



WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 2 • President's Message
- 3 • From the Administrator
• "Landscapes of Light"
- 4 • Upcoming Events
- 5 • Mussar
- 6 • "The Thomashefskys"
- 7 • From the Education Director
- 8 • Inclusive Communities
• From the SATO Committee
- 9 • First Suburbs Project
- 10 • Eco Corner

From Rabbi Roni



On Monday, January 17, 2011 we observe the 25th commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This day was first observed in 1986 after being signed into law in 1983 by President Ronald Reagan. For some the battles of racial integration may still be fresh, recalling stories and memories of fear, triumph and pain, as King and others diligently worked to make our country "a more perfect union." Conversely, for the younger members of our community, thanks to the sweat and tears of those that came before, they will never know a time in our country with as much inequality or government sanctioned discrimination. Martin Luther King Day is not only a day of remembrance for the battles once fought, but it is also a day of service, compelling us to continue King's work in our time, in whatever form and forum necessary in order to truly "let freedom ring."

Also celebrating 25 years this year is the American Jewish World Service. AJWS was founded on May 1, 1985 in Boston as the "first American Jewish organization dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease among people across the globe." AJWS first sprang into action, making their dream a reality in 1986 when they responded "to the volcano disaster in Armaro, Colombia - its first emergency response. AJWS and the Tibetan community-in-exile in India initiate [d] an agricultural improvement project that develop[ed] into a long-term relationship." As an organization, AJWS is dedicated to "empowering people throughout the world to achieve justice and self-sufficiency through the promotion of human rights, education, economic development, healthcare and sustainable agriculture."¹ AJWS continues to head the call of Deuteronomy 16:20, "Justice, justice shall you pursue," by applying our Jewish values to alleviate pain and suffering throughout the globe, by working with grass roots organizations to empower local communities to realize their own dreams.

This year, as we celebrate 25 years of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and 25 years of AJWS, Or Hadash will offer an opportunity to deepen our connection to our values of justice at home and abroad. Through a three-session Adult Education Series - January 30, February 6 and 13, 9:00-10:30AM - I will be teaching about Judaism, Justice and Global Responsibility. During these sessions we will explore our universe of obligation, how we define poverty and understand its causes and effects, and how we relate to people with less power and privilege than ourselves. I will also share my reflections and experiences from participating in an AJWS Rabbinical Student Delegation to Senegal in June 2009.

As we mark 25 years of amazing justice work at home and abroad, may we finally let freedom ring "from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city." May we "speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, [Africans and El Salvadorians, Mexicans and South East Asians, Rich and poor, city dweller and village dweller,] will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"²

B'vracha, Rabbi Roni

¹ http://ajws.org/who_we_are/history.html

² King Jr., Martin Luther, "I have a Dream: Address at March on Washington." August 28, 1963.

President's Message

Another New Year

By Janet Karp

As I write this, it is early December, the 2nd night of Hanukah, and yet, as you are reading we have come to the end of 2010 and are heading into 2011. Hard as it is to believe, we are already in the second decade of the 21st century. The difference between the secular new year and the Jewish new year that we celebrated at Rosh Hashana is significant.

At Rosh Hashana, we take responsibility for how we are living our lives. We take stock in ourselves and commit to improving the way we relate to the world.

The secular new year is more about the passage of time. The popular activity at the transition from one year to the next is to count down the seconds as one year passes away and another year is born. And then perhaps we kiss a special someone or raise our glasses and drink to “cheers” or “I’chaim.” And party!

In Judaism, time is very significant. We sanctify time and make it holy. We light the candles in the twilight between the days. Separating the days at sunset makes so much sense because the transition from light to darkness is a natural bridge. Changing at midnight is artificial and so it is all about watching the clock or waiting for the ball to drop because we have no other way to notice the change.

We are about 40% into the rabbinic Sabbatical. Rabbi Josh reports from Israel that he and his family are doing very well. We love hearing from him (hopefully you all saw his Hanukah message) and anticipate hearing all about his year when he returns.

