



The Centre Call

GERMANTOWN JEWISH CENTRE

www.GermantownJewishCentre.org

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By Rabbi Adam Zeff

Freedom From Something, Freedom For Something

In the story of the Exodus from Egypt, God sends Moses to Pharaoh with the same message again and again: *Sh'lah et 'ami v'ya'avduni* – “Let My people go that they may serve Me” (see for example Exodus 7:16). The Etz Hayim commentary notes, “The popular phrase is ‘Let My people go,’ but the Bible never uses that phrase without adding the reason and purpose for the Israelites’ freedom. Freedom was more than release from bondage; it provided the opportunity to serve God. It was not only freedom from something; it was freedom for something” (page 359).

Despite this repeated formulation, even the Israelites have a hard time remembering that their freedom has a purpose beyond liberation from slavery. Thrust into the wilderness, they struggle to find their way, and they resist God’s oft-heard instruction that they are intended to be a holy people, not simply people who are not-slaves. Instead, they concentrate on what they are free from, and they take advantage of their ability to do what they want and say what they please to defy both Moses and God.

Maybe this is not so surprising. At first glance, serving God looks an awful lot like slavery. It is certainly not a democracy. God unilaterally imposes rules and regulations, rituals and laws, and very little is explained or justified. God demands obedience and threatens punishment. And the Israelites seem to have few choices. Of course they

resist – it must look to them like the new boss (God) is the same as the old boss (Pharaoh)!

Only gradually do the Israelites and their descendants – that’s us – come to realize that there is a crucial difference between serving a human being and serving God. The commandments of a human ruler are designed primarily to serve the ruler, not the people. But the commandments of God are designed primarily to serve the people, to ennoble them and push them toward a higher purpose than their own self-interest. To serve God is to realize the immense potential of being human, of living a life dedicated to abstract principles like love, justice, and freedom, rather than just focusing on our own material needs and desires.

To give even this kind of divine service a chance requires liberation from human rulers, but that is only the first step, the “freedom from something.” The whole point of liberation is to provide the opportunity to put that freedom to work, to discover the “freedom for something” that is at the heart of the Jewish path.

In recent months, the political world has been full of talk of freedom, but it is notable that overwhelmingly, this talk is about “freedom from something.” People argue that we should be free from regulation, free from taxes, or even free from obligations like caring for the poor or advocating for

human rights in the world. Rarely is there any mention of what this freedom is for. In what way will it ennoble us? How will it make our human world more divine? Too often, the answer is silence.

As we move through this time between the liberation of Pesach and the receiving of Torah at Shavuot, we need to think carefully about how we are using the freedom we have been given. Are we simply glorying in our “freedom from something?” Or are we putting our freedom to work in pushing the world toward a higher state of being? Are we making our freedom truly stand for something?

“Let My people go that they may serve Me.” May we have the wisdom and the strength to justify God’s confidence that our liberation will truly serve a higher purpose than our own desires, and may the “freedom for something” that was always God’s plan for us take us all the way to Mt. Sinai, finding joy in the service of the divine.

Program Highlights

Yom ha-Atz'ma'ut Dinner, Film & Discussion	May 2
Women's Club Torah Fund Brunch	May 7
HAZAK Film & Discussion	May 17
Red Cross Blood Drive	May 21
Women's Club Shopping & Dinner	May 21
Memorial Day Weekend Potluck Picnic & Outdoor Music Jam-a-long	May 28
Tikkun Leyl Shavuot	May 30-31
Annual Meeting	June 14
Shabbat Morning JAM (Jewish Arts & Movement)	June 17



Shabbat & Holiday Chai-Lites

May 6

- BBMM Shabbat
- Chai Service: HAZAK Shabbat

May 12 & 13

- Early Childhood Program: Grandparents & Special Friends Shabbat
- Parashat ha-Shavua B'Ivrit

May 19 & 20

- Tot Shabbat
- Chai Service: Confirmation
- Kol D'mamah
- Musical Marching Minyan

June 2 & 3

- BBMM Family Shabbat Dinner
- Chai Service: Chai Appreciation Shabbat
- Musical Marching Minyan

June 10

- Parashat ha-Shavua B'Ivrit

June 17

- Shabbat Morning JAM

June 23

- Kol Zimrah

Kabbalat Shabbat /Kol Zimrah/Tot Shabbat

Fridays at 6:00 PM *(unless otherwise noted above)*

Shabbat Morning

Services at 10:00 AM *(unless otherwise noted above)*

Kol D'mamah at 11:00 AM

Musical Marching Minyan at 11:00 AM

Parshat ha-Shavua b'Ivrit at 11:00 AM

Shabbat Morning Kids Space - Room 305

Kids are welcome to play Shabbat-friendly games in Room 305 - bring your own and some will be provided.

Please respect the space, clean up after yourselves and put all games away after use.



(March 2017 - April 2017)

IN CELEBRATION...

Reena and Aryeh Friedman, on the marriage of their daughter, Tamar, to Aaron Wilson

David and Marcy Fish, on the birth of their 3rd granddaughter, Zoe Fish Ain

Anna & Phill Goldberg, on the birth of their son

Rachel Falkove & Michael Masch, on the wedding of their son, Sol

Jake & Linda Kriger, on the birth of their grandson

Benjamin Axelrod, son of David Axelrod & Keira Chism Axelrod, on becoming Bar Mitzvah

Caleb Mendelsohn, son of Alan Mendelsohn & Mindy Shapiro, on becoming Bar Mitzvah

Marcia Landesberg, on the occasion of her 90th birthday

Lynne Ellis, on the occasion of her special birthday

Sam & Connie Katz, on the birth of their granddaughter

IN MEMORIAM

Shirley Spicehandler, mother of Reena Spicehandler

Saul Spodek, brother of Howard Spodek

Bruce Elfenbein, longtime member of GJC

Margalit Berdugo, mother of Albert

Richard Rosenbaum, longtime member of GJC, father of

Beth Rosenbaum

Beryl Kate Liberman, mother of Tamar Jacobson

Libby Barkan, grandmother of Craig Barkan

Welcome back to

Lisa Baum

Ross Mattio

Leiah Moser



Join the Ner Tamid Society by Making a Planned Gift to GJC

Please consider making a planned gift to the Germantown Jewish Centre's endowment fund. Planned gifts come in many forms, including for example, charitable gift annuities, life insurance, trusts, or even a bequest in your will.

