



Approach Pesach with new ideas

Consider 2 For Seder

Peter Maer

It won't be surprising if 2 for Seder becomes 2000 for Seder following OT congregant Marnie Fienberg's January 19th Men's Club program. Marnie's "From Hate to Hope" effort has evolved into an international initiative based on the thoughtfulness of her mother-in-law, Joyce Fienberg, z"l, a victim of the October 2018 Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue shooting.

More than 100 Men's Club members and guests heard Marnie recount the days after the Pittsburgh tragedy and how she was inspired to launch 2 for Seder "truly guided by the spirit" of Joyce.

She expressed gratitude for the support that she, her husband Howard, and daughter Sophie have received from the OT family. She recalled how Rabbi David Kalender advised her, "It's not about how Joyce died. It's about how she lived." Speaking to the audience, Rabbi Evan Ravski recalled how, in the aftermath of the tragedy, Marnie said, "I want to do something." He praised "the work that you have done to change the conversation to hope, not fear."

In the program moderated by Men's Club member Irvin Varkonyi, Marnie Fienberg described how 2 for Seder grew from the inspiration of her late mother-in-law's desire to have non-Jews at her table. Marnie challenged her audience to "invite two people of another faith to their first Seder and give them that experience." Proclaiming, "You have to dream big or go home," she said the 2 for Seder goal should become part of the American Jewish experience. The program provides kits and guidelines for Seder hosts. In the first year, there were 967 "2 for Seders," with more than 10,000 participants throughout the U.S. and Canada. Marnie and her 2 for Seder supporters continue to reach out to Jewish groups and interfaith efforts. As her audience looked at a screen showing the slogan "Push Back on Anti-Semitism with Love and Matzah," Marnie Fienberg pointed to her goal to tell 3 million Jews about 2 for Seder.

To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#)



Above: Irv Varkonyi interviews Marnie Fienberg at the Brunch.

Below: Eric Rothberg helps field audience questions.

Photos by Bob Watts



Marnie writes:

Deepest gratitude to the OT Men's Club for allowing 2 for Seder to speak about our program and helping us get members signed up for 2 for Seder 2020. We would like to thank both Sisterhood and Men's Club for their generous donations to 2 for Seder. These donations go a long way to ensure that the 2 for Seder Kit stays free to everyone. Participation and support from my home synagogue is like a blessing from family. We will do our best to make you proud.

Below, Rabbi Evan Ravski summarizes two recent Pesach workshops.

How will you tell the story?

The Seder is an interactive experience. From the moment we sit down to begin telling the story of the Exodus, we are engaging with our rituals and traditions in a variety of ways. Whether through song or symbols or taste, the Seder pulls us into the story and asks us to engage with our tradition and texts like no other holiday or ritual.

Yet because many of these methods have been part of the Seder for generations, what was meant to be innovative and interactive has become a rote part of the Seder ceremony. How then can we continue the tradition of making the Seder an event that speaks to us in new and exciting ways each year?

See **TELL THE STORY**, page 2



Count your way through the Seder

In Judaism, certain numbers seem to be standard measures in counting. Seven, for instance, as in the seven days of creation, or the 49 days of the Omer. Ten is another number, whether the 10 commandments or plagues.

Four is also an important Jewish number. Multiples of four are found in the Story of Noah, the days Moses spends on Mt. Sinai, the years the Israelites spend in the wilderness, the number of tribes of Israel. When it comes to Pesach, the number four is even more prevalent in the Seder ritual.

In a recent Seder Workshop, Rabbi Ravski examined the evolution of the number four in the Seder. The four questions, the four sons, and the four cups of wine are all recognizable

See **COUNT TO FOUR**, page 2

TELL THE STORY, From page 1

Rabbi Kalender addressed this question in a recent Seder Workshop. He pointed out that one of the beautiful aspects of the Seder is that we have the ability to add to it, personalize it, adapt it to fit our families' needs and interests, and most of all, the chance make it fun.

The Haggadah provides us with a wonderful framework for the Seder, one which has been observed by our people for thousands of years. It is not, however, the only text that can be used that night. When it comes to telling the story, use the Haggadah that speaks to you and your family. Let it be a tool that adds to your experience, not just something that gets you through.

Remember that the Haggadah text was not necessarily constructed with modern families in mind, ones where people of different backgrounds and children are involved in participation throughout the night. Perhaps the greatest thing that can be done is to sit with the Haggadah a few days before the Seder preparing for the evening, making sure there is something, whether readings, songs, games, for every age person who will be at your Seder.

Each year the Seder is the perfect opportunity to create family moments and traditions. Rabbi Kalender reminded and inspired us to enliven our ancient traditions with modern additions and fun, inclusive components that engage everyone. In doing so, we continue to link the story of the Exodus to the story of our family.