Things are going very well at Or Hadash with Rabbi Roni. We are very grateful for her genuine warmth and incredible skill in everything she does. Let's share the wealth. Invite a friend to join you at Or Hadash for a Shabbat Shmooze dinner (next one is January 28th), for a visit to our wonderfully re-invented religious school, for an adult education program or at a warm social event (January 29th), a Shabbat service or for Torah study.

I am really looking forward to our Dickstein Scholar-in-Residence program in March when we will welcome Ellen Bernstein, a naturalist and ecologist who is a founder of and at the forefront of “Jewish ecology.” How is ecology Jewish? Come find out in March. She was invited because of this year's theme of “the environment” at Or Hadash. Many years ago, when she lived in Philadelphia, Ms. Bernstein wrote a haggadah for Tu b'Shevat. I came across it and used it successfully for a 6th grade Tu b'Shevat Seder when I was a teacher in our school. With the guidance of Ellen Bernstein's book, we were connected to a side of Tu b'Shevat that was so much more than the simple birthday of the trees of my Hebrew school days. Look for more details about our Scholar-in-Residence program and please take my advice, “don't miss it!”

Look through this issue of Hakesher for more programs that will happen at Or Hadash in the coming weeks. As we begin 2011, I wish all of you a healthy year filled with goodness and love.



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of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or
gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them
for the poor and the stranger.*

Leviticus 19:9-10

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B'NAI MITZVAH

JANUARY 22

Bar Mitzvah of **Jonah Koppel**, son of Meg and Ross Koppel

FEBRUARY 5

Bat Mitzvah of **Hannah Kaplan**, daughter of Sarah and Don Kaplan

From the Administrator

By Laurie Albert

I am so proud of the congregants of Or Hadash for their giving spirit. We received a thank-you note from the Mitzvah Food Pantry. Our High Holiday drive supplied them with over 350 pounds of peanut butter. In November, we housed two families. Our helping congregation dropped out, so Or Hadash members stepped up and we had volunteers supply dinner, stay overnight, drive, do laundry and shop for the entire month. You are awesome.

Our religious school collected food for an adopted family for Thanksgiving.

We had a toy and winter clothing drive during our Hanukkah Party. SATO also did a used musical instrument drive to help needy schools.

January brings our Red Cross Blood Drive and the MLK Day of Service Soup parties. I know you will all turn out for these events too.

HOT OFF THE PRESS: LANDSCAPES OF LIGHT

Takes Readers on a Spiritual Road Trip from Athens to Jerusalem

HOBOKEN, NJ (November 1, 2010):

Poets Wear Prada is pleased to announce the release of Philadelphia native **B. E. Kahn's LANDSCAPES OF LIGHT**. Twenty-four poems take you on a spiritual road trip from Athens to Jerusalem, intertwining Greek, Arabic and Jewish cultures, the ever-present past, ancient myths and legends, tradition, relics and the transient present of our "gifted days." All the while Kahn's strong voice, a bright and steady beacon, illuminates as she observes, reflects and questions, guiding the reader through sometimes painful histories to the future possibilities, reminding us that "our language differs, but smiles, gestures carry our thoughts across the wire of our minds."

B. E. Kahn is a grant recipient of both the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts and the Pew Fellowships in the Arts. Some of the poems in this, her second collection, previously appeared in *Arts and Spirituality*, *Bridges: A Jewish Feminist Journal*, *Clockwise Cat*, *Lifeboat*, *New Verse News*, *Poetry Ink*, *Poetry Super Highway*, and *Schuylkill Valley Journal*. A retired speech therapist, she now lives in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania and has taught poetry to intergenerational, interfaith groups. She is a member of the 34th Street Poets Cooperative. Her previous book, *SPRING APPLES, SILVER BIRCH* was published October 2008 by Greenleaf Press. For more information about the author, visit her website: <http://www.bekahn.com/>.

She has been nominated for the 35th Annual Pushcart Prize.