For more information about how you can join the Ner Tamid Society please contact the office.



ISRAELI DANCING

Sundays (Sept-June) & Wednesdays (July-Aug)
May through June 18 at 10:00 AM

(Summer sessions resume on Wednesday evenings in July)

Taught by our wonderful, experienced dance teacher, Grant Shulman, GJC's Israeli dance group welcomes dancers of all ages and levels. We begin each session with 45 minutes of beginner dances, followed by instruction, review, open dancing and requests with increasing levels of difficulty. GJC's dance group is proud to be friendly and inclusive. For more information, contact Tamar Magdovitz at tamarmagdovitz@gmail.com.

President's Message



By Chip Becker, GJC President

With Passover behind us, Shavuot ahead of us, and spring in full bloom, I have many people to thank for their contribution to Germantown Jewish Centre.

As always, I would thank our professional staff for their stewardship of our building and everything that happens within it. Eric Word and his maintenance staff perform daily miracles in keeping the building safe, clean, and prepared for upcoming events. They were especially great during the March storm that dropped inches of wet, heavy snow in the area -- staying late and arriving early to make sure the grounds were plowed, cleared, and salted so people could walk safely. Their efforts around the snowstorm are characteristic of their daily contributions to the synagogue. It is difficult to quantify the value of our maintenance personnel given how terrific they are. Mainly we should sing their praises.

I invite you to welcome John Frusciano to our administrative team. John is the guy at the front desk when you walk into the office. I have come to know him over the last few months, and I am confident that when you encounter him, you will agree with me that he is pleasant, competent, effective, and an excellent presence in the synagogue. John is working with Rebecca Paquet under Nina Peskin's supervision on performing all manner of administrative tasks that are required to keep the synagogue organized and efficient. I realize some of you remember a time when Germantown Jewish Centre had barely any administrative staff at all. Today, this is a \$2.2 million operation that provides an almost dizzying array of services and programs, some of which (like our Early

Childhood Program) are extensively regulated by the Commonwealth, and others of which (like acknowledging contributions to the synagogue) are not necessarily complicated but require time and attention. At this point, it's hard to imagine our synagogue working well without the full-time support of people like John and Rebecca, who is also a tremendous asset.

I have a few congregants to thank as well. A lot of them, actually -- Marilyn Kraut especially, along with Sandy Meyer, Marcy Fish, and everybody involved in Women's Club for the Purim Bash that Women's Club conceived and sponsored. The Purim Bash this year was vital, fun and full of great items for auction. It also was full of people and surely the best subscribed Purim Bash yet. Certainly we owe a debt of gratitude to Women's Club for the concrete financial support it provides the synagogue. That generous support is vital to the synagogue's budget, but the Purim Bash has emerged as something more -- an opportunity for all of us to spend time together, have fun together, and enjoy each other's company. This is a gift in its own right.

Another Purim event that encouraged our entire community to be together was the Saturday evening Megillah reading in which our different prayer communities gathered as one. This was another well-attended, vital and joyful event that allowed people from different parts of the GJC community to visit and spend time with one another. We have seen a few more opportunities like this in recent months, including the congregational Kiddush that followed the Wolfe Memorial Shabbat, and the Shabbat of Unity during which Rabbi Zeff gathered us for an extraordinary program of reflection following the desecration of the Mount Carmel cemetery and bomb threats made against Jewish community centers nationwide. That program featured re-

marks not only by our friend and congregant, Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz, but also by several Christian and Muslim clergy in our broader community with whom Rabbi Zeff has built relationships and who sought to express their personal solidarity and grief concerning that terrible event.

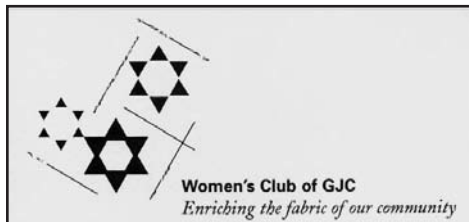
A crucial strength of GJC lies in the vitality and integrity of its multiple communities. But as these recent experiences have taught me, there is something valuable in finding opportunities for the entire GJC community to spend time together. Those opportunities allow people to meet and visit with one another. They encourage mutual support and friendship. They enable us to join together in song and prayer. I am hopeful that we can continue to create opportunities for togetherness by the entire congregation. As a whole, GJC is an amazing institution. Every once in a while it's great to see the entire energy of the institution energizing the same space. That energy reminds us of our collective strength and vigor and gives strength to our individual communities just as those individual communities give strength to the whole.

I hope everybody had a great Pesach and that you are enjoying the spring weather. Marta joins me in wishing you all the best.

**Germantown Jewish Centre
would like to extend thanks
and gratitude to the
Wolfe Family Foundation
for generously supporting
and making our
programming possible.**

Women's Club News

By Marcy Fish and Sandy Meyer (Co-Presidents)



Programs

In March, we continued our theme on health related issues and had a spirited and informative program on **"Jewish Responses to People with Disabilities."** Larry Berger, our presenter, noted that society has seen big changes in social attitudes about people with disabilities. He helped us to visualize that there are lessons to be found in our Jewish tradition as to how we can learn from our friends and family members who may have physical or mental challenges.

Women's Shabbat

The 40th Anniversary of Women's

Shabbat took place in April. Our scholars-in-residence, Rabbi Dayle Friedman and Rabbi Danielle Stillman, absolutely inspired us on many levels to imagine **"What's Next? Feminist Visions for the Future of Judaism"** and how we can all be a part of that vision.

