



HA-KESHER

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Newsletter of Or Hadash
A Reconstructionist Congregation
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From Rabbi Roni

The book of Leviticus can sometimes feel daunting, listing one rule after the other. Some of these laws are appealing and seem like a good idea, while others can be a bit more challenging to understand in a contemporary context or with our progressive values. Just a few weeks ago in *parshat Kedoshim* we read from the heart of this book, located squarely in the center of the Torah scroll. Parshat Kedoshim opens by reminding us that "You shall be holy, for I, Y-H-V-H your God, am holy," and this is the main reason given for following God's laws and walking this path of righteousness. In the middle of this parsha, we find what I have come to believe is the central teaching of all of Judaism. Leviticus 19:18 urges us to "love your fellow/neighbor/friend as yourself," *v'ahavtah l'reacha kamocho*. As my year here at Or Hadash draws a close, it has become abundantly clear to me that mitzvah is also at the heart of this community.



Throughout this year each and every one of you have opened your hearts and
(continued on page 11)

"Rock the House" Dance Party with The Dukes of Destiny



May 21, 2011
Doors Open at 7:30 PM
\$15 per person
Cash Bar
Casual Dress

Or Hadash
190 Camp Hill Rd
Ft. Washington,
www.orhadash.com 215-378-0276
www.dukesofdestiny.com

Join us for a great night of Chicago style blues with soul wrenching vocals, harmonica, guitar and saxophone backed by a powerhouse rhythm section. This well-known Philly band will deliver a good time and good music. The Dukes are Philly's pride and joy... The city's best loved blues band for over twenty five years. You don't want to miss this evening of excitement and energy! Not only will this be a GOOD TIME, but it will also be the Or Hadash Spring Fundraiser. Tickets are available now. Invite your friends to join you.

You may either purchase tickets online, at the door, or print and mail the PDF order form attached at the bottom of the link on the Or Hadash website. General admission tickets purchased online will be subject to a \$1.00 per ticket service charge.

President's Message

Balance

By Janet Karp

In one sense the year is winding down as we move closer to summer when synagogue activities lessen. On the other hand, Or Hadash is now truly brimming with activity. This is the season of many b'nai mitzvah and of lots of programs to keep us all engaged in our synagogue community. My first presidential year is drawing to a close. We are sadly getting closer to saying goodbye to our wonderful Sabbatical Rabbi Roni. Later in the summer, we will happily welcome Rabbi Josh back from sabbatical. Cold vs. warm, sad vs. happy, busy vs. leisurely — the theme here is balance. Being involved in governing and running a synagogue reinforces our need for balance in all of our lives. We need to balance the interests of different groups within the synagogue. We balance our calendar with activities and programs that aim to involve everyone.

The fiscal face of that balance comes from the contributions that we each make through our membership dues to support the day-to-day operation of Or Hadash. Our economic reality is such that to continue to achieve the fiscal balance that enables us to share our beautiful home and to enjoy the excellence of our rabbinic leadership, our religious school and our synagogue administration, we need a new approach.

Our Development Committee, under the leadership of Lani Moss, is introducing a plan that will focus on supporting Or Hadash by raising 10% of our operating budget from beyond the scope of membership dues. This new Annual Giving Campaign will formally begin during High Holy Days this coming September. Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying, "God helps those who help themselves." This proverb or truism is apropos to the Annual Giving Campaign. As a congregation we have always relied on combining the investments of time, of skill and of money that each and every one of us provides and that result in Or Hadash.

Now we are being asked to move Or Hadash into the list of worthy recipients of our tzedakah dollars. During our recent budget planning, a preliminary introduction to this program was launched to a targeted group of members and a sizeable sum was committed toward our goal. Come September, the entire congregation will be asked to join this effort and it is one of the committee's goals to achieve 100% participation. If you have not thought of Or Hadash as a tzedakah, think of the adage that states, "charity begins at home." Let's begin our tzedakah lists by setting aside a donation to

HIGH HOLY DAY NEWS AT OR HADASH

There will be singing heard in the halls of Gratz College and it will be sung to Or Hadash: "Will I see you in September, or lose you to another love?"