MAZEL TOV

- To our own **Betti Kahn** on the publication of her book of poetry **LANDSCAPES OF LIGHT** that is available on Amazon.com
- To **Bonnie and Fred Ritterman**, on the birth of their granddaughter, Alexa Sloane, born October 21st
- To **Elley and Manny Rosenberg**, on the marriage of their daughter, Lauren, to Craig Bair
- To **Alison and Jan Sandler**, on the birth of their granddaughter, Brielle Peyton Ardoff, daughter of Ashley Sandler and Rob Ardoff, born October 25th
- To **Roz Fudell**, on the birth of her grandson Samuel Jacob Matz, son of Shari and David Matz, on November 9th

CONDOLENCES

- To **Rosalind Fudell** of the passing of her husband, Steve Fudell, father of Jamie, Robin, and Shari, step-father of Adam and Jonathan Gusdorff



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Judaica!

Shop Our Online Judaica Store

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, December 31 New Year's Eve

There will be no erev Shabbat service.

Saturday, January 1 New Year's Day

We invite you to sleep in and celebrate Shabbat one hour later than usual. Breakfast at 9:45 a.m., Torah Study at 10 a.m. and Shabbat Service at 11. Happy (secular) New Year!

Friday, January 7 Shabbat in your PJ's

Our January Three Part Harmony on includes our Tot Shabbat service at 6 p.m., a dairy/vegetarian potluck dinner at 6:30, and our Family Service at 7 p.m. All are invited to come in their PJ's to welcome Shabbat, and to celebrate all January birthdays.

Sunday, January 9 The Red Cross Blood Drive at Or Hadash

All healthy members, their friends, and neighbors are asked to sign up and donate. Someone who is desperately ill needs something only you can give. Your blood donation, a gift of life, will give someone another day to smile, laugh and to love. Your single donation can add days, weeks or even years to someone's life. Sign up online at

<http://www.membersforlife.org/pennj/schedule/login.php?sponsorcode=6291> or email Jon Shapiro at jshapmd@yahoo.com or call him at 215-873-5683. *For questions about donating...call 1-800-givelife*

Friday, January 14 Erev Shabbat Service at 8 p.m. features Special speaker Rabbi Isabel DeKoninck on Building Inclusive Communities.

Sunday, January 16 Mussar Presentation

The Adult Education Committee presents Rabbi Ira Stone speaking on Mussar at 11:30 a.m. RSVP's to office@orhadash.com

Sunday, January 16

Join in making soup as part of our MLK day of service project. Watch for information on soup parties in the area, or make it yourself at home.

Friday, January 21

Our choir will sing at erev Shabbat services.

Sunday, January 23 at 9:00 Rap with Rabbi Roni

Friday, January 28 Shabbat Schmooze

Come for coffee and conversation! Come for Kabbalat Shabbat Service and stay

for a catered Shabbat dinner. Advance reservations are required for the dinner.

Saturday, January 29 at 8 p.m. Winter Wine Warm-up

A cozy evening of conversation, board games, mulled wines and friends.

Friday, February 4 Three Part Harmony

We will celebrate all February birthdays.

Saturday, February 12 Family Havdallah Game Night from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

It will include light snacks, lots of games and an engaging, interactive Havdallah service.

Friday, February 25 Our choir will sing at erev Shabbat services.

Saturday, February 26 Torah Study & Inter-generational Shabbat B'Yachad Service

Torah study with teens at 8:45 a.m. and an inter-generational Shabbat B'Yachad service at 10:30. All are welcome.

Sunday, February 27 Rap without Rabbi Roni

SAVE THE DATE

May 21, 2011 at 8 p.m.

Rock the (Or Hadash) House at a Dance Party with

The Dukes of Destiny

\$15 Entrance Fee

Tell you friends and neighbors and join us for the Or Hadash spring fundraiser and a GOOD TIME

Tickets will go on sale later this winter.

MUSSAR SPIRITUALITY PRESENTATION

Please join us for an exciting presentation and discussion with Rabbi Ira Stone, the Rabbi at Beth Zion Beth Israel Synagogue in Center City. He will be speaking in the Or Hadash Sanctuary on Sunday, January 16th, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a talk entitled,

“Why Is It So Hard To Be Good: Mussar Spirituality in a Contemporary Context”

The Mussar Institute website explains that:

Mussar is a path of contemplative practices and exercises that have evolved over the past thousand years to help an individual soul to pinpoint and then to break through the barriers that surround and obstruct the flow of inner light in our lives. Mussar is a treasury of techniques and understandings that offers immensely valuable guidance for the journey of our lives....