Torah Fund

Torah Fund Brunch will be Sunday May 7, at 11 AM. We are honoring our devoted past president Dena Lake. This year's Torah Fund pin has the phrase P're Yadehah, which means "the fruit of her hands", a phrase from Eishet Chayil in the Book of Proverbs (31:31). What better tribute to Dena, who has produced so many good deeds and accomplishments for all of us through her involvement at GJC. Our speaker will be Rabbi Annie Lewis. Annie is a

poet, activist and therapist in training as well as our former Assistant Rabbi. Her topic will be: "Stories in Moral Courage".

Donations to Torah Fund are part of Women's League's campaign to raise money for the Jewish Theological Seminary Women's Programs to support the education of future rabbis, cantors, educators and scholars who will serve as the gifted leaders and innovators of the Conservative Movement. If you would like to purchase a Torah Fund pin, please contact Yona Dansky at ydansky@gmail.com. Donations for this event will also be welcome at the door. Torah Fund Brunch will be at the home of Kathy and George Amron, 8319 Seminole St in Chestnut Hill. We hope you will join us for this special occasion.

2017 Purim Bash

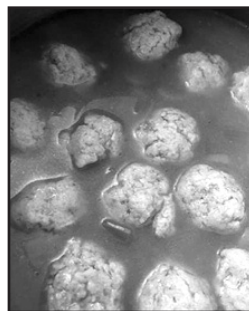
We had a larger-than-ever-before crowd with members from every GJC community. This set the stage for great energy and fun, and fostered new relationships within GJC.

- We broke records for fund-raising for the event, thanks to the generous support of GJC members and guests, through Sponsor and Patron donations and generous bidding on our outstanding auction items.
- This financial support assures that Women's Club can fulfill our annual goals to support many projects throughout the synagogue from religious school, Shabbat babysitting, school treats, Women's Shabbat to GJC annual operating budget.
- For more information about the many ways that Women's Club supports a wide array of GJC programs and activities, go to our Women's Club link on the GJC website.
- We would appreciate any feedback on this year's event or ideas for the future. Please send this to this year's Event Chair, Marilyn Kraut at mkkraut1@gmail.com.



Early Childhood Program (ECP)

By Jodi Gordon, ECP Director



The ECP is bustling with creative energy this spring. We celebrated Purim with a very festive Purim parade and retelling of Megillat Esther by Rabbi Adam and Rabbi Alanna. The children and teachers also baked hamantashen, created their own groggers, and prepared gift baskets for the Seniors at Symphony Square in Bala Cynwyd. It was a very joyous occasion for all.

GJC's Purim Bash was a big hit this year with our ECP families. Our very own ECP children and teachers worked very hard creating collaborative art projects to be auctioned off at the Purim Bash, and all of the proceeds from these auction items will go towards purchasing new material for Camp Keshet! Thank you to the Women's Club, Addie Lewis Klein and all of the ECP Teachers and Families for making this a huge success!

April means Spring finally arrived and we celebrated Passover! Each of our ECP classes was extremely busy preparing for Passover including planting parsley, preparing matzo ball soup, and designing their very own Seder plates. Each classroom celebrated Passover with their very own interactive Seder. It was a very special time for all.

Happy Spring!

Did you know that GJC offers a \$250 referral incentive for bringing new families into the Early Childhood Program? For more details on how you can earn \$250, please contact the ECP Director, Jodi Gordon, at 215-844-1510 or ecp@germantownjewishcentre.org.

The Humans of THE LITTLE SHOP

Hours

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Mon	closed
Tues	12-5 pm
Wed	12-7:30 pm
Thurs/Fri	12-5 pm



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crafted using traditional
techniques and local
resources. It's a mitzvah to
purchase and all profits
support communities in
Africa and South America.**



Special Discounts

- May: 10% off challah boards, plates, knives and covers
- Summer: 10% Sale!

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

May 9

Lineup

by Liad Shoham

June 13

The Paris Architect

by Charles Belfoure

**Tuesdays at 7:15 PM
in the Quitman Library**



Men's Club News

By David Fish and Dick Menin (Co-Presidents)

Germantown Jewish Centre describes itself as a "Community of Communities" and even has magnetic plaques to show it. Although some may take this as a reason to participate in only one aspect of what is offered, we think this is an invitation to sample many of the interest groups that are available. This includes prayer communities, adult education devotees and the Women's and Men's clubs, to name but a few. Both of the latter act as synagogue support organizations as well as fellowship venues, allowing people who meet at services to develop deeper relationships.

The Men's Club does this with periodic meetings at which featured

speakers encourage discussion about topics, both religious and secular, in addition to those that are purely entertaining. This year we have added working with the Jewish Relief Agency to prepare and distribute food to our less fortunate brethren, predominantly in northeast Philadelphia. This is a very well-run program that accomplishes its mission for its recipients as well as strengthening the community of workers. The endeavor is appropriate for people 8 years old and above. It takes place the first Sunday of each month from 8:30 a.m. to about noon.

One of our other signature projects is the "Dancing Children Hanukkah". It has been a fixture at GJC for 15 years and is enjoyed and appreciated by both

the synagogue family as well as those in the neighborhood. We need people to erect it and take it down. Currently, all our builders remember "Ike" (Eisenhower). If we want the tradition to continue, we need people with no personal knowledge of the 50s! Yes, it's cold when we are putting it up but it doesn't take all that long and it's not that physically difficult. To quote Tom Sawyer, if you give me an apple I'll let you swing the sledge. Or paint.

Look to the Shabbat bulletin and Centre website for announcement of upcoming programs. Please don't hesitate to contact David Fish or Dick Menin, co-presidents, with any questions or program ideas.

