generations.

The campaign: **A Light Among the Nations** aka "*How Many Jews Does It Take to Change a Light Bulb?*" will engage the Jewish community in education, advocacy, and concrete action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This modern day commemoration of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, will most importantly bring the issue of global climate change front and center in Jewish public life.



Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
60 Highland Street
West Newton, MA 02465

Dorshei Tzedek Officers, Board, and Committee Chairs

Executive Committee President: **Marc Steinberg**
Past-President: **Nancy Gertz**
VP Strategic Planning: **Laurie Gould**
VP Membership: **Andrew Schiff**
VP Finance: **Mark Farber**
Secretary: **Dan Halbert**

Board Chairs Adult Education: **Jeff Kichen**
Finance Secretary: **Sivan Nasoff**
Kehillah (in-reach): **Diana Fisher-Gomberg**
Membership. Outreach: **Susannah Zisk**
Member-at-large: **Betsy Hinden**
Member-at-large: **James Kaplan**
Nadiv Lev: **Peter Hess**
Newsletter: **Dan Halbert**
Ritual: **Debbie Waber / Audra Karp**
Space: **Stuart Snyder / Steve Siegel**
Tikkun Olam: **Esther Kohn**

Off-Board Chairs Chesed: **Jackie Fleischman**
Rabbinic Liaison: **Ora Gladstone**
Personnel: **Peter Katz**
Website: **Stan Fleischman**
High Holy Days: **Theresa St-John Siegel**
School Liaison: **Pamela Schoenberg Reider**

Dorshei Tzedek Mission Statement

Dorshei Tzedek is a Reconstructionist Congregation dedicated to creating a caring and inclusive community, and to enhancing Jewish practice and learning in the lives of our members. "Dorshei Tzedek" means "seekers of justice," and as our name implies, we are seekers: of meaningful spirituality, of serious Jewish learning, and of social justice.

Consistent with Reconstructionist philosophy, we are committed to seriously engaging with Jewish tradition, challenging that tradition, where need be, and building on the tradition in creative ways. We do this in order to enhance our own lives as contemporary Jews and to perpetuate our bond—and our children's bond—to our heritage. We view education for ourselves and our children as fundamental to Jewish life.

We are a participatory congregation, encouraging all of our members to take an active role in some aspect of our congregational life. Our rabbi is our partner in this endeavor, and is both teacher and participant in our community. We value diversity in our congregation, and welcome all those who share our commitments.

Finally, we affirm the concept of mitzvah as obligation, acting on our Jewish values through deeds of *tzedek* (social justice) and *gemilut chasadim* (loving kindness), both within our congregation and in the larger community.