Remember that old summer song by The Happenings? For Gratz College, it will be a melancholy song. For Or Hadash, it is a happy song because the "other love" is our own home, our synagogue. Or Hadash will not be returning to Gratz College for High Holy Days beginning this September 2011.

After very careful and extensive consideration, an ad hoc committee under the leadership of Lani Moss, recommended to the Board of Directors that we hold all of our High Holy Day services at Or Hadash from Erev Rosh Hashana all the way through to Ni'elah, the closing service of Yom Kippur with light sticks!

There will be some changes. We will have no more complaints about standing on a sloping floor. Our Family Service will be held at a separate time from the larger service. That is a good thing because it will enable Rabbi Josh to spend quality time at the Family Service instead of rushing back and forth. There will be limited parking in Or Hadash's lot and most of our parking will take place off site with shuttle transportation to Or Hadash. Not such a bad thing considering the detours that we are enduring from the extensive road construction around our building.

So please stay tuned for all of the details over the summer and please don't look for your directions to Gratz. Come home to Or Hadash!

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.

our Or Hadash family. I hope that as a member of this family, you will participate at whatever level you can so that Or Hadash can continue to be the community that you deserve without needing ever higher dues to achieve fiscal balance.

Thank you all!

**Beth Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun & Congregation Or Hadash
Proudly Present
The Cuker Family Yom HaShoah Program**



Beth Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun

1001 Paper Mill Road Erdenheim, Pa.

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

7:00 p.m.

**We are honored to announce our guest performers will be
violinist and conductor Yuval Waldman and
pianist Inesa Sinkevych.**

Waldman played his first public performance at the age of 8. He was educated in Israel, Europe and the United States, after which he made his New York debut on the International Series at Carnegie Hall, Jeunesse Musicales.

Maestro Waldman is a versatile performer. He has earned acclaim both for his playing of the standard repertory and for his thoughtful and stylish interpretations of Baroque music. He has also championed rarely performed nineteenth century masterpieces and commissioned or premiered works by contemporary American and Israeli composers.

Born in the Ukraine to Holocaust survivors, Waldman has been presenting rarely performed gems composed by Eastern European Jews, many of whom perished during World War II in the Holocaust or were silenced by Soviet repression. As Artistic Director of Music Bridges International, Mr. Waldman was able to rediscover these pieces by searching music libraries and obscure music collections in Russia, Ukraine, Czech Republic and Israel. They represent a wide spectrum of stylistic influences on Jewish composers: impressionistic, neoclassical, folk and Klezmer. These pieces fill an unexplored gap in early twentieth century Jewish music repertory which fully deserves to be heard today.

**Toda Raba to the Cuker family & Congregation
Or Hadash for sponsoring our Annual Yom
HaShoah Program!**

Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of our program.

This Program is free and open to the public.



Dear Or Hadash Community:

We would like to thank everyone for the tremendous outpouring of love and support shown to us following the loss of our daughter and sister, Sarah Michelle Grossman. We feel blessed to be a part of this caring and supportive community. Our grieving was made more bearable by the warm wishes, prayers, food, visits, phone calls, donations, and numerous acts of support that we experienced, and some that we are still learning about. These acts served to hold us up at a time when we were most broken and vulnerable.

As we move into a new phase of grief and begin to reenter our community, please know that your kindness has served to light the path toward the possibility of joy and hope in the future.

Sincerely,

Marc, Amy, Rachel and Sam Grossman and Family

From the Administrator

By Laurie Albert

We at Or Hadash have had wonderful spiritual guidance this year from our sabbatical rabbi, Roni Handler. Rabbi Roni has shared with us all the life cycle events – the good and the bad, the holidays and educational opportunities, and has been an integral part of our congregational family.

Now it is time for us to celebrate a very special moment in her life. On Sunday, June 12 at 2:30 pm, Rabbi Roni will graduate from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and receive the title of rabbi. The ceremony will be held at Temple Sinai in Dresher and will be followed by a light reception, and I encourage you to come and be part of this very special day.