GJC Purim Megillah and Spiel

By Hillary Kruger



This year's "Soul City" rendition of the Purim Megillah was a groovy time to be sure! Led by Rabbi Adam "Ain't No Sunshine when She's Gone" Zeff and "Soul Man" Jake Kriger, the evening kicked off with a musical beat. The GJC "Gospel Choir" set the pace for a joyful vibe. Our incredible Rabbi Zeff produced an entire running commentary to the whole Megillah which was both witty and insightful. This commentary, which was presented as an accompanying slide show in synch with the Megillah reading, served both to explain and highlight the political, sexual, and moral dilemmas in the text. There was an all-star cast of Megillah readers and much bell-ringing for Esther and booing for Haman. The G'vanim band kept the energy going and the crowd was dancing in the aisles. If this was not enough, the annual Purim Spiel was led by punster Joel Fish. There were many fine performances from our talented community. Let's nosh some Hammantaschen!



GJC Alumni

GJC Alumni in Israel: Mollie Bernstein

This is the third in a series of articles written by and about the lives and work of young people who grew up in our congregation and are now living in Israel. Our author this issue is Mollie Bernstein, who is the daughter of long-time GJC members, Rabbi Kevin Bernstein and Rebecca Meyer.

I moved back to Israel in the fall of 2015 just as a wave of violence, now referred to as the Knife Intifada, broke out. Living in Israel during a time of increased tensions between Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, held new weight for me after reaching fluency in Arabic and living in Morocco for a year. Seeking to utilize my language skills, I joined and helped launch a project entitled *0202: A View from East Jerusalem*. As a one of the lead English editors, I help create a news digest of real-time Facebook posts, translated from Arabic into both Hebrew and English, providing the average Israeli access to the daily realities facing Palestinian residents of Jerusalem.

For the first time, I was able to recognize the disparities in media reports of the ongoing violence. One

specific incident involved an Arab woman in the Jewish city of Afula, shot by a security guard. Hebrew language press covered the story as a successful thwarting of another in a long thread of terrorist attacks; Arabic language media discussed her martyrdom, a knife placed next to her in photos validating Jewish-Israeli aggression against Arabs. These vastly different narratives have motivated me to begin working towards a master's degree, grounded in my observation that if neighbors are communicating in parallel but never with one another, the Middle East will never change.

This year in the framework of my master's program at Tel Aviv University, I began studying Farsi. I am planning on spending 2 months this summer in an immersion program in Tajikistan improving my language skills. When

I return, I will start writing my thesis analyzing the reciprocal relationship between identity and media in the Middle East, comparing Farsi, Arabic, and Hebrew news sources and social media.

My experience living in Israel as a Jewish Arabic speaker provides me with access to a new perspective. In my role working at the Abraham Fund Initiatives, an NGO that works towards increased integration and equality for Israel's Arab citizens, I'm constantly exposed to the gaps between Israel's Jewish and Arab populations, gaps rarely discussed or even seen by the Jewish mainstream. In the future, I hope to continue working to improve equality among Israel's diverse citizenry, applying my language skills to advocate for those less privileged than I.

HAZAK News

By Helen Feinberg & Coleman Poses

HAZAK has been having fun! On a cold Sunday morning in February, we woke up and smelled the coffee, literally, when Josh Peskin treated us to a talk on the history of coffee, how to choose it, how to roast it, and how to taste the different qualities of various coffees. We had two or three pots going at once, people tasted bitter, chocolate-y, fruity, smooth and less-smooth brews, while having a bagels-and-lox breakfast. We're hoping for a similar event with Josh next year – tasting beer!

On March 19, Francis Hoeber (a friend of Iz Kranzel, who recommended this idea) spoke to HAZAK about his book, *Against Time: Letters from Nazi Germany, 1938-1939*.

In the late 1990's, Mr. Hoeber discovered among his mother's effects a

stash of letters written by his parents during the year in which his father left Germany, (leaving his wife and daughter behind), arrived in Philadelphia, and miraculously attained a job working in city planning in Philadelphia. The letters tell of the great longing his parents had to be reunited, as well as the increasing horrors of life in Germany, including Kristallnacht, which occurred after his father left. Mr. Hoeber read extensively from the letters, as well as engaging the group in his photo presentation. He engaged us in a stimulating, thought-provoking discussion and, we hope, sold several of his books.

Our event plans include a visit to the LaSalle University Art Museum, a wonderful cultural secret in Philadelphia, on Wednesday, April 26. Stay tuned for details.



HAZAK members enjoy Josh Peskin's program on the history of coffee.

Our book group read and raved about Michael Chabon's *Moonglow* in March. The next meeting of the book group is Wednesday, April 19, and members will be discussing Matti Friedman's *The Pumpkin Flower*. Our book in May will be *Elsewhere Perhaps*, by Amos Oz.

Finally, please join us for HAZAK Shabbat on Saturday, May 6, when we will participate in services, have a delicious lunch and hear Milt Cohen tell the story of "Challah's in the Ark."

Member Spotlight

By Linda Kriger



Donald Joseph and members of his family.

Donald Joseph, who likes to describe himself as a wise guy, gives his age when asked, as a prime number squared, times a prime number. (In other words, he's 75). Donald regularly attends Shabbat services at Dorshei Derech Derekh and has organized several special Shabbat services for Dorshei and the larger GJC community.

Donald attended M.I.T as an undergraduate. He wasn't really interested in science, but he was very good at math and majored in physics. After graduating, Donald went to the Silicon Valley for a year to work in research and development for a semiconductor company, only five or six years after the first commercialization of the solid state transistor semiconductor. "I had a great time," he remembers. "Then Kennedy was shot. I said to myself, this country is screwed up; I'm going into the Peace Corps."

In the third year of its existence, the Peace Corps sent Donald to Ghana in 1964. His father died while Donald was on vacation in Nigeria and he was called home. "I came home to a manic depressive mother," Donald said.

"When I was in Silicon Valley, I'd been admitted to Penn Law School." The law school application was a result of sibling rivalry. "My older brother had a law degree. It was like, 'He had a Jaguar, I must have a Jaguar,'" Donald said, with a smile. "I had to compete with him. Ironically, it turned out to be a very good choice.