The goal of Mussar practice is to release the light of holiness that lives within the soul. The roots of all of our thoughts and actions can be traced to the depths of the soul, beyond the reach of the light of consciousness, and so the methods Mussar provides include meditations, guided contemplations, exercises and chants that are all intended to penetrate down to the darkness of the subconscious, to bring about change right at the root of our nature.

Rabbi Stone received his education at Queens College, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the American Jewish University in Los Angeles, and the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he was ordained a Rabbi in 1979. He has served congregations in Seattle, Washington, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he has been the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel since 1988.

Rabbi Stone has been visiting lecturer in Jewish Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and currently teaches at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. He has taught and lectured widely on Talmud and the world of Emmanuel Levinas.

He is the author of *Reading Levinas/Reading Talmud* (JPS, 1998), *Seeking the Path of Life: Theological Meditations on the Nature of God, Life, Love and Death* (Jewish Lights, 1993) and *Sketches for a Book of Psalms* (Xlibris, 2000) as well as numerous articles in various journals of Jewish thought.

Rabbi Stone's first book on Mussar is *A Responsible Life: The Spiritual Path to Mussar* (Aviv Press 2006). His commentary on Rabbi Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto's *Mesillat Yesharim* was just published by The Jewish Publication Society in September 2010.

Mussar

By Marty Jacobs, Chair, Spiritual Life Committee

Mussar literally means correction or instruction in Hebrew, but it has come to refer to a system of Jewish moral and ethical education. My personal introduction to Mussar was through an Or Hadash adult education course offered by Rabbi Roni nearly a year ago. I was very impressed by the potential for Mussar to be a life-changing experience. However, my resolve to continue the new practices I had learned gradually faded with time. Fortunately, all of us at Or Hadash now have an opportunity for in-depth participation in Mussar. I'll talk more about that later in this article, but for now I'd like to explain Mussar in more detail.

Mussar began as a 19th century reaction against what was perceived as rote observance of Jewish law, which was leading to loss of emotional connection to the tradition's inner meaning and ethical core. The movement's founder, Rav Yisrael Salanter, started a yeshiva in Vilna, Lithuania, where he emphasized moral teachings based on classical Mussar literature which dated back to medieval times. Even though Mussar teachings had been available for several hundred years prior to Salanter, they were only practiced on an individual basis. Rav Salanter, however, made the teachings available on a much broader basis, due to the movement's rapidly growing popularity in Eastern Europe.

Although Mussar was originally opposed by large segments of the Orthodox Jewish community, there has been a significant revival of Mussar among both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews. One of the leaders of this revival is Rabbi Ira Stone, the rabbi of Beth Zion Beth Israel in center city where he founded and directs Mussar Leadership. Rabbi Stone is also a faculty member at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where he teaches Mussar. In Rabbi Stone's book, *A Responsible Life*, he describes one of the key questions addressed by Mussar as “**In a cultural milieu in which personal satisfaction and spiritual satisfaction are deemed synonymous, can we hope to attain an alternate spirituality that promises to take us beyond ourselves not through intoxication, but through profound concern for the other people among whom we live?**” This summarizes the guiding principles of Mussar. In addition, the practice of Mussar is based on a series of personal characteristics called *middot* (singular *middah*). Examples of *middot* are equanimity, patience, orderliness, humility, righteousness, truthfulness, calmness, trust, and generosity. Each *middah* is accompanied by a detailed description and a worksheet, both of which aid in carrying out its teachings. The goal is for a person to replace (at least partially) self-centered habits with those which focus on the needs of others.

(continued on page 9)



**American
Red Cross**

CONGREGATION OR HADASH
190 CAMP HILL ROAD
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AMERICAN RED CROSS
****BLOOD DRIVE****
Sunday January 9th
8:30am to 2:30pm

Your Donation Makes a Difference!