Copies of the invitation will be available at the Or Hadash office for all interested congregants. Please stop by and pick one up, or call me at 215-283-0276, to arrange another way for you to receive it.

In addition, on Friday, June 17, we will honor Rabbi Roni for her year of service to Or Hadash at evv Shabbat services at 8 pm. Join us for a special evening and let her know how much we have loved having her here.

B'NAI MITZVAH

MAY 7

Bat Mitzvah of **Samantha Stern**, daughter of Amy and Michael Stern

MAY 24

Bat Mitzvah of **Jessica Levin**, daughter of Caren and Adam Levin

JUNE 4

Bat Mitzvah of **Shoshanna Israel**, daughter of Vivian and Ehud Israel

JUNE 11

Bar Mitzvah of **Adam Simon**, son of Catherine and Peter Simon

CONDOLENCES

- To **Amy and Marc Grossman** on the passing of Sarah Grossman, sister of Rachel and Samuel, grand-daughter of Sandra (Sissy) and William (Bill) Plotnick.
- To **Maureen Bierhoff** on the passing of her former husband Jerry Bierhoff, father of Harris and Brooke.
- To **Lucy Raizman** on the passing of her mother, Mina Salem, mother-in-law of David, grandmother of Rebecca and Joshua.

Bimah Mitzvah Baskets Available



Does your child have an upcoming Bar/ Bat Mitzvah? Don't forget to order your Bimah Mitzvah Baskets and share your celebration with those in need. These beautifully wrapped baskets are an alternative to flower arrangements. They are available in two sizes, medium for \$90 and large for \$118 with a choice of different decorative bows. The money is donated to the Mitzvah Food Project, which

alleviates hunger and malnutrition among at-risk families in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Contact Rhoda Gansler at rgansler@verizon.net or 215-412-8790 for further information and to place your order.



OR HADASH ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PROUDLY PRESENTS

“A JOURNEY OF SPIRIT”

A DOCUMENTARY TRIBUTE TO DEBBIE FRIEDMAN

Saturday Evening May 14th, 2011 at 7:30 pm

A Journey of Spirit is a documentary that tells the story of the remarkable singer, songwriter and guitarist Debbie Friedman. One of the preeminent women in contemporary Jewish culture, Debbie has integrated contemporary melody with Jewish liturgy to transform Jewish sacred music, making the text accessible to a large and diverse audience. *A Journey of Spirit* explores the tremendous power this artist and leader has to promote spirituality, healing, and community.



This 75-minute documentary explores the transformation of liberal Jewish worship, the growth of the new profession of Jewish singer/songwriter, and humanity's need for healing. Viewers are treated to a lively and heartfelt exchange as *A Journey of Spirit* places the debate about contemporary versus traditional prayer music squarely on the table.

Following the screening, there will be some musical selections by the Or Hadash Makaylah, light refreshments, and discussion.

Program is open to the public and free of charge.
RSVP to office@orhadash.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, May 4th at 7 pm - Or Hadash is co-sponsoring this Yom HaShoah service being held at Beth Tikvah Bnai Jeshurun, 1001 Paper Mill Road, Erdenheim, PA, 19038. We are honored to have as guest performers violinist and conductor, Yuval Waldman, and pianist, Inesa Sinkevych. They are the wonderful musicians who performed at Or Hadash last year.

Friday, May 6 (and Friday, June 3) – Three Part Harmony: Tot Shabbat at 6 pm, Pot Luck (dairy/vegetarian) Dinner at 6:30, and Intergenerational Shabbat Service at 7 pm. Our May Three Part Harmony will be an **Open House** and we encourage you to bring friends, family, neighbors and others you think might be interested in joining Or Hadash.

Sunday, May 8 at 11 am - The Adult Education Committee presents author and former Or Hadasher Janice Booker discussing her latest book, *Across from the Alley, Next Door to the Pool Room*. This program is free and open to the public, but RSVPs are requested to office@orhadash.com. A limited quantity of books will be available for advance purchase through the Or Hadash office for \$18.