I loved law school. It was an escape from not knowing what to do, and I found something that was really fascinating." As it happened, his brother left the law for real estate development.

Now focused on the law, Donald clerked for the chief judge of the U.S. District Court of Maryland in Baltimore. He returned to Philadelphia and joined the litigation department of a prominent law firm for "the prestige, experience, and the money." He spent 40 years at Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen, one of Philadelphia's best-known firms; he served 19 years as partner and the rest as a retired partner, called "Of Counsel."

"My sole obligation then was to keep client secrets secret," Don said. "Furthermore, I had an office and could use the secretarial staff. I was retired at 53 and could go on do what I really wanted to do – teach." Wolf Block went out of business in 2009 and with it, the life time pension twenty or more retired partners, including Don, had earned.

Donald had wanted to teach since high school, but said he was sidetracked by the common Jewish goal of 'making a good living.' His first appointment was at Penn State's Dickinson School of Law, followed by a two-year joint appointment at Temple and Rutgers-Camden. At Rutgers, for the remainder of his teaching career, his principal area was legal ethics. He also taught Poverty Law; a seminar on Business, Ethics, and Law; Legal Research & Writing; and Professionalism, the last he created to introduce the entire first-year class to the core values of the profession. Among the three schools, Donald taught for two decades, retiring in the spring of 2015.

Donald met his wife, Harriet in 1974 through his cousin's wife. "Harriet moved from Boston to Philadelphia and was told to look up two people," Donald said. "One is my cousin's wife and another was a lawyer whom I had known

for years." Interested in teaching law to younger children, she came to Philadelphia to be the principal trainer of teachers on how to teach law in public schools, a program located out of Temple's law school. She then received a doctorate from Temple.

"It was love at first phone call," he said, only partially joking. "I come home on a Monday night and as I'm watching the Red Sox on TV, I call her. I say something like, 'Oh, you're from Boston. I bet you don't know a pitcher for the Red Sox, named Rogel...' when she interrupts, saying, 'You mean Rogelio Moret.' I was in love."

Donald asked Harriet to marry him two weeks before he knew he would become a partner at Wolf Block. They married in 1976 and have two children, Rachel and Seth.

For the last decade, Harriet has been director of CURF, the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, which gives the crème de la crème the opportunity to do extra-curricular, non-graded research with faculty. CURF also serves as a pipeline and organizer for Penn students to shoot for prestigious fellowships including the Marshall and the Rhodes.

Donald joined a high-pressure law firm and achieved 'Best Lawyers in America' for environmental litigation." He met his pro bono obligations to his profession by serving on the board of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia ("PILCOP) for over 30 years, including three years as chairman, and later four years as vice chairman.

When Donald and Harriet lived in Center City and even after they moved to Mt. Airy, their synagogue was the Society Hill synagogue, where Donald served on the executive committee as treasurer. "The rabbi, Ivan Caine, re-introduced us to religion," Donald

said. "He had a book of readings for services that included Emily Dickinson, he didn't talk about an anthropomorphic God, and he was intellectually fascinating."

Synagogue politics gone bad brought them to Germantown Jewish Center in 1990, an action Don called the best Jewishly-related decision of their lives. His first leadership role here was to co-chair the Goodbye Shabbat for Rabbi Hahn.

When Rabbi Gordon arrived and Marty Kaplan became president, Donald put together an ad hoc committee of former presidents to find a new executive director.

"I was on the board here for a term or two but I no longer felt the need to participate in synagogue leadership," he said. "But I did co-chair with Dan Bacine a by-laws revision committee."

A few years later, he ran the committee to honor Ed Polisher on his 90th birthday. Ed had been the Centre's first president, and a prominent and beloved lawyer in the Philadelphia community.

Don's main interest soon became Dorshei. To get to know the minyan, he became its treasurer and held that position for eight years.

Stefan Presser was an ACLU leader, a member of Dorshei, and his friend. When Stefan died, money was given to set up the Presser Shabbat. There have been 10 of them and "I've been chair or co-chair for at least four," Don said. "To learn about the subject matter, find the right speakers for an area of public interest connected to Stefan's legacy, and then put on the program has been both great fun," Donald said. "It also was an opportunity to work with extraordinarily talented members of the

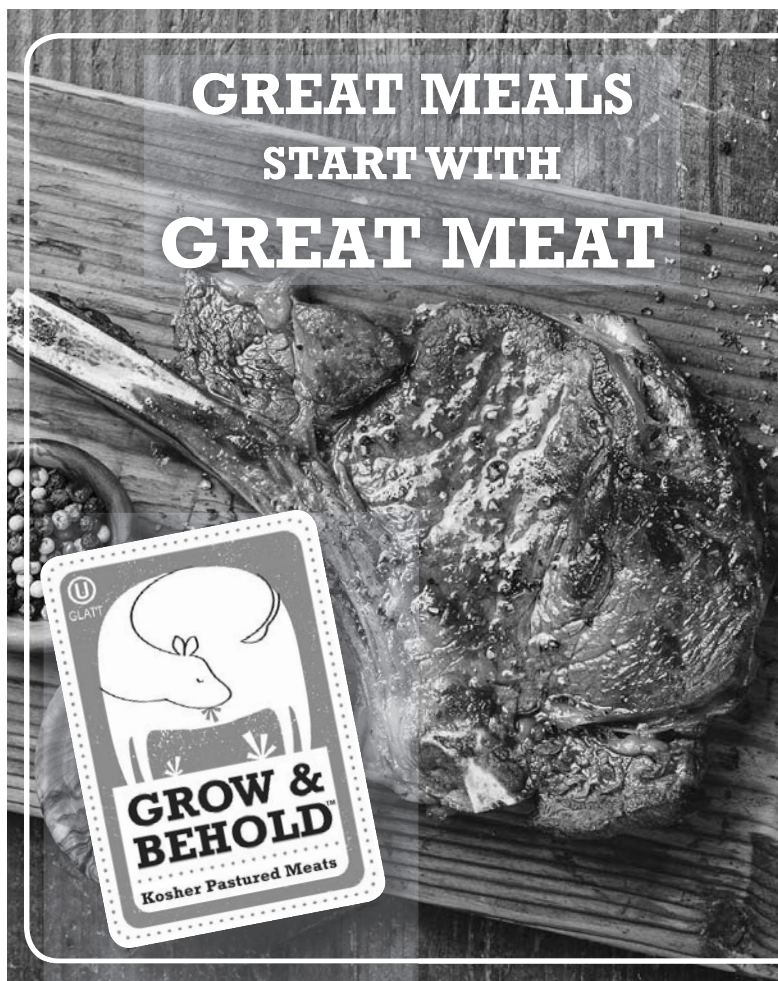
Presser committee, including Betsy Teutsch, David Mosenkis, and Malka Bina Klein."