COUNT TO FOUR, From page 1

moments in the evening's rituals. From the youngest person being called upon to recite the questions, to family members vying to read Chacham (the wise child) while eschewing the Rasha (the wicked one), to making sure all the cups are enjoyed, the rituals that are repeated four-fold are integral pieces of the Seder.

Each piece developed over many years. The question of why so many cups of wine goes back to the Talmud. The four questions were once three questions, and then five questions; the answers given to each of the four sons have varied over the years. The class also explored the origin of the four different names Pesach has been called, and how each name and aspect of the holiday gives the celebration a deeper meaning and a different feel.

While the evolution of the number four may be challenging to explain in the short time of your Seder, engaging people with the number is not. Of the four categories, none of them were ever static, and there is no need for them to be now. So once you've read about them in the Haggadah, add your own ritual, your own explanation.

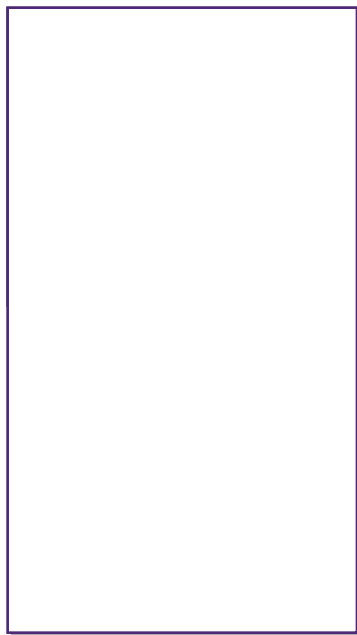


What four questions do you have about the Seder that you would like to ask those at the table? How would you answer each of the four children? What does each cup of wine represent for you? What names would you give to Pesach?

The number four has been part of our Seder ritual for centuries; now it's your family's turn to carry that tradition "four-ward"!



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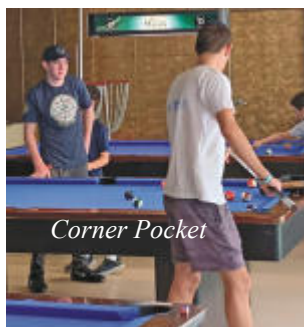
OT Youth Programs are better than ever!

Debra Beland Ackerman, with Brian Grossbard

Last year, during the Seaboard USY Spring Convention, our chapter was awarded the regional Chapter of the Year Award. For any synagogue youth group, this would be a huge honor, but for our chapter it is even more exciting. That's because just a few years before that moment, OT had no USY chapter at all. To go from something that didn't even exist to winning the highest award given each year by our region was an amazing moment, one that only happened because of the hard work of a small group of dedicated teens.

OT has, of course, a legacy of successful and robust USY engagement. For decades, our chapter was held up as a model, with tremendous participation in both local and regional events. In my office closet are scrapbooks filled with photos of OT teens skiing, cooking, bowling, and dressed to impress in their formal best (feel free to stop by and take a look; there are some great pictures in there). I often meet OTUSY alumni who talk about the impact their youth group years had on their Jewish identity into adulthood. But sometime around the early 2000s, participation dropped, and about a decade ago we found ourselves with a rich history but no current program to engage our teens.

I can talk at length about the plan we adults put in place behind the scenes to try and change that narrative, but the truth is that had we not had a group of extraordinary kids who were hungry to make USY happen again at OT, we wouldn't be where we are today. Over the last four years, a dedicated group of teens has done the work necessary to reinvigorate our chapter. They created the programs. They called (and texted and Instagrammed) their friends to invite them to attend. They worked with their advisor to learn more about how other chapters find success. They gave time and attention to Machar (3rd-5th grade) and Kadima (6th-8th grade), because they understood the importance of building a program at the youngest ages. And they kept at it, even when, in those early days, it felt like they were pushing a big rock up an even bigger hill.



Corner Pocket



Ticonderoga Farms



Pre-Chanukah Limo Hop

When they brought back that banner last spring, I met with our triumphant USY board members and I made sure they understood what their win really meant. I told them it was not a finish line but a starting line, that our goal wasn't to be "chapter of the year" but to be "chapter that gets better every year." They took that charge seriously, I know they think about it every time they have a meeting, run a program, or participate in a regional event.