Sunday, May 8th - The Or Hadash Religious School Team will participate in the Susan G. Komen *Race for the*

Cure in Philadelphia. For details on supporting the team, or reserving a spot on the bus, go to the website calendar or contact Jennifer Hoagland by email at mailto:jhoagie@verizon.net

Friday, May 13 - Annual Congregational Meeting, dinner and Shabbat. Please join us for dinner at 6:30 (RSVPs requested to office@orhadash.com), the meeting at 7:00 and Erev Shabbat Services with choir at 8:00 pm. There is no charge for the dinner, but RSVPs are needed so we have enough food and seating.

Saturday, May 14 - A special inter-generational torah study and service will take place at Robbins Park, 1419 E. Butler Pike at Meetinghouse Road, Ambler.

All other intergenerational services are held at Or Hadash. Join us every Saturday for breakfast and torah study at 8:45 am, and Shabbat services at 10.

Saturday evening, May 14th - Join us for “*A Journey of Spirit*,” a moving documentary tribute to Debbie Friedman z”l. Following the screening, there will be musical selections by the Or Hadash Makaylah, light refreshments, and discussion. The program is open to the public and free of charge. RSVP to office@orhadash.com.

Sunday, May 15 at 10 am - OR HADASH IN BLOOM

Tell all your friends and neighbors to come and see our beautiful garden, have a bagel, and find out about membership at Or Hadash

Saturday, May 21 at 7:30pm - “Rock the House” with *The Dukes of Destiny*

Join us for a great night of Chicago-style blues with soul-wrenching vocals, harmonica, guitar and saxophone backed by a powerhouse rhythm section. This well-known Philly band will deliver a good time and good music. The Dukes are Philly’s pride and joy ...the city’s best loved blues band for over twenty five years. You don't want to miss this evening of excitement and energy!

Tickets can be purchased on-line at <http://www.orhadash.com/dukesofdestiny>.

Friday, May 27 - Shabbat Al Fresco – an outdoors service at 7 pm. Weather permitting, join us on the patio and enjoy a beautiful Shabbat evening.

Tuesday, June 7 at 7:00 pm - Confirmation Service

Friday, June 10 - Shabbat service will include discussion of the Jews of Cuba.

Saturday, June 11, 7:45 pm to 10:15 pm – Shavuot (Program to be announced)

Sunday, June 12 – RRC Graduation at Temple Sinai. Come see Rabbi Roni graduate!

Friday, June 17 – Join us for a special Shabbat service honoring Rabbi Roni Handler as we celebrate her graduation from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and honor her service to Or Hadash.

ADULT STUDY HAVURAH

SUNDAY, MAY 15 at 10:30

The topic of discussion will be

**“THE INFLUENCE OF VARYING MELODIES
In JEWISH LITURGY”**

Please join us to listen, discuss, and enjoy!

From the Education Director

By *Lori Rubin*

Be happy – it’s Adar! Ok, it’s not the Hebrew month of Adar now, as you are reading this; but it is as I’m writing. Besides, you should still be happy because it is now really spring! It is almost time for Pesach! In my house, that means spring-cleaning, lots of family time, and cooking great recipes together. What does Pesach mean in your house? Reflecting on what you love about celebrating holidays and what you might wish to change is a wonderful opportunity. This spring, you have the chance to change it up a bit! Make your seder something spectacular: add a new charoset recipe, a special seder song, or take the opportunity to see a play about what it means to be free. These links may help your seder be the best it can be!

For charoset recipes:

<http://www.jewishrecipes.org/recipes/passover/charoset/index.html>

For seder songs: <http://sederfun.com/images/Silly%20Songs.pdf>

For a Passover play: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uP0tc2FlnzI>

It is hard for me to even think about Passover now; but as you are reading this, I’m sure I’ll be cleaning the kitchen, cooking yummy treats, and thinking about creating more family traditions. Seems like only yesterday, it was Purim. Actually, it was! Purim this year at Or Hadash was an amazing holiday. From Rabbi Roni’s rendition of Justin Bieber to the incredible Purim Shpiel, this festival was an indicator of what Or Hadash really is – warm community full of friendships, laughter, food, and fun. When the evening was over, we celebrated the remaining portion of Purim by having our religious school students create Mishloach Manot packages for the rest of the community. Following our own kid-led shpiel, volunteer families traveled across the area far and wide to deliver the handmade packages to congregants who don’t have children in the religious school. It was a blessing to see so many eager faces assembling the packages, baking the hamantashen, and writing little notes on the boxes. I was overjoyed to receive many e-mails and phone calls in appreciation for the surprises they received. A special thank-you to all who delivered, assembled, and participated in all things Purim this year.