Someone who is desperately ill needs something only you can give.
 Your blood donation, a gift of life, will give someone another day to smile,
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questions about donating...call 1-800-givelife

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

"THE THOMASHEFSKYS"
 an elaborate multi-media extravaganza
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2011
jewishphilly.org/thomashefsky

DON'T MISS OUT ON AN EVENING OF THEATRE AND TRIBUTE
TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE FOR "THE THOMASHEFSKYS"

On Tuesday, February 15, 2011, Federation will present, "The Thomashefskys," a multi-media musical extravaganza which salutes the giants of the Yiddish theatre experience in America, Bessie and Boris Thomashefsky. This critically acclaimed concert will be performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under the baton of Michael Tilson Thomas, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. This is the Philadelphia debut of a tour de force which has played to sold out audiences across the country. Don't miss out on this memorable evening which pays special tribute to Jewish communal leaders, Connie and Joe Smukler.

For individual and group sales contact the Kimmel Center Ticket Office, 215-893-1999. Groups of ten or more can purchase tickets by calling 215-875-7695 or emailing groupsales@philorch.org to save on processing fees.

Questions: Please call Betsy at 215-832-0529.

Or Hadash has been the recipient of many gifts from our congregants, for which we are grateful. However, we are requesting that all donations of treasured items such as books, tapes, videos and other Judaica be placed on hold. We appreciate your cooperation at this time.

From the Education Director

By Lori Rubin

I recently received a phone call from Mark Levine, the executive editor at Behrman House, the publisher of many Jewish textbooks. He said that I was recommended to him as someone who could facilitate a conference call of Jewish Family Educators who wanted to talk about successful intergenerational programming. He asked if I would give a brief introduction to the topic highlighting the current trends, advantages and challenges of such programming. Of course, I was flattered and said I'd be happy to participate. So, I have started to think about the topic in great detail. Allow me to think aloud with you.

I am often asked, mostly by students, "Why do we need to go to Hebrew School?" The first thing that comes to mind is to learn about Jewish history, customs, and prayers. However, your average nine-year-old isn't necessarily interested in those things. How do we keep it relevant, engaging, and meaningful? How do we convince families that community and bringing Jewish families together for many different purposes matters? You may find other Jewish families on the soccer field, at dance lessons, or at yoga class, but you don't engage Jewishly there. Is it enough to just be together, or do we need to be doing something Jewish together? My answer is the latter.

So my job is to provide a Jewish education for our students that is relevant, engaging, and meaningful. Feeling good about being Jewish seems to be most important — having a strong Jewish identity. But we cannot provide this in a vacuum. Our supplementary religious school must be supplemented by something. This is where the family education comes in. This year, we are providing new Jewish family educational experiences to our repertoire. We have had Global Day of Jewish Learning, Social Action Shabbat, Shabbat B'Yachad, and soon, our Mitzvah Fair. These are opportunities for families to spend time together learning and doing Jewishly.

I believe that these experiences can make a difference in the lives of our families. However, one shot deals are not enough. We need to provide ongoing experiences so that families can see what they do in their lives as Jewish things. For example, when you donate clothes to the needy, that is a Jewish value, Halbashat Arumin, clothing the naked. Our new carpool cards are another way to bridge the gap between what we learn at school and how you can continue the conversation at home. (Use them and let me know how it goes.) Ponder with me. What makes your family Jewish? Is it going to synagogue, participating in social action events, collecting Tzedakah, appreciating all that you have, or a combination of things?

Dog Walk Raises Money and Awareness

Jonah Zitelli and his friend, Ethan Schwartz, seventh graders at Sandy Run Middle School, did a community service project in preparation for their b'nai mitvah. The boys organized a dog walk to raise money for Main Line Animal Rescue at Kohler Park in Horsham. The Main Line Animal Rescue was chosen because both Ethan and Jonah love animals. MLAR saves puppies and dogs from the puppy mills in Pennsylvania and around the country. It also spend countless hours educating people about the horror of puppy mills. More information can be found on this organization at www.mlar.com. At the park, community members and their four-legged friends gathered to participate. Each participant who registered for the walk had the opportunity to purchase raffles, and received a goody bag that included a frisbee for the dogs. After registration the humans and their companions had a chance to visit with different vendors. In attendance were: the Main Line Animal Rescue (with Bella and Chardonnay), Best Friends Pet Care, Cutter's Mill, Bark Busters Home Dog Training, and the K9JYM who put on an agility show.