Every year, Donald sponsors a birthday Shabbat "I get David Mosenkis and Leah Weisman to lead a chanting service. "I then give the dvar torah and afterwards, in order to thank the minyan for all it gives to me, I sponsor a full Kiddush lunch."

Donald appreciates not only the Dorshei minyan, but GJC as a whole. "GJC is a hugely diverse community with extraordinary dedication to service and diversity in the wider community, a respect for accomplishment and intellectuality, and, especially in Dorshei, ruach (spirit.)"

At the age of a prime squared times a prime, Donald is very grateful for the richness of his life, of which the Centre is a prominent part.

GREAT MEALS START WITH GREAT MEAT



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Memorial Day Weekend Potluck Picnic & Music Jam-a-long

Sunday, May 28 at 12 PM

Come and relax with your friends and family, let the children play together, and enjoy an afternoon of picnic fare and fun, music and good conversation. \$5/adult (pay at "door" - drinks & beer included). RSVP to let us know that you are coming, provide your potluck dish (and instrument if you are planning on jamming'), and the type of music you'd like to hear and/or play!

www.germantownjewishcentre.org/memorial-day-2017



Philadelphia Jewish Life

with Rabbi Robert Tabak (begins Tuesday, May 9)

Come explore key periods and expressions of Jewish life in Philly, from the early history of its Jewry to how Philly became a center of moderate traditional Judaism. We will start before WWI, looking at mass immigration, then discuss "Americanization," neighborhood life, the rise of Conservative/Reform Judaism, new roles for women, and responses to the rise of Nazism. We will end with a modern look at Philly Jews, changes in neighborhoods, religious life, and concerns with Israel and Soviet Jewry. There will be two field trips (described in "Out & About in Jewish Philadelphia").

**4 Sessions + 2 Field Trips: Tuesday 7-9 PM
May 9, 16, 23 & June 4 (field trips on May 21 & May 30)**

**GJC Members \$120 / Non-Members \$135
(field trips included in class fee)**

Out & About in Jewish Philadelphia

with Rabbi Robert Tabak

Explore key periods and expressions of Jewish life in Philly with two opportunities to get out and about in Jewish Philadelphia! These field trips are part of the Philadelphia Jewish Life 4-week class, but taking the class is not a pre-requisite. The field trips are exciting opportunities on their own!

Field trip #1: 10:30 AM, Sunday, May 21 - Join us as we journey to the oldest local synagogue building in continuous use: Bnai Abraham in Society Hill.

Field trip #2: 10:30 AM, Tuesday, May 30 - We travel to Frank Memorial Synagogue, Albert Einstein Medical Center. Built in 1901, the synagogue is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Each Field Trip: GJC Members \$20 / Non-Members \$35

Urban Environmental Injustice with Becca Richman (Sunday, May 7)

Join Rabbinic Intern Becca Richman for an adult education program about the intersection of environmental justice and social justice. This interactive learning program will explore Philadelphia's history, broader patterns of environmental racism, and an ethic of Jewish responsibility. Bring a (vegetarian) lunch!

Workshop: Sunday, May 7, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM GJC Members \$20 / Non-Members \$35

Lifelong Learning at Germantown Jewish Centre • Register by emailing program@germantownjewishcentre.org

Tikkun Olam Update

PIHN – Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network: the Organization behind GJC's Outreach to Homeless families

By Rachel Falkove, PIHN Executive Director and GJC member

For the past 25 years, GJC members have been faithfully caring for family clients of the Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (PIHN), preparing meals, serving as dinner hosts and sleeping overnight to make sure that our guests are comfortable and have what they need. The intention and generosity that over one hundred volunteers have put into this work is truly impressive! For the seasoned organizer types among us, sustaining interest in a volunteer effort like PIHN's over so many years, given all the Tikkun Olam causes that require attention, is nothing short of phenomenal.

PIHN has certain core values that inform its program. They are:

- **Family preservation is best served by enabling families to stay together in-shelter**, and by offering a trauma-informed, holistic approach that engages each family member
- **Basic needs must be met before families can begin focusing on self-sufficiency goals**
- **Access to education and training opportunities is key to upward mobility**, within and across generations
- **Access to continued follow-up and support leads to long term success**

Much of the progress our guests make happens outside of their stay at the congregation. That's essentially the place where the basic needs are met. The program at **PIHN's day center** with weekly **goal setting, budgeting, career/education assistance, trauma informed therapy and art therapy, life-skills education, children's activities and material supports** begins for each family with their stay and continues



Photos of our recent guests

long after they have moved on to housing. Some families cannot fully take advantage of the services while in PIHN's program, and avail themselves of the help once out. While PIHN does offer classes in parenting, budgeting, etc, during the time in the congregational shelter program, they have found that much of the learning is integrated afterwards, in a more personal context and frequently after making a few mistakes.