This year, we transformed our religious school into a caring community. The students are in mixed-aged classes, getting to know each other in ways they were previously unable to do. I could see at our annual sleepover the changes in friendships that have been made. We have spent a great deal of time learning about Jewish values, how we can help ourselves be the best we can be while helping others in need. This past month,



The confirmation class on the Panim trip to Washington in February

Left to right are: Zoe Adler, Sam Jacobson, Zach Schwartz, Alex Rubin, Sydney Mann, Hannah Rifkin, Meredith Davis, Sarah Rosenbaum.

we assembled backpacks of school supplies for students who don’t even have a pencil through the Mitzvah Circle Foundation. (See www.mitzvahcircle.org for more information.) My hope is that our students live their lives by thinking about others before themselves. However, it isn’t only about those in need, but those in our own community and families who we need to consider as well. Our Mishloach Manot Brigade was an example of seeing our entire Or Hadash community as a caring community. I enjoyed hearing from the recipients of the packages as well as from the creators and deliverers.

Take a moment and think about someone outside our Or Hadash community who would love to be part of our family. Invite them to share our joys; bring them to a service, adult education program, or social event. We have a great deal to offer others. Help them find us-on Camp Hill Road. We have open houses scheduled in May. Check the Or Hadash calendar on www.orhadash.com for more details. Wishing you the very best spring ever!

An Intergenerational Event About Food

By *Janet Karp*

On Sunday, April 3rd, a group of adults and our delightful 7th graders engaged in a discussion around ethical decision-making concerning food. We were guided by Rabbi Nathan Martin of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College as part of a Jewish Partnership Grant from Jewish Federation and the Bux Mont Kehillah. Stop and think about the foods that you buy. Think about all of the steps involved from farm to table. Where does the food come from? How far do the foods travel? How are the workers who assist in the process of getting the food to you treated and paid? What about the animals? Are they treated humanely during their lives? Is the earth respected during the growing and transporting of the food? Is your health respected and protected? Where does the Jewish community stand?

These are the questions that the Jewish Food Movement is asking. Are you already asking them? At Or Hadash, we can ask together and move toward answers. Are you interested? If so, please send an email to janet0517@comcast.net and let me know that you are interested in becoming involved in ethical eating and what you are already doing or thinking along these lines.

Ha-Kesher Now Accepting Advertising

Thank you for your interest in advertising in our synagogue newsletter, *Ha-Kesher*. We have “gone green,” and *Ha-Kesher* is now a bimonthly online publication available at our web site, www.orhadash.com. We will be publishing quarter-page ads at a rate of \$30.00 per issue or reproducing business cards at a rate of \$20.00 per issue. Please contact me if you have general questions. If our terms are acceptable, please email photo-ready ads to debra.schaeffer@gmail.com for evaluation. If your ad is accepted for publication, we will invoice you through email and forward your ad to our printer. Please contact our printer, Guy Homer, at homer@homer.com, for more specific information regarding printing specifications.

MAZEL TOV

- To **Gail Morrison-Hall** on the inclusion of her art work in exhibit at the **ARTISTS HAVEN GALLERY** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- To **Laura and Marc Feller** on the birth of their granddaughter Mollie Noa Cohen

Southeastern Pennsylvania First Suburbs Project Offers Or Hadash Members “Team Listening Campaign” Training

As a member of First Suburbs Project of SE PA, Or Hadash has the right to send a team to Listening Campaign training. First Suburbs is a coalition of institutions (congregations, agencies, some municipal governments) to bring more power over policies that affect our lives in the inner ring suburbs of Philadelphia (Bucks, Chester, Delaware & Montgomery Counties).