Other sponsors included Robbye the Gentle Groomer, Buffalo Blue Dog Food, Seattle's Best Coffee, Fast Signs, Oakes K9 Training, Fort Washington Veterinary Hospital and The Bone Appetite. The registrants then took their two-mile walk around the park or however far the dogs could go. In the end, they raised close to \$1700 to help MLAR. We are proud of Jonah and his efforts. Jonah became a Bar Mitzvah at Or Hadash on October 30, 2010.

Another aspect of being part of a Jewish community is having support when you need it most. Whether it is someone who is ill in your family, someone who has died, a problem with a pet, or a house, this community is here for you in times of need. Conversely, the community is here for you all the time — in times of joy as well. So, come and be a regular at Or Hadash! Our next big event is our Mitzvah Fair on Sunday, January 16th. We will be completing many different projects to help organizations in our area. This may include soup cups, breakfast bags, pet toys, scarves or reading books on cd. We hope to make it an intergenerational event. That weekend, we will also be making soup as we have done in the past. Consider inviting other congregants to your house to make soup. It is a fun time and you can get to be with friends, new and old. Happy Secular New Year! Let's make it a year of meaningful intergenerational learning and doing together at Or Hadash.

Building Inclusive Communities One Step at a Time

On Friday, January 14, 2011, Or Hadash will present “It Gets Better When We Work Together: Jewish Perspectives on Building LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer) Inclusive Communities and Combating Bullying,” at a special Shabbat service featuring Rabbi Isabel de Koninck.

In New Jersey, Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old Rutgers freshman and a promising violinist, jumped off the George Washington Bridge after it was revealed by other students that he was gay. In New York, the gubernatorial candidate, Carl Paladino, who insisted that he was not homophobic and that he would hire gay people in his administration, told a Jewish group that children should not be exposed to gay people or be brainwashed into thinking that “homosexuality is an equally valid or successful option,” and described gay marches as “disgusting” events. In Maryland, protesters at the funeral of a 20-year-old Marine lance corporal killed in Iraq carried signs saying “God hates you” and “Thank God for dead soldiers” because they believe that God is punishing the United States for tolerating homosexuality. Since September, at least six U.S. students have taken their own lives as a result of anti-gay bullying. Homophobia is alive and flourishing in the United States. The question is: What can we and what will we do about it?

Or Hadash has taken a stand by becoming a partner congregation in the YES! Coalition, an interfaith collaboration of over 250 faith communities in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties that welcome and seek to nourish the faith of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, their families, and friends. The central project of the **YES! Coalition** is the online *Guide to Welcoming Congregations* that lists these communities, including their location, contact information, and a direct link to the congregations’ websites. The Coalition also holds public meetings providing speakers on topics of interest to partner communities; the January 24 meeting will take place at Or Hadash and will feature a panel focusing on “Welcoming Communities’ Success Stories.”

What does it *really* mean to be a welcoming community? What can we — as a community and individually — do about anti-gay bullying? How can we best address these issues in our community? The evening’s speakers, who will begin to answer these questions, are clergy and students from Philadelphia area university campuses who are working to build LGBTQ-safe and inclusive campuses and build and support Queer Jewish space on campus. Rabbi Isabel de Koninck is the Director of Hillel at Drexel. She is a 2010 graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College where she also completed a graduate certificate in Jewish Gender and Women’s studies.

Rabbi de Koninck currently serves on Drexel University’s SAGE (Sexuality and Gender Equality) commission. Jason Landau Goodman is a senior at the University of Pennsylvania where he is also the president of J-Bagel, the Jewish LGBTQAI community of the University of Pennsylvania. Jason also works for Equality Pennsylvania as a Youth Equality Organizer. Equality Pennsylvania is the only organization in the Commonwealth advocating in Harrisburg and across the state, exclusively for the rights of LGBTQ Pennsylvanians.