So what happens to the families? How do we know PIHN is making a difference? PIHN's office and its volunteers are connected with 130+ families from the past 15 years. The services available to families in its program remain available to them upon leaving. At least 10 alumni come in daily for a budget tweak, to see a therapist, to stretch their tight budget with donated children's clothing or household goods, to file their taxes at no charge, to pick up free recreational tickets, or learn about colleges for themselves and their children. PIHN stays in touch by email and US post and gathers info on each family. They have learned that:

- 92% (119) never required another stay in shelter over the past 15 years
- 30 adults and 22 teens enrolled in college degree programs
- 27 households obtained living wage employment.
- 41 families became market rate

renters (as opposed to subsidized housing) and 9 of these 41 became first time homebuyers.

These are great results for serving such a vulnerable population!

It is PIHN's commitment to partner patiently with each family on their journey that really makes the difference. They do not view families as "cases" that can be opened and closed. Once they bring a family in, they remain in our lives, whether living in our congregations or on their own. There have been many surprises along the way. Sometimes the families who did not seem very interested in parenting while with PIHN become the most attentive parents after their stay. Some of those who seemed like the least ambitious enroll in college and obtain degrees.

The work of caring for people who are experiencing their personal Mitzraim (the Hebrew word for Egypt that literally means "narrow place"), survivors of trauma and those who have suffered extreme loss and betrayal is often challenging. Sometimes it is really disheartening to greet a tired and hopeless family. It is painful to hear them scold their children or watch them sulk and suspiciously pick at lovingly prepared wholesome food. When guests are tired,

continued on next page

Tikkun Olam

Continued from page 11

frustrated, discouraged and worn out, it is difficult to show gratitude. But please know that **the bridge to security that our congregation provides towards a better life makes an incredible impact, even if we don't realize it in the moments during the time we welcome our guests at GJC. Their stop at our congregational home is often the beginning of their journey.**

Our dedicated coordinators, Debbie Stern, Linda Cherkas, Karen Kripke, Louie Asher and our 100+ GJC volunteers, who venture out to welcome our unknown visitors and give so generously of their time do not always get to see the end result of their work. That's why I am writing this article.

While it is not glamorous work, we

are ending homelessness, one family at a time. Thank you to all at GJC, from our staff and administrative team, to our coordinators, to our volunteers, and to our religious school students who share their classrooms with PIHN families.

The next rotation of homeless families at GJC will take place from Sun., June 18 – Sun., July 2. To learn more about helping out when the families stay at GJC, contact Debbie Stern debstern502@msn.com or 215-848-9503. To learn more about how you can help throughout the year, contact Rachel Falkove at PIHN at rachel@philashelter.org or 215-247-4663, x 136.

Refuat HaNefesh Jewish Healing Service



7-8 PM in the
Magil Chapel

May 2

All are welcome to join us for a quiet, reflective, and restorative healing service. We gather once a month to sit in silence, to gently sing, and to share prayers for healing. We pray for ourselves, for people we love, for members of our community, and for the greater world. By being together, we acknowledge that we are not alone in our pain.

GJC's Refuat HaNefesh service combines elements from the Ma'ariv (evening) service with poetry, meditation, and Torah study. No prior experience with Ma'ariv or with healing spaces is necessary. We welcome everyone.



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Pinat haHinuch – Education Corner

Revealing the Torah of our Teens

By Rabbi Alanna Sklover, Director of Lifelong Learning

Each week, on Tuesday evenings, our synagogue is transformed. Absent the gleeful shouts of the ECP students, the sounds of Shabbat morning davening, and the tones of our choir rehearsing, Germantown Jewish Centre buzzes with the conversation, study and cell-phone dinging of our teenagers who gather each week for Teen Tuesdays and Confirmation Class.

For those unfamiliar with our program, in 7-9th grades our post B'nai Mitzvah teenagers enroll in a series of rotating electives (two classes per trimester) delving into topics that interest them. During the first hour, these academic courses focus around three topics: Texts and Tradition, Social Justice and Teen Leadership. During the second hour, students select from a quite diverse set of Jewish cultural offerings, including: cooking, board games in Hebrew, woodworking, film, and the arts. All of these classes are mixed-age, encouraging new friendships and a broader community to develop, outside of the grade-based cohorts in which the students have learned during their pre-B'nai Mitzvah years.

In 10th grade, students embark on a year-long study of Spirituality and World Religion that is unlike anything else they learn during their years at GJC, and serves as a capstone to their years of childhood Jewish learning. Our Confirmation Class curriculum, which is taught by Rabbi Zeff, blends the academic study of religion with visits and immersive experiences to a wide range of houses of worship across Philadelphia's vast faith-scape. Through their study of world religions, our older teens gain both an appreciation (and deeper understanding) of the diversity of religious expression across our region and a more nuanced definition of their own beliefs and personal theology.

I share with you the details of our teen program not only because I am proud of the programming itself, but also because of the ways in which Teen Tuesdays and Confirmation not only build meaningful community amongst our teens but also between our teens and the broader GJC community. We are so grateful that our Teen Tuesday and Confirmation programming is sustained and supported through generous gifts from Chris and Steve Levin and from Marth and Chuck Schleifer. Neither the Schleifers nor the Levins are current parents of teens – which makes their gifts all the more meaningful to us as it demonstrates that true inter-generational value that building Jewish community has to all of us at Germantown Jewish Centre. As our post-B'nai Mitzvah teens begin to spread their wings as young adult members of the GJC community through chanting Torah and Haftarah, working as *madreichim* in our Religious School, serving as Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutors returning as full members of the synagogue after college and in myriad other ways, it is the examples of their teachers, adult mentors, and those who have sustained our programming through their generosity who they carry with them as models for Jewish living and life-long engagement.

As we reflect on the importance and power of cultivating intergenerational connections, I wanted to leave you

not with my words, but with words of Torah from our teens from last spring's *Art and Midrash* class.

Midrash in poetry on *Akeidat Yitzhak* – Genesis 22:1-18

By Ayala Silverman

Abraham, who am I,
that you fear so much
to kill your own son
laid him on a wooden altar,
knife in hand
until the angel cried out
But you still felt the need
to appease — me,
the one who asked for your son
And offered a ram in his stead.