This training is designed to create a “listening team” for members. The goal is to train people who then reach out to their members to learn more about their views and needs, learn more about how the mission of a particular committee or the institution as a whole can be connected to what the members need, and tie the whole thing back into the larger community of inner ring suburbs.

This is an organized event; so if you are interested or want more information, please contact Michael Golden (magolden1@aol.com) or Jules Mermelstein (Jules.Mermelstein@gmail.com) for more details. The training itself will be one afternoon in early June, and the goal is to finish the initial phase by August.

FIRST SUBURBS PROJECT MEMBER INSTITUTIONS & STRATEGIC PARTNERS

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania • Cabrini College • Chapel of the Good Shepherd • Chester Upland Citizens for Educational Progress • City of Coatesville • Drexel Hill United Methodist Church • Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia • The Garden Church • Good Schools Pennsylvania • Jenkintown Borough • Lansdowne Borough • Millbourne Borough – Montgomery County Community Action Development Commission • Nether Providence Township • Norristown Municipality • Or Hadash • Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Organizational Development and Leadership Program • Pottstown Borough • Presbytery of Philadelphia • Upper Darby Township • Wallingford Presbyterian Church • William Penn School District • Victory Christian Fellowship • Yeadon Borough • Yeadon Civic Association

From the Spiritual Life Committee

Spirituality

By Marty Jacobs, Chairperson

As noted in previous HaKeshet articles, the mission statement of the Or Hadash Spiritual Life Committee is “to work to provide a means to meet congregants’ spiritual needs within a framework of evolving Jewish Reconstructionist principles.” Accordingly, I’d like to draw attention to several Or Hadash activities which are designed to meet congregants’ spiritual needs on an ongoing basis. These are the Alternative Saturday Morning Service and two Torah Study Groups.

The Alternate Saturday Morning Services are held nearly every Saturday Morning at Or Hadash from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon. On mornings when there is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, this service takes place in the Rabbi’s study or outdoors (patio or Healing Garden, weather permitting). When there is no Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Alternate Service is held in the sanctuary, the Rabbi’s study, or outdoors.

That covers the logistics, but what makes this service spiritual? The spirituality comes from a combination of factors: spirited singing, inclusion of English readings to enhance the meaning of the prayers, and periodic pauses in the service for discussion about the prayers. In addition, on Saturdays when Rabbi Roni is not available to lead, the service becomes group-led. Attendees spontaneously call out page numbers for the next prayer or reading of their choice. This may sound disorganized, but it really works! More important, it creates a group spirit of closeness and shared responsibility that greatly enhances the service. This brief description can’t possibly capture the flavor of this service, so please stop by on a Saturday morning and see for yourself. All are welcome!

The Evening Torah Study Group has a similar atmosphere. It takes place two evenings a month (usually, but not always, on Tuesdays) at Or Hadash, 7:30-9:00 P.M. It’s a small group – usually three to five people - and is involved in intensive study of Torah. Intensive in the sense that only ten to twelve verses are studied in detail (i.e., word-by-word) in the course of an evening. Some knowledge of Hebrew is helpful, but not necessary. Instead, the focus is on insights participants can bring to the verses, as well as traditional Torah commentaries. There is occasional discussion on translation of the Hebrew, but only as it might affect the understanding of the verse. Participants have all found that delving into the Torah in such detail can’t help but provide new insights into the core text of Judaism. After more than five years of



Coming Soon!

THE TIKVAH PROJECT

Purchase your raffle tickets today to win a 7-day, custom trip to Israel for two by Israel My Way! Prize valued at \$10,000.

Raffle Ticket:
\$50/each

Raffle Drawing will take place at our cocktail benefit on September 21, 2011.

The Tikvah Project, presented by the ALS Hope Foundation and Israel ALS Research Association, will create an international, collaborative network of researchers from outstanding universities in Israel and the Greater Philadelphia Region aimed at finding the cause and cure for ALS.

To purchase your raffle tickets, please visit our website or call the ALS Hope Foundation office at (215) 568-2426.

www.ALSHopeFoundation.org/Tikvah/

study, we are still early in the second of the five books (Exodus) and probably won’t finish it for another few years – but no one’s in a hurry.

