In his book, To Life: A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking, Rabbi Harold Kushner writes that “the goal of Judaism is not to teach us how to escape from the profane world to the cleansing presence of God, but to teach us how to bring God into the world, how to take the ordinary and make it holy.” I’ve always loved the elegant way that the passage so elegantly explains that kashrut is a central value because it sanctifies the otherwise mundane experience of eating and that Shabbat, far from being a limitation, is a unique and empowering opportunity for us to experience the sacred in the world around us and to appreciate our time together as we pause to witness the phenomena that get lost in the rush of every other day of the week, such as the slow progress of the deepening blue of the sky when the sun sets and night falls.

Our tradition does not encourage us to shrink away from the mundane, the tedious, or even the uncomfortable elements of everyday life. Instead, it gives us the tools to recognize how they can fit into fully realized religious lives. Which is not to say that this is easy. Over the last few months, even the previously routine acts of reading the news, listening to the radio or watching television in the morning have become fraught with unease. Whether you support the new political reality or not, the rancor in civic discourse is impossible to ignore. And, while you will not read this column for several weeks, on the day that I am writing it the news is full of reports of anti-Muslim, xenophobic and homophobic attacks against individuals and communities and there has been yet another round of bomb threats to JCC’s and Jewish day schools across the country as well as the desecration another of Jewish cemetery.

So, how does our tradition suggest that we respond? It is instructive that this is the month of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar and that the ritual high point of the month is the observance of Passover. According to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Orthodox Rabbi of Great Britain, one of the central messages of Pesach is that our tradition is inherently political. In one of the essays in his edition of the Haggadah, Rabbi Sacks writes that the goal of the Israelites, and by extension our goal today, is to construct a “counter-Egypt.” Instead of being complacent in a culture based on oppression and subjugation, the Jewish quest is to construct a “society established on the principles of tzedakah (justice) and mishpat (laws), distributive and retributive justice, and the covenantal virtues of hesed (lovingkindness) and rachamim, kindness and compassion.”

As opposed to many other faith traditions in which personal salvation is the ultimate goal, ours teaches us that God’s will is for us to pursue communal salvation. The Jewish quest is to repair the entire world and to work for a time in which all human interactions will reflect the belief that all of us are entitled to live lives that manifest the dignity and respect that flow from the understanding that we are all created in the image of God. And that is the Jewish secret to sanctifying the brokenness of the world in which we live. It is to accept that we were freed from Egypt in order to hear the cries of others who need our help in the same way that God responded to our cries when we were oppressed in Egypt. (See Deuteronomy 24:18). It is to recognize every uncomfortable social reality as a challenge that we are obligated to accept. This is not an easy task, remember, we are the people who strive, and another time-honored part of our tradition is to argue (for the sake of heaven, of course) about the best way to move the world closer to God’s expectations for it, but accepting this challenge is the way to live in relationship to God’s presence during these difficult days.

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Notes from the Hazzan

By Hazzan Sheldon Levin

“One Community” Events

I attended an educators meeting in February and someone asked me to speak about an upcoming concert that I am promoting. I had no idea what concert to which she was referring. My mind was still on the Jerry Herman Musical Review and the Stars of David Show in which I was singing. I was already working on the Hebrew School Purim Shpiel and a concert the NJ Cantors are doing at a Solomon Schechter School. In March I was spearheading a major interfaith concert at Neve Shalom featuring a dozen choirs and dance groups of many religions and cultures. In March, I was also helping to bring Dr. Josh Jacobson to our area to do a “Jewish Choral Master Class” and training many singers for the challenging pieces he would conduct. I didn’t think that was what she wanted me to speak about.

Then my mind moved forward to Pesach programs. I will lead a few seders for seniors at the JCC and Whispering Knolls and I was sure that it wasn’t a concert to which she was referring. On Monday, April 24, there is the annual Interfaith Yom HaShoah event at the JCC, in which I will be participating but I didn’t think educators wanted me to speak about it.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, Tuesday evening May 23 I will be directing an historic concert at the Cantors Assembly Convention near Atlantic City. Every piece mentions and sings about Jerusalem from classics and cantorial music to popular and modern repertoire. I will be conducting a choir of over thirty cantors and many other soloists in a program that will be educational, enjoyable and, most important, emotional in our tribute and connection to Jerusalem. I’m sure that wasn’t the event about which this educator wanted me to speak.