So where are we now? Some examples:

- Our fall kickoff event saw 40-plus kids gather at The Corner Pocket for games, food, and fun.
- A few weeks before Thanksgiving, 20 high schoolers stood in front of easels painting on our Bob Ross Paint Night.
- Thirty Machar and Kadimaniks headed out for hayrides and s'mores on a sunny Sunday morning at Ticonderoga Farms.
- In late December, 22 OTUSY members joined us for our Pre-Chanukah Limo Hop, where they visiting the homes of several OT members for a fried food festival of flavors.
- Over 50 Machar and Kadimaniks participated in a pair of chocolate and cookie-themed events right before winter break.
- During winter break we sent our largest delegation in years to International Convention in California .
- A group of USYers is hard at work creating a Purim play they will perform at Greenspring Village in early March.

As we move into the second half of the year, our teens continue to create programming and work to support the success of all of our youth programs. And they are also impacting the larger USY movement. We've got OT teens on both regional and international board, a tremendous accomplishment for a program that only just restarted a few years ago.

Most importantly, we have kids just beginning their USY adventures, freshmen and sophomores who are energized by what they see older teens doing and who want to be a part of that experience, and middle schoolers eager for their chance to join USY in a year or two. And that is the greatest testament to the work these "founding members" have done. They are no longer building a program for themselves. They are building a program for the OT kids coming long after them.



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to Karolyn Hastings

Rachel & Eric Trest, on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Nathan

Leslie & Irvin Varkonyi, on the marriage of their son,
Peter Varkonyi, to Lauren Stevens

Condolence

We acknowledge the passing of ...

Milton Fort, uncle of Daniel Fort

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for replacing the broken freezer
with a brand new. working freezer!*

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B'nei Mitzvah

Saturday, March 14

Alicia Faye Feldman,

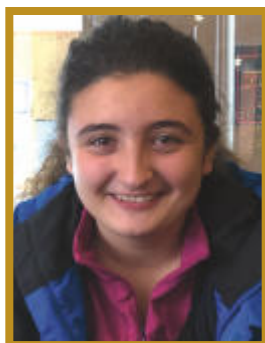
daughter of Leslie Frieden & Seth Feldman, and big sister to Ilana, is a 7th-grade honor roll student at Geshar Jewish Day School. She especially enjoys playing basketball for Geshar and local teams and dancing ballet. Over the years, Alicia has performed in many dance and musical theater productions. Alicia is excited to celebrate her bat mitzvah with family and friends from Virginia, Maryland, and Michigan. For her mitzvah project, Alicia is planning to volunteer for the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes.

Parashat Ki Tissa



Saturday, March 21

Elana Anna Calderon,



daughter of Ilisa & Andrew, sister of Michael and David, turned 13 on January 25, 2020, but she agreed to have her bat mitzvah on March 21, 2020, so that bad weather would not prevent her guests from celebrating with her. Elana attends seventh grade at Rachel Carson Middle School in Herndon, where she studies the Japanese language, which she has been learning since the first grade.

Elana brings the best of Sephardic and Ashkenazic culture together into one person! She was named for four people: her nonnie, her dad (both Sephardic), a great great aunt, and her great grandmother (both Ashkenazic). Just like her nonnie, Esther Calderon, who passed away in 2018, Elana is an avid baker. Both her nonnie, and her grandfather, Gilbert Goldstein, who passed away in 2017, will be in our thoughts during Elana's special day.

Parashat Va'yakhel



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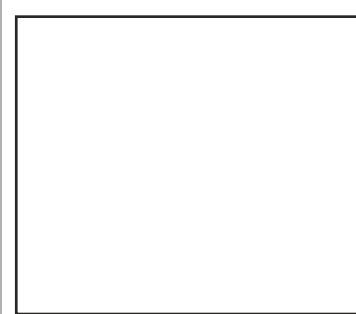
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MARCH 2020

SUN	1	1:30pm	Sisterhood Persian-Style Jewelry Making Workshop
SAT	7	7:00pm	Spring Fundraiser: Purim Las Vegas Style
SUN	8	11:00am	Pre-Purim Grogger Workshop
MON	9	6:45pm	Purim Evening Service
TUE	10	8:00am	Purim Morning Service
SUN	22	10:00am	Young Families Passover Experience
SAT	28	9:30am	Kabbalat Siddur and Spring Training Kiddush
SUN	29	10:00am	Israeli Folk Dance Class

APRIL 2020

SUN	5	9:45am	Men's Club Spring Brunch
WED	8		Erev Pesach
FRI	17	7:15pm	Shir HaLev Chorale performs for Kabbalat Shabbat at Greenspring
SUN	19	9:45am	Clothing Swap
			Men's Club Electronics Recycling
			Young Families Play Date
WED	22	7:05pm	Men's Club Nationals Game
SUN	26	9:00am	Good Deeds Day
		6:00pm	Abba Steak Dinner
WED	29	11:30am	World of Hope Golf Tournament