The monthly schedule is set a few weeks in advance, so if you’re interested in attending a session to see what it’s like please e-mail me at martin.jacobs@verizon.net and I’ll add you to the e-mail list for meeting announcements. This is a small group, and there is always room for additional participants.

Finally, the Saturday morning Torah Study Group meets every Saturday morning from 9:00 to 10:00 in the Board Room, preceded by a bagel breakfast starting at 8:45. The discussion is usually led by Rabbi Roni, with an occasional substitution by a lay leader. Discussion centers on the weekly Torah portion and is always very spirited. Participation in the discussion is optional and some are content to listen, while others enthusiastically contribute their thoughts with everyone getting a chance to speak at least once. Attendance ranges from fifteen to twenty-five, and additional participants are always welcome.

Please join us at one or more of these activities, and raise your spiritual consciousness!

Changes Around the Reconstructionist Movement

In Or Hadash is affiliated with the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement. Our movement has been comprised of 3 branches: JRF- the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, RRC- the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and RRA- the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association. In order to keep this progressive movement on the forefront of Jewish life in the 21st century, change is on the horizon.

At the JRF biennial last November, a resolution was passed to empower the RRC and JRF to work toward developing a new unified organization. On April 10th, a meeting was held in Philadelphia at which Or Hadash was represented. At that meeting, a vote was taken to dissolve JRF and to merge it with the RRC to create a new single organization of the Reconstructionist Movement. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association will remain a separate entity that will be represented on the board of the new organization. Camp JRF will be represented on the organization's board as well. I think we can assume that a new name for the camp will happen too.

**Tired of writing out checks for all the events you attend?
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610-896-7620

The goal of the new organization will be to better position Reconstructionist Judaism for the changes that we already see in American Judaism. There will be renewed focus on cultivating Jewish leadership, enhancing Jewish learning and fostering Jewish living. We will expect better congregational support, especially through strengthening of the branding of the movement and by reaching out to interfaith families and unaffiliated Jews in the greater community to attract them to the movement. There

should also be more involvement in all the new methods of socializing and communicating so college students and young adults are better served. To top it off, by consolidating resources, significant financial savings should also be realized. I am encouraged by this new plan and look forward to the day when perhaps people won't look quite so quizzical when they hear the mention of Reconstructionist Judaism.

A Letter From Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz, RRC

Dear Friends,

Nearly two years ago, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation came together to discuss our joint mission: to enhance Jewish leadership, learning and living in the 21st century. We knew that together we could form an even more powerful force to advance the Reconstructionist movement.

At a special meeting in Philadelphia on April 10, lay representatives of the movement passed a proposal to create a single organization—with a united board made up of lay leaders and rabbis, a united professional staff, and a single chief executive.

Together, with your support, we have taken a large and vital step. We look forward to taking on the challenges and opportunities of contemporary Jewish life with new vigor, as a unified organization.

The Reconstructionist movement, as you well know, is built to evolve as times change. We have been taught to approach our own evolution creatively, thoughtfully and proactively. To unify our organizations does just that. It will allow us to use our resources more efficiently, expand our role as an innovative leader in the Jewish community, and encourage and sustain engagement in Jewish life.

I look forward to our collaboration in the days and years ahead.

L'Shalom,

*Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz
President, RRC*

ECO CORNER

By Doug Smithman, ECO Chairperson

So we just had a wonderful, if not exactly kosher, meal at Tex Mex Connection in North Wales. We've been going there for years, Brian LOVES the chips and salsa, and the margaritas aren't bad. But now this symbol is on the menu.

Tex Mex has gone green. It is a certified green restaurant. But what does that mean? First, let's think about a few things that a restaurant does that aren't green. I invite you to explore www.dinegreen.com; but this will give you some idea of the problems.

1. Packaging of foods and other products used often can't be recycled.
2. Leftovers and other organic waste are thrown in with the rest of the garbage.
3. Cleaners and disinfectants are often toxic and eventually run off into the ecosystem.
4. Water is often used excessively and loaded with grease and other contaminants.
5. Electricity is often wasted in everything from refrigerators and dining room or kitchen doors that are left open to excessive use of dishwashers.