Finally, she mentioned Noah Aronson and I quickly remembered that Noah Aronson will be coming to Neve Shalom on Sunday evening, April 30. I had sent emails to a number of area Hebrew Schools asking if their children would like to sing several selections with Noah and his band. I had already gotten positive responses from a few schools but she wanted me to invite others which I was thrilled to do. Neve Shalom’s Hebrew School is one of many around the country using a new curriculum from Behrman House called “Hebrew In Harmony.” There are booklets for the children to use to learn about and to read a number of important prayers and their vocabulary. Noah Aronson is the main guide, using videos, on-line materials and many recordings to help the children learn both traditional and new settings of these prayers and to learn the meanings and history of the liturgy as well. We look forward to both Neve Shalom students and some children from other area schools to help this year’s Susy Schwartz concert be a huge success. I think everyone, of every age, will find Noah entertaining, personable and very talented. I am glad I got to speak about this concert to our area educators and look forward to this and the many other events in which I am participating this Spring.
Ritually Speaking

By Christina Daniels, Vice President, Ritual

Another Passover is arriving; another spring is here. In the past, this column has talked about the preparation obligations: the cleaning, the shopping, and the cooking and how those activities can help us prepare spiritually. We have other obligations though. As I am sure everyone remembers, Rabbi Gamliel taught that “whosoever does not speak about three things has not fulfilled his obligation. And they are: Pesach (the Paschal lamb), matzah, and maror.”

A couple of things strike me as odd in this passage. First of all, because I am a linear type of person, I have always wondered why Rabbi Gamliel made his list in non-chronological order. The maror symbolizes the bitterness under which the Hebrews (we) lived in Egypt, the Pesach is the sacrificed lamb and the matzah is the meal of our flight. Why not state them in their logical order?

Many sources I checked saw the Pesach as a symbol of gratitude, but there was one source, which saw the sacrifice as a symbolic release of the idols of other traditions and clinging to the Hebrew God. It is the first step in a long journey toward freedom and Judaism, as we know it now. After taking that step, the matzah is the bread we must eat “on the run”. To some of us, eating it seems like a punishment, but in fact, it can symbolize hope as it recognizes that circumstances can change at a moment’s notice. When things seemed truly the darkest for the Hebrew people, their fortunes changed and they ran – with their unrisen loaves – to freedom and the Promised Land. It does then seem strange to end with the bitterness of maror. Of course, it must be noted that difficulty creates resilience. Yet still, should we not end on a sweet note? When my children were little, they would ask – Why can’t every day be a holiday? I would tell them holidays wouldn’t be special if we didn’t have regular days in order to recognize them as special. Without sadness, we don’t appreciate joy. Without rain, the sun doesn’t seem as bright. In a similar way, we have to taste the bitterness remind ourselves how lucky we are to live in a place and a time where we can truly celebrate a “zissen Pesach.”

The second item that piqued my interest was how Rabbi Gamliel specified that we must speak of these three things. We eat the matzah and the maror; the Sephardic Jews even eat the Korban Pesach. So why does he say “speak of these three things?” I think it is because our obligation is not only to do the mitzvot – it is to teach our children about them: how to do them, why we do them, and perhaps most importantly, the meaning that performing mitzvot adds to our daily lives. Everything we do and say is an example to our children. We can use this holiday to teach our children about the faith, the hope and the resilience that our people have demonstrated at the beginning of Judaism and throughout history since then. Faith, hope, and resilience are embodied in the Pesach, matzah and maror. I’d like to think that Rabbi Gamliel is telling us to use these three parts of our seder to teach our children and grandchildren Judaism – religion and values.
Hebrew School News

By Hazzan Sheldon Levin

**Sunday, April 2**
Grades K-3 will have an age appropriate seder with songs, foods and lots of fun. It will be nut free and we will have alternate items for the children who have various food allergies. A new breakout seder for grades 4-7 will also take place that day. There will be a series of rooms, each with a variety of things to do, blessings to recite, foods to eat and many puzzles to solve in order to get from Slavery to Freedom, from Egypt to Israel. Similar to popular experiences, where people need to solve puzzles to find more clues to get out of a locked room, our children will answer questions that are connected to the many parts of the traditional seder but in a new and very fun way.

**Sunday, April 9 - Tuesday, April 18**
NO HEBREW SCHOOL

**Sunday, April 23**
OPEN HOUSE: Please invite prospective students and their families to visit our classes that morning.

**Sunday, April 30**
Java Nagila for Dads. More information to come.

**Sunday, April 30**
Noah Aronson and his band will perform at our annual Susy Schwartz Concert. Our children grades 3-7 will be joined by students from several other area Hebrew Schools to perform three songs with Noah and the band. Parents should purchase tickets to this very dynamic, young composer-singer’s exciting concert. There is no charge for performers.