Avraham, who am I,
that you fear so much
to kill your own son
laid him on a wooden altar,
knife in hand
until the angel cried out
But you still felt the need
to appease — me,
the one who asked for your son
and offered a ram in his stead

Midrash in illustration, *Esau Sells his Birthright...* *the Aftermath* – Genesis 25:29-34

By Joanna Charap



In this illustration, we see Jacob's face moments after Esau trades away his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup. Though we think of Jacob as being the one who prevails in this story, here he is depicted with a tear falling down his cheek, as he realizes the damage that has been done to his relationship with his twin brother. As Esau leaves the house, Jacob wonders whether he will ever be able to look his brother in the eye again.

Nedivot haLev (Offerings of the Heart)

By Linda Kriger

On most Tuesday nights during the school year, the corridors of GJC echo with the voices and laughter of post bar and bat mitzvah teenagers who participate in confirmation class and Teen Tuesdays. Martha and Charles Schleifer and Chris and Steve Levin have each just committed to funding the program for the next few years, and GJC is extremely grateful for their generous support.

This is how Martha Schleifer with her husband, Charles, came to support Teen Tuesdays and Confirmation class: "After my grandfather, Samuel Furman, died," she explained, "a prize was set up for kids who went through the confirmation class. Ultimately, it ran out of money. When I spoke with Nina Peskin (GJC's executive director) about refunding it, she said, 'More than a prize, we need support for programming. We have a relatively new program for teens that continues their education and also allows them to teach in the school and get a little bit of compensation for doing that, while they participate in continuing education.'"

The program, designed to engage GJC's teenagers in communal life while they continue their Jewish education, has been successful. The tenth graders in confirmation classes study other religions and interact with them in other places of worship, meeting other clergy and attending worship services. Teens from 8th, 9th, 11th and 12th grades work as *madreichim* (assistant teachers) in the

Religious School, mix together socially and as a result, become engaged in the program and connected to the synagogue.

"Since we're great believers in continuing education," Martha said, "we said we'd help fund it. I went to nursery school at GJC. My father's sister and husband donated the Quitman Library. My uncle, Jay Furman, started the Israel garden. The congregation is a huge part of my life."

Chris and Steve Levin are the other funders of Teen Tuesdays. Chris, former president of GJC, said that she and her husband had less than fond memories of their three children going through confirmation studies at GJC. They generously donated to Teen Tuesdays because "we wanted to provide funds that would be more engaging at a critical time in children's Jewish identity and religious education. After bar and bat mitzvah they don't know how to relate to the congregation," she said. "They lose their connection to synagogue life."

Rabbi Alanna Sklover, Director of Lifelong Learning at GJC, said the structure of the programs is intentional. "Students who work as teachers' assistants meet for leadership development and supervision. Up to 10th grade, every student also participates in Jewish education on Teen Tuesdays or Confirmation class. I've been excited to see how many of our teenagers are motivated to stay connected with GJC even past Confirmation."

Teen Tuesdays is a program that gives teens the opportunity to enter into Jewish studies in ways that interests them in multi-age electives. During the first hour, students pick a more academic class from one of three topics, traditional Jewish



thought and text or tikkun olam (social justice) or teen leadership. The second hour taps into different aspects of Jewish culture, including Jewish comedy, cooking classes, environmental ethics, and a class in which students develop their own personal theology based on the NPR program, "This I Believe".

The number of students in Teen Tuesday and confirmation classes varies from year to year. What is consistent is having the two programs meet on the same night, which builds community among students, Rabbi Sklover said. "Students from 7th-10th grade

get to meet each other and become friends – it becomes more Hebrew High School rather than religious school. Confirmation class also brings our day school and religious school students together, as a single cohort."

In interfaith encounters, the 10th graders in Confirmation class learn about other religions with Rabbi Zeff and interact with clergy of other faiths, go on tours of churches and mosques and experience worship services.

"We see kids stepping up to the Torah, building deeper relationships with each other, choosing particular majors in college that connect to Jewish studies, pur-

suing Jewish leadership on campus, studying abroad in Israel: doing things that are markers of Jewish engagement," Rabbi Sklover said.

Chris and Steve Levin, who began supporting the programs this year, have asked for feedback meetings with students as well as adults who run the programs. Chris hopes that members of GJC will step up and donate to programs that peak their interests, saying, "I hope others will find programs and contribute to things they find important as well."



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Contributions For the period of January, 2017 through March, 2017

Todah Rabbah!

Sincere thanks and appreciation to those who remember to honor their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions.

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Chesed Fund	Wendy Horwitz	in honor of Rabbi Adam Zeff, for his leadership in dark times
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*Please submit all articles via email to
program@germantownjewishcentre.org.
Deadline for the July issue is June 1st.*



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David Fish & Dick Menin
MEN'S CLUB CO-PRESIDENTS

Affiliated with the United Synagogue
of Conservative Judaism

Save the Dates: May - June

May 2:	Yom ha-Atz'ma'ut Israel Programming: Dinner, Film & Discussion
May 6:	Charry Service: HAZAK Shabbat
May 7:	Women's Club Torah Fund Brunch honoring Dena Lake Urban Environmental Injustice Workshop
May 12:	Early Childhood Program's Grandparents & Special Friends Shabbat
May 12-14:	GJC's Annual Family Retreat
May 17:	HAZAK Film & Discussion: <i>Defiant Requiem</i> with Sam Feinberg
May 19:	Tot Shabbat
May 20:	Confirmation
May 21:	Red Cross Blood Drive Women's Club Shopping & Dining
May 28:	Memorial Day Weekend Potluck Picnic & Outdoor Music Jam-a-long
May 30-31:	Tikkun Leyl Shavuot: "My Father was a Wandering Aramean"
June 2:	BBMM Family Shabbat Dinner
June 3:	Charry Service: Charry Appreciation Shabbat
June 14:	Annual Meeting
June 15:	Early Childhood Program Moving Up Ceremony & Potluck Dinner
June 17:	Shabbat Morning JAM (Jewish Arts & Movement)