These are obvious but there are some less obvious issues, such as:

1. The restaurant is out in the country. That idyllic setting requires extra driving by patrons, employees, delivery trucks and trash removal.



2. The building's energy system is inefficient? Converted Victorian houses and barns were specifically built to breathe. That way they didn't asphyxiate themselves while trying to keep warm.
3. Are the foods and other products used locally grown and/or produced?
4. Ditto for the building. Where did the materials and the labor to build it come from?

All of these are important in determining the impact of a restaurant on our planet, Earth.

The Green Restaurant Association (GRA) certifies a certified Green Restaurant. GRA is now certifying restaurants based on version 4.0. They inspect:

1. Water efficiency
2. Waste reduction
3. Sustainable furnishings and building materials
4. Sustainable foods
5. Energy
6. Disposables
7. Chemical and pollution reduction

If you think this sounds like LEED for restaurants, then you're right. It is LEED for restaurants. But since most

Americans eat out at least two times a week, it is very important. I strongly recommend that you ask your favorite eatery if they are certified as a Green Restaurant. If not, you should ask them why not. Restaurants are businesses and the owners and operators will not bother with this unless their clients begin asking.

So go ahead. Ask a question. Put them on the spot. This is a perfect place to apply an old Chinese proverb; No single raindrop considers itself responsible for the flood. In the meantime, eat at Green Restaurants like Tex Mex Connection (sorry Rabbi). The food is great and they have a sincere interest in the plant Earth.

I also invite you to check out the garbage cans next time before you eat. Using trash in a sustainable manner helps. It may also help with your diet (sorry, I DIDN'T say that). www.landfillfree.com



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Religious Action Center's Rabbi David Saperstein Poses the Next Big Question

By Rachel Weiss-Berger, Project Director, Global Day of Jewish Learning

In Avot, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel observed “It is not the study of Torah that is the essential thing; it is the doing of it.” What should that mean to modern Jews? What does “doing Torah” mean to you?

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz and Rabbi David Saperstein begin the discussion but want to know what YOU think. Here is a sneak peek at the Rabbis’ responses:

Rabbi Saperstein: “To many Jews, the “doing” of Torah remains the doing of the 613 commandments as prescribed by rabbinic law. To far more Jews, the doing of Torah is living their Jewish lives: working for Israel’s security; fighting anti-Semitism; engaging in the forms of worship of the various streams; strengthening Jewish learning; and engaging in social justice...”

Rabbi Steinsaltz: “The mitzvot (“commandments”) provide the content of what it means to be a Jew. Like the abundant, complex leaves and flowers of a tree, their manifold, seemingly disparate forms actually comprise a wondrous whole: the derech, or way, of Torah...”

Be a part of the conversation, share your thoughts and read the entirety of the Rabbis’ responses.

From Rabbi Roni

(continued from page 1)

welcomed me with open arms into your lives. I cannot thank you enough for the opportunity to fill in this year as your Sabbatical Rabbi while Rabbi Josh and his family have been in Israel. When I started rabbinical school six years ago I never thought that the congregational rabbinate would be for me. I want to thank you for showing me how delightfully sweet this path can be. Being with you through both the joy and elation of life’s celebrations as well as the sorrow and pain of illness and death has been an honor and privilege. You have all welcomed me in as one of your own, and have truly fulfilled the divine imperative, to “love your fellow as yourself.”

As we journey from Pesach to Shavuot, from our mythic redemption to revelation, it is a mitzvah to count each day during this period of the Omer. The mitzvah of counting each day reminds us that it is a mitzvah to make each and every day count. Even though the days of my tenure here at Or Hadash are numbered, I want you to know that every single day in which I have served as your Rabbi has been awe-inspiring for me both personally and professionally. Thank you for this profound opportunity, from the bottom of my heart. You truly are a holy community, and it has been an immense blessing to have been part of this congregation.

B’vracha, Rabbi Roni

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