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Men’s Club Minute

By Steven Schneider, Men’s Club President

Men’s Club has had a terrific year with some great programming and terrific participation. April is no exception and we are looking to close out the year with a bang! Aside from our regular monthly meeting on Thursday, April 6, we are making a slight change to our annual pasta-fest. On Sunday, April 23, please join us for the Men’s Club Pasta Extravaganza. We will be having spaghetti and meatballs, salad, onions and peppers, and drinks. The Pasta Extravaganza will be lunch this year. We will be hoping to have lots of Hebrew School families as well as the entire community. Check your calendars and make sure you will be there.

You will also start seeing the Yellow Candles in remembrance of Yom Hashoah. This fund raiser by Men’s Club goes directly to the youth of our community. Please do what you can to participate in this worthwhile program.

Finally, keep your eyes open for a new event in May. The Harvest of Hops is a beer making competition and should be bubbling with fun!

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Neve Shalom continues to support the efforts of Jewish Family Service of Middlesex County to help the needy by collecting food for the Kosher Food Pantry. Food donations may be left at the synagogue in the closet near the stairs next to the stage. Going forward, USY will be collecting a different item each month to be donated. Please watch Neve Now! for more information. Thank you for supporting these efforts!
Diaspora Identities

On Friday, Apr 21 at the 7:30 pm service, Judith Gerson (pictured, right) will speak about “Diaspora Identities.”

Professor Gerson is on the faculty in the departments of Sociology and Women’s and Gender Studies and an affiliate faculty member of the department of Jewish Studies of Rutgers University. She is a recipient of a research fellowship at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. She is co-editor of Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories, Identities and Diasporas (Duke University Press, 2007). Currently, she is completing a book manuscript on German Jewish forced emigration during the Nazi era. Using feminist theories of intersectionality, and relying on archival evidence as well as in-depth interviews, she is analyzing how German Jewish immigrants who arrived in New York between 1933 and 1941 understood various aspects of their identities. This project follows earlier research on work and family structures that compares home-based and office-based employment among clerical workers in the service sector.


The recipient of a number of prestigious honors, Professor Gerson has received awards from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, the American Sociological Association, and the National Science Foundation to conduct research on life during and after the Holocaust. In 2017 - 2018, Professor Gerson has been invited to be a senior residential fellow at the Mandel Center at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

At the graduate level she teaches courses in Catastrophe and Collective Memory; Narrative Analysis; and Gender Theory. At the undergraduate level she regularly teaches Sociology of Gender, Research Methods, Immigration and selected topics courses. She has her Ph.D. in Sociology from Cornell University and B.A. in Sociology from Syracuse University.

Israel on My Mind

In late October, my wife Dorie and I had the good fortune to travel to Israel. But unlike our prior trips, this one was a little bit different. For starters, we sailed there. Yes, although the vast majority of those who travel to Israel arrive via the David Ben Gurion airport, Dorie and I arrived on a cruise ship in Ashdod, the port city on the Mediterranean located about 53 km (33 miles) west of Jerusalem.

Arriving by sea was a serene and wonderful experience. I went onto our cabin’s balcony early in the morning prior to docking and gazed upon the edge of Eretz Yisrael as the ship moved slowly towards her shores. As we moved closer to Ashdod’s mostly industrial berths, I could immediately see the enormous amount of shipping activity that is a hallmark of this port. Thousands of shipping containers were in the process of being off-boarded from freight ships. It was a powerful feeling to see the vast commercial activity happening in this ever-developing nation.

I watched closely and with great anticipation as the ship (the RSSC Explorer) drifted meticulously to its designated spot and made its landing. And then the excitement of having arrived in Israel came over me once again! Not with the frenetic activity of a busy international port but with the beauty of a tap onto a few rubber pads against the port’s cement dock.

And in some respects, the journey that preceded it helped to build the anticipation even more. We had been traveling at that point for over a week (hardly roughing it) on this stunning new ship departing initially from Venice and moving through the Mediterranean from port to port in Croatia, Greece, and Cyprus. They were all wonderful and exotic places but none would compare with the feeling of arriving “home.”

After a whirlwind of wonderful excursions and visits to fascinating places in this great country, we spent our last full night and day in a city that we had only briefly experienced before...Tel Aviv. Since organized trips and missions don’t often focus on this modern and bustling metropolis, we thought it wise to give it some time on our schedule especially in light of our love for cities. And what a treat it was! Without structure or discipline, we were able to meander through many of Tel Aviv’s neighborhoods and soak in the local and vibrant lifestyle of its citizens.