From the SATO Committee

By Debbie Bernstein & Alisa Belzer, Co-Chairs, SATO

The Social Action/Tikun Olam Committee was busy this fall and has lots of events planned for the upcoming months as well. We hope you will get involved and help make a difference!

Our High Holiday peanut butter collection for the Mitzvah Food Pantry was very successful. We collected 327 jars — a total of 350 pounds. That sure can make a lot of pb & j sandwiches! In October, families gathered at Or Hadash on Sukkoth to assemble pasta dinners for clients of Aid for Friends. We had over 50 adults and children volunteer, and we assembled 111 delicious looking meals. In November we hosted guests for the month through Interfaith Hospitality Network. Over 60 volunteers were overnight hosts, made dinner, did laundry, shopped and drove our guests to and from the synagogue. In December, we collected toys and clothes for HIAS, an immigrant aid organization, as well as musical instruments for Musicopia, a program that provides musical instruments and music programming to children in Philadelphia and Chester. As we go to press, the results of these two efforts are not known; but, hopefully, Or Hadashers came through once again for those in need.

Our January SATO activity will be making soup for Aid for Friends. Please get involved and get cooking. Keep your eye on the weekly OH blasts for more information about getting containers, dropping off soup, and timing. Events for February through June are in the planning phases still, but we hope to see each of you at one activity during the year. If you have ideas for efforts you would like to see Or Hadash get involved in, please let us know. You can contact us at belzera@rci.rutgers.edu or debbie.bernstein@mac.com

First Suburbs Project Names Award for Group's Founder

The following is excerpted from the Delaware County Times, Friday, December 3, 2010. Or Hadash is a member institution of the First Suburbs Project. For more information contact Michael Golden (magolden1@aol.com) or Jules Mermelstein (Jules.Mermelstein@gmail.com).

LANSDOWNE — The Southeastern Pennsylvania First Suburbs Project announced the establishment of an award in memory of the coalition's late founder during a leadership event Thursday night.

Several organizations and municipalities in eastern Delaware County have joined the coalition to address three major challenges — housing, infrastructure and education finance reform — facing older, inner-ring communities. Municipal, education and community leaders in Delaware County have teamed up with officials from neighboring Bucks, Chester and Montgomery counties for these efforts.

The organization “has grown from a group of leaders sitting around a kitchen table to an organization with 23 institutional members,” said Michael Golden, council member from Jenkintown, Montgomery County.

In addition to the announcement about the award, the coalition also established a fund for people who want to participate in training sessions before joining the coalition. The coalition's members participate in weeklong training sessions twice a year.

Titled, “Leaders: Building Our Future Together,” the event was co-chaired by state Treasurer Robert McCord and state Sen. Edwin “Ted” Erickson, R-26, of Newtown. The coalition hopes to make it an annual fundraiser event.

“Jonathan worked passionately to find solutions to some of our greatest challenges — suburban sprawl and urban abandonment, racial segregation and concentrated poverty, burdensome property taxes and inadequate local services,” said McCord, a Democrat, in a release. “He understood that suburban communities need to work together to create policies that support sustainability and economic growth. Tonight, we honor Jonathan —and his vision— by continuing his important work.”

The goal of this First Suburbs Project is to educate and push state and federal legislators

to look at issues facing older suburbs and assist with revitalization efforts, according to Puriefoy-Brinkley. During the summer, coalition members attended a Building One Pennsylvania statewide summit on regional equity in Lancaster.

“We’re a strong organization and we’re trying to get stronger,” said Forrest. “We want more members on board so we can make more progress. We have an agenda for change in communities and that’s what this celebration was all about — the progress we’ve already made and the progress we want to make in the future.”

Mussar (continued from page 5)

I spoke earlier about an opportunity to study *Mussar*. Since October, a group of four of us has been meeting every Wednesday night for two hours at Or Hadash to study with Mindy Shapiro. Mindy is a student of Rabbi Stone's and a staff member at Mussar Leadership. We focus on readings from both *A Responsible Life* and the classical Mussar text *Mesillat Yesharim (The Path of the Upright)* which present the teachings of Mussar, as well as discussing our own experiences during the week. The group also meets in pairs (*hevruta*) for about one hour each week to study the material one-on-one. In addition, a new *middah* is added every two weeks to develop our personal *Mussar* practice.