But for me the highlight was the evening we spent walking about Sarona. This place is a former German temple colony established in 1871 but it is now a bustling and stunningly beautiful neighborhood in Tel Aviv that contains a modern park and former colony buildings used for upscale retail stores and all of it set against the backdrop of high rise residential buildings and a state of the art culinary center of restaurants, shops, and food retailers in the Sarona Market. It is an incredible development that was buzzing with life and excitement. We arrived as Shabbat was ending and families were arriving in droves to partake in this beautiful Fall evening’s activities. There were puppet shows and entertainers about, all with the attention of hundreds of young children reveling in the fun. We just watched and watched with pride as the future of Israel could be enjoyed and admired. It felt comfortable and safe and it seemed in all respects to me like an extraordinary evolution of a society that is thriving.

Israel is an unending source of great inspiration as it continues to grow and develop. It is a place from which we can draw enormous optimism as its people are clearly intent on enjoying life to the fullest!
A non-traditional Passover

By Chef Lon

An onion, like Judaism, is made up of many layers. Not every onion is the same, nor is every Jew. As mentioned in a past article, there was once an active Jewish community in China. Many years ago, a Jewish merchant from England was doing business in town, and decided to pray in the town’s synagogue. When he entered, a group of people came over to see what this foreigner wanted. When he said he was there to pray, one of the congregants exclaimed, “funny, you don’t look Jewish.” Just as each Jew looks differently, they pray differently, observe differently, and some have their own unique traditions to celebrate holidays and occasions. This month, the Jewish people celebrate the holiday of Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew. Although there are some clear-cut rules to follow (e.g., it begins on the Hebrew date of the 15th of Nissan, and no eating of chametz (food that rises), Jews from various cultures and regions of the world have their own unique traditions to augment those rules.

Modern Additions
One of the non-traditional traditions I have seen practiced is the addition of the Kos Miriam (Cup of Miriam, filled with water) to the seder table [Miriam was the sister of Moses]. It represents Miriam’s Well, a source of nourishment for the Hebrews during the Exodus, but it also provides recognition of the women in the story of the Exodus, and their importance.

It is interesting to note that the Cup of Elijah, which has become a staple at most seders, was not always a part of the traditional part of the Passover table. This tradition may not have begun until around the 1st century, as referenced by the (minority) opinion of Rabbi Tarfon’s (in Pesachim 118a) on the question of allowing for more than four cups of wine on Passover, which he replied “over the fifth cup we recite the great Hallel.” However, his answer was not really clear. It was not until another millennium that a Jewish scholar made a statement on a fifth cup, when Maimonides wrote that one should have a fifth cup (although it is not mandatory). However, some interpret this in different ways; some believe a fifth cup should be filled with wine in honor of Maimonides, but not to be touched, while others are of the opinion to drink it. In addition, this is more of a tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews (from Eastern Europe) than the Sephardim.

Another tradition I have seen being implemented is the placement of an orange (sometimes a tangerine) on the seder table. The story’s origin usual told is as follows: At a conference, Dr. Susannah Heschel was speaking about a woman’s right to be a rabbi. An angry Orthodox man got up and yelled “a woman belongs on the pulpit, like an orange belongs on a seder table.” That story, however, is false. According to Heschel, she was speaking to a woman writing a feminist Haggadah. The woman asked her rabbi if there is room in Judaism for a lesbian as there is for a crust of bread on the seder plate.” Since she could not put bread on the Passover table, the following year she added an orange because “it suggests the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life.”

A third regionalized tradition I have also experienced is the use of rice by Sephardic Jews (Iberian Peninsula). The first time I went to a Sephardic home for a seder I was taken back, but I quickly learned to enjoy this tradition. However, in 2016, this 800 year old rule was overturned by the leaders of the Conservative movement, stating that kitnyot (rice and beans) are now allowable during the holiday of Passover. That being said, many still follow the older ruling.

The addition of olives to the seder table has become a recent tradition. The olives are meant to symbolize the hope for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. In line with promoting peace and friendship amongst people, some observers add the artichoke to promote interfaith-friendly seders.

Around the World
There are also many other traditions that come from specific regions of the world. Unfortunately, some of these customs are carried out by descendants of many these countries, since there are no Jews (or very few) actually living there today.