A second semester will be starting January 19 and continuing through late-April (with a break for Passover), and it is open to all Or Hadash members as well as the general community. Tuition is \$350, and Rabbi Roni has asked to be contacted by anyone who might be interested in this course but is concerned about the cost of tuition. In addition, Mindy Shapiro has offered to meet one-on-one with any new class members to quickly bring them up to the level of this semester's class. Another opportunity to learn more about Mussar will be available on Sunday, January 16 at 11:30 a.m., when Rabbi Stone will be coming to speak at Or Hadash.

The Or Hadash Mussar group would welcome the opportunity to grow beyond four participants, and we hope that at least several of you would be interested in joining us in January. We all find the course to be very worthwhile and recommend it highly. If you have any questions about Mussar or this class, please email me at martin.jacobs@verizon.net.

ECO CORNER

By Doug Smithman, ECO Chairperson

As I write, I've just heard that Japan is considering a withdrawal from the Kyoto Accords. That is particularly shocking since Kyoto is IN Japan; but it feels that without U.S. and third world support, the accord imposes an unfair burden on the Japanese economy. At least they're being honest. Russia and Canada also signed the accord, but simply ignore its provisions. This is unfortunate. Most of those making these decisions will not have to live with the consequences. It reminds me of the Isaac Asimov novels I loved as a kid. Humanity lived inside 'Caves of Steel' because Earth had become uninhabitable. The caves were built gradually but the end result was that people actually had a phobia about being outdoors. They needed the comfort of walls and considered windows to be obscene.

I recently spoke about sustainability at a Friday night service and would like to present an excerpt here.

How many of you have been to Israel? We traveled there last summer. Being good Jews (or lacking sense, I'm not sure which), we climbed Masada mid-morning so that we could marvel at the view of the Dead Sea. But what did we see from the top of this mesa? What we saw beyond the Roman encampments was a series of dunes covered in white salt. The Dead Sea was far off in the distance, barely visible. As you probably know, the Dead Sea is evaporating faster than it is replenished by the Jordan River. Why? The Jordan River has drained the fertile lands of northern Israel for millennia. The Romans and Harold the Great looked upon these waters thousands of years ago. What has changed?

We traveled up the Jordan to Tiberius on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. As we traveled, we passed large expanses of desert with the occasional kibbutz. The stark contrast between the lifeless desert and the thriving kibbutzim provided visual evidence of the success the Israelis have had in transforming the land. Eventually we entered Tiberius and went down by the docks for a cruise on the Galilee. The water level was at least 15 feet below the dock.



Just as the kibbutzim had shown the great success of cultivating desert lands, the height of the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea showed the price paid in this accomplishment. The natural mechanisms that resupplied water to this system were completely outmatched by the demands for water. The balance that had existed since the beginning of recorded history between rainfall and evaporation had been lost. True, people had been using Jordan River basin water since the time of Moses but just as with the dwelling stones, the overall effect had not been enough to de-stabilize the system.

There before us was an example of lost sustainability. This situation cannot continue unabated. If people don't solve the problem, nature will when seas and rivers run dry. If that happens, the residents will have to decide whether they stay and die or move to another place. At least they have a choice. When people engage in unsustainable activities on a global scale, there is no choice. We have nowhere else to go.

Every day the human species engages in activities all around the globe that are not sustainable. We pump ever increasing amounts of pollutants into the air. We dump chemicals and waste into the waterways. We pull limited quantities of oil and coal from the ground to power our lives. And when somebody tries to sound the alarm, they are attacked and demonized because that is easier than facing these problems. It allows us to remove these issues from our radar and focus on more pleasant things.

As Jewish parents we spend a great deal of time educating our children in Judaism so that Judaism will be sustained. We owe at least as much attention to ensuring that Earth will be sustained as well.

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