- **Afghanistan** — During the recitation of the 10 plagues, they whip the other guests with scallions while singing “Dayenu”.
- **Ethiopia** — Break their dinner plates to symbolize a break from the past.
- **Gibraltar** — Literally add brick to the charoset.
- **Hungary** — Place gold and silver jewelry on the seder table (Exodus 12:35).
- **Morocco** — Besides Elijah’s cup, an elaborately decorated chair is also set aside for the prophet.
- **Poland (town of Gora Kalwa)** — They reenact the crossing of the Red Sea by pouring water on the floor, lifting up their coats, and walk over the water.
- **Sephardim** — Telling the story of the Exodus in costume.
- **Turkey** — At the conclusion of the seder, they take a sprig of parsley, and recite a verse in Arabic.
- **Yemen (region of Adeni)** — They eat eggs as the main course of the seder. Also, following the dripping of wine for each of the 10 plagues, they throw it into the garden to cast the plagues onto their enemies.

For an unabridged version of this article, which also discusses the origin of onions and its connection with Judaism, visit: https://foodhistoryreligion.wordpress.com/

For an unabridged version of this article, please visit https://foodhistoryreligion.wordpress.com/.

The Recipe
This month’s recipe is for scallion pancakes.

**Ingredients** (serves 4)

| 1 bunch/10 scallions | 1 egg |
| 2 cups flour | 1 1/3 cups water |
| 1 tsp salt | Oil (for frying) |
| 2 Tbs soy sauce |

**Directions**

1. Mix flour, water, egg, and soy sauce, then set aside for 10 minutes
2. Add scallions and mix
3. Heat oil
4. Scoop flour/scallion batter into oil
5. Cook pancakes for about 2 minutes on each side (until each side is golden brown)

Happy Cooking,
— — Chef Lon
**PASSOVER 5777**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, April 10</td>
<td>Fast of the First Born</td>
<td>6:30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 11</td>
<td>First Seder at home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second Seder at home</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 12</td>
<td>Pesach Service</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 13</td>
<td>Chol Hamoed</td>
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<td>Friday, April 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 18</td>
<td>Pesach Service/Yizkor</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
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**Order of the Seder**

- **Kadesh**: Recitation of Kiddush
- **Urchatz**: Washing the hands
- **Karpas**: Vegetable dipped in salt water
- **Yachatz**: Breaking the matzah
- **Maggid**: Telling the story
- **Urchatz**: Washing the hands the second time
- **Motzi Matzah**: Blessing over matzah
- **Maror**: Eating bitter herbs
- **Koresh**: Eating Hillel sandwich
- **Shulchan aruch**: Eating a festive meal
- **Tzafun**: Eating the afikoman
- **Barech**: Recitation of Grace
- **Hallel**: Psalms of praise
- **Nirtzah**: Our prayer that G-d accepts our service

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**WHAT’S ON YOUR SEDER PLATE?**

- **Bitter Herb, Often Romaine Lettuce**
- **Bitter Herb, Often Horseradish**
- **Parsley or Boiled Potato for Dipping in Salt Water**
- **Charoset (Mixture of Chopped Nuts and Apples, Wine and Cinnamon)**
- **Shank Bone**
- **Hard-Boiled Egg, Often Roasted**

**NEW TRADITIONS**

- **For Vegetarians**: Roasted Beet replaces Shank Bone
- **For Vegans**: Flower or Seed replaces the Egg
- **Orange**: in support of LGBT inclusion
- **Olives**: in support of peace between Israelis and Palestinians
- **Artichoke**: in support of interfaith families
- **Tomato**: in support of farmworkers’ rights
Membership Memo

By Steven Schneider,
Vice President, Membership

One Community.

Every Jewish journey is unique. Neve Shalom is here to support you on your journey. Together, we build One Community.

We have been talking a lot over the past year about One Community. We’ve talked about what the term means to each of us and how we try to live the principle. We talk about our individual Jewish journeys and how Neve is supporting each of us on that journey.

But how does supporting individual Jewish journeys actually build One Community? Sharing common beliefs and values is at the core of building a community. If we can focus all that we do as a community on six principles, our community will come closer together towards our vision of building One Community.

**Common Values** – Neve Shalom has, at its core, Jewish identity. It is through this identity that we share common values, goals, and ideals for ourselves, our families, and our Community.

**Education** – The commitment to educate our youth and adults is critical to the spiritual growth and health of our community. Education supports our connection with Israel and with the greater Jewish Community.

**Leadership** – Maintaining a strong and well-trained lay leadership in both religious and administrative areas is a direct result of the dedication and passion of our professional and lay leaders and staff. Strong leadership builds a strong Community.

**Engagement** – Sitting in the center of Jewish New Jersey, the wide variety of religious, cultural, social, and tikkun olam (social justice) programs at Neve Shalom are essential to building the connections within the larger Community.

**Support** – Being available and accessible to all in our Community to share life cycle events is the basis of our connectedness, friendship, camaraderie, and sense of belonging regardless of your unique journey. Together we develop the relationships that build a loving and supportive Community.

**Spirituality** – Recognizing that we are all on our own journey of Jewish discovery, Neve Shalom provides an oasis of peace and support for each other to assist as we travel that path. Spirituality is woven throughout all aspects of our Jewish Community.

These principles manifest themselves through all the programming and events, the education and school, the religious services, the differences and similarities, the kisses and hugs, and the engagement with the community at large. Look around and recognize the support that we all offer each other. Neve Shalom is a wonderful place to be.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or want to talk about any of this in more detail please do not hesitate to let me know via email at membership@neveshalom.net or in-person.

Neve Shalom would like to thank the following people for chanting Torah during the month of February.

T=Teen, JR=Junior

- Jennifer Bullock ............ 2
- Andrea Colby ................ 1
- Lawrence Dombrow .......... 1
- Eric Goldman .............. 4
- Rosalie Green ............. 3
- Bruce Greenberg .......... 3
- Farrah Grubman ............ T 3
- Miriam Kafker ............... 2
- Rena Kallman ............... 2
- Audrey Napchen ............ 1
- Richard Raibman ............ 1
- Mark Rosenfield .......... 12
- Simon Rosenfield .......... 11
- Stacey Sern ................. 4
- Barbara Spack .............. 3
- Allen Stern ................. 1
- Karen Weinstein ............ 5
- David Yellin ............... 11

**Haftarah**
- Matt Bonus
- Bruce Greenberg
- Audrey Napchen
- Steven Schneider

**Ashrei**
- Rachel Dobbs ............. JR
- Aaron Grubman ............ JR
- Maya Kushner ............. JR
Maya Kushner, the daughter of Wendy and Michael Kushner, will become a bat mitzvah on Saturday, April 22.

Maya’s sister, Ariella, will be celebrating with her on that day, along with Bubbe “Bobi” Susan Edelstein from New York City; Grandpa Richard and Grandma Lois Kushner from Orlando, FL; Grandma Norma and Grandpa Seymour Hurwitz from Fairlawn, NJ; and aunts, uncles, and cousins from many different places.

Maya is in the seventh grade at John Adams Middle School, where, she tells us, “My favorite subjects are English and Tech (which is like wood shop). I love reading and writing and my English teacher is really great. Also in Tech, we do tons of exciting projects such as building a CO2 Dragster racing car and making a movie.”

Maya enjoys several sports -- she plays tennis, and she also like running and hiking, and “I am really good at ping pong.”

Her hobbies include “…singing, reading, biking, watching and making movies, and hanging out with my friends. I play piano and guitar, and in my free time, I like to write songs.”

In the summer, Maya attends Camp Harlam, a Jewish sleepaway camp in the Poconos, where “I have made lifelong friends and countless amazing memories. I also love dogs (all animals, really), ice cream, and my friends and family.”

Asked about her travels, Maya reports that “…My family travels a lot, so I have been many places inside the United States, as well as to Israel and Aruba. My favorite places to visit inside the country are Texas, Florida, and Wisconsin. When we visit Texas, I spend time on my cousins’ goat farm, which is a unique and rewarding experience.”

For her mitzvah project, Maya is “…helping out homeless people. I organized a winter weather clothing drive and was able to collect 50 coats, 36 hats, 38 scarves, 34 pairs of gloves, six blankets, three sweaters, and two comforters. I am also volunteering at the soup kitchen at Elijah’s Promise in New Brunswick. I also served meals and spent time with struggling families through an organization called Family Promise.”

Called to the Torah

By Flora Cowen

Neve Shalom Proudly Introduces…..

Shabbat 2.0

We are proud to offer a new interactive Shabbat Experience for learners of all ages that was developed based on member feedback.

Shabbat 2.0 will feature singing, plays, prayers, snacks, and an opportunity to learn why we pray as we do.

All are welcome to experience these participatory services, which will be held on most Saturday mornings from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Services will be

Apr. 1, 8, 22, 29

Questions? Contact Debbie Schildkraut at dkestins@yahoo.com
In March 2016, Stan and I were part of the Women’s League for Conservative Judaism (the international organization of women’s groups in Conservative congregations) Mission to Cuba. Laden with donations for our Jewish brethren, filled with enthusiasm and the spirit of tikkun olam (repairing the world), 35 participants with a luggage allowance of only 33 pounds (10 of which had to be donations), traveled to Cuba. Even as we delivered our bags filled with pharmaceuticals, clothing, school supplies and cosmetics, it was apparent that we were receiving as much from the Cuban Jewish community as we were giving.

Cuban Jewry has faced a more intense version of our own Jewish challenges – and has prevailed. These Cuban Jews give us hope for the future of our own Jewish community.

I would like to share my reflections along with those of Sarah Mack, rabbi of Temple Beth-El in Providence, Rhode Island, following her congregation’s mission to Cuba. We reflect on the lessons we can learn from the ambitions and compassionate commitment to Jewish life of this amazing community.

Openness.
The Cuban Jewish community is unfailingly open to any person who wants to reclaim their Jewish heritage. After more than 30 years of religious life being blocked by the Communist regime, few had knowledge of Judaism, and intermarriage prevailed. Cuban Jews engage the unconnected – for decades, they have warmly welcomed anyone interested in reconnecting to their Jewish roots and traditions, no questions asked. Their community is successful partly because of its openness and gracious acceptance of all.

Lay leadership.
The Cuban Jewish community is primarily lay-led because it has had no choice. There are no rabbis in Cuba, other than those sent occasionally over the years by the Joint Distribution Committee. The Jews themselves have had to be the daily stewards of Jewish life. The knowledge that the future of their Jewish community was in their hands alone has created an impressively strong lay leadership where everyone has a vested interest in the well-being of the community. The Shabbat service we attended was led by lay leaders, the dinner organized by and the challah was baked by community members. Additionally, three Jewish communities we visited were led by women. The Cuban Jewish community reflects a refreshing egalitarian orientation that is instructive to all of us.

Fearlessness about asking for help.
Often, when we are struggling, we go to the same sources over and over again for assistance. But because resources of any kind are so limited in Cuba, the Cuban Jewish community has been unabashed and creative in looking outside itself for help. For years, the Canadian Jewish community has been sending Passover supplies. Adela Dworin, the president of the Patronato, Havana’s main synagogue, had us laughing with her stand-up routine describing how she has asked visitors for resources over the years, from money to a van. The Kaplen van, Adela told us, is named for its donor – and they joke that Kaplen is Hebrew for Mitsubishi.

Resilience.
In the face of true adversity, Cuban Jews have persevered. Their desire to preserve culture and tradition has triumphed over political persecution and economic hardship. Uncomplaining, Cuban Jewry simply does what needs to be done to recover Jewish heritage and culture, with an unflagging sense of purpose and humor.

We learned from our Cuban Jewish brethren to go forth with pride in our heritage, joy in observing our traditions, and hope for the future – no matter what political, economic or demographic curveballs come our way.

As I reflect on our experiences in Cuba, I am amazed at the lessons we learned from this small, passionate and courageous community.

Dream Weavers in the Neve Shalom Loom Room

By Cory Schneider

Dream Weaver Peter Heimann from Highland Park Conservative Temple weaving a tallit.

“IT was great to learn a new skill, which is important at any age but especially at mine. The fact that I could make new friends and create a sacred object is icing on the cake.”

Create a beautiful Judaic heirloom for yourself or someone special.

For more information and to schedule your time on the loom, contact: Cory Schneider at 717-574-1807 or corstan65@gmail.com or Jennifer Bullock at 732-906-8565 or rnjbullock@aol.com.
We Gratefully Acknowledge
and thank the following generous contributors to our funds:

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IN HONOR OF .................................. FROM
Rabbi Rosin, a complete and timely recovery ...................................... Harold and Robbie Geller
Audrey and Lindsay’s milestone birthdays! ........................................... Mark, Sheera and Samantha Glass
Rabbi Rosin, thank you for your help and kindness during this difficult time in my life ......................................................... Bunny Bloom
Rabbi Rosin, thank you for a beautiful funeral service for Mom .................. Heidi Haiken and Beth Haiken

IN MEMORY OF .................................. FROM
Albert Schrob ............................................. Alan and Donna Wink
Miriam Frank ............................................. Renee Frank
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Stanley and Gail Slobodien, Anya’s bat mitzvah ........................................ Miriam and Ron Rockmore
Audrey Naphen and Lindsay Norman’s birthdays ................................ Lisa, David, Carolyn and Jonah Glass
Julius Feinson, thank you for a lovely dinner out with friends .................. Audrey and Joel Naphen
Dan Hirsch, thank you for a lovely dinner out with friends ...................... Audrey and Joel Naphen

IN MEMORY OF .................................. FROM
Rae Clare .............................................. Robert Clare
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Lucy Breitbart .......................................... Lil Weinstein
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Alan Szuran .......................................... The Szteinbaum Family

BARRY MILLER FUND
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Marcia Lerner .......................................... Gail and John Schuetz

Neve Shalom invites you to
MUTIPLE MINYANIM
Sat., Apr. 29, 2017

During the Shabbat morning service, several options will be offered throughout the building including

★ The Regular Service
 starts 9:30am
★ Bibliodrama Led by
 Rabbi Rosin
 at 10:30am
 (in the Sanctuary)
Join us for our
Annual Pasta
Extravaganza
Sunday, April 23rd
Served at Noon

Cost is only $12/adult and $8/child 5-12 if pre-registered online ($15 per person at door) and includes: Spaghetti with Meatballs, Sautéed Onion and Peppers, Salad, Bread, and Beverages and is being prepared by the infamous Neve Shalom Men’s Club Kitchen Crew.
This event will be held on April 23, 2017 at 12 noon at Neve Shalom in Metuchen, NJ, (250 Grove Avenue).
Please register online at: http://www.neveshalom.net/event/mens-club-pasta-event.html

Israel & Shirley Segal Memorial Lecture at Neve Shalom

Viviana A. Zelizer
Women’s Money: Are All Dollars Equal?
May 7, 2017  10:00am


Sponsored by the Israel & Shirley Segal Memorial Fund, this annual event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Neve Shalom Adult Education Committee and the Gilbert and Claudie Hayat Speaker Series present

Judith Gerson
Professor of Sociology, Women’s Studies and Jewish Studies
Rutgers University

Diaspora Identities
Friday, Apr. 21, 2017 at the 7:30pm service
Discussion will continue after refreshments

Neve Shalom 250 Grove Avenue, Metuchen
732-548-2238 x14 Hazzan@NeveShalom.net
The Heart of Our Community: Dedicate a Lev Shalem Siddur

We will officially mark the new books’ place in our sanctuary at a special Shabbat in the spring.

NEVE SHALOM
250 Grove Ave.
METUCHEN, NJ 08840
732-548-2238

RABBI ERIC ROSIN
Hazzan Sheldon Levin
Rabbi Gerald Zelizer, Emeritus
Dan Hirsch, President

For the first time in decades, Neve Shalom is purchasing new prayer books for Shabbat & Festivals for our community. This is your opportunity to dedicate a prayerbook in honor of or in memory of someone special, or to celebrate a life event. What a beautiful way to remember, honor or recognize your loved ones by passing on Jewish text from generation to generation!

For a limited time only, you can dedicate siddurim at the cost of just $36 a book. *(beginning April 10th the cost goes up to $54 a book)*

To order your book plate, make checks payable to Neve Shalom Book Fund and return to the synagogue office.

Questions?? Call Rita at 732-548-2238 x 12
Know someone who needs help?
Don’t Keep It Under Your Hat!

Know someone in need of help during an illness, after surgery, after the birth of a child, please contact the Mitzvah Mission. No Mission Is Impossible!

732-858-1764

tikkunolah@neveshalom.net

Got Simcha?
Share your Simcha with the Entire Neve Community!

Community Kiddush Fund

Mazel Tov Sponsorship - $500
The most popular sponsorship! Includes everything in a regular Kiddush with lots of extras. You’ll be listed prominently in the Shabbat Shalom and get lots of Mazel Tov’s from the community.

L’Chaim Sponsorship - $250
A great option for all of life’s Simchas! This sponsorship if like a standard Kiddush on steroids. You’ll be listed prominently in the Shabbat Shalom and thanked by everyone in the congregation.

Simcha Donation - $18 multiples
Sharing a Simcha is what builds our community. Support the weekly Kiddush and let everyone know about the good things in your life.

Please contact Rita in the office at (732) 548-2238 or Email at office@neveshalom.net

Visit www.NeveShalom.net • Click on Community Kiddush Fund
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<td>Shabbat and Pesach morning: 9:30 am</td>
<td>Morning Minyan: Monday and Thursday: 6:45 am</td>
<td>Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 7:00 am</td>
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<td>Fast of the First Born: 6:30 am</td>
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