



HA-KESHER

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Newsletter of Or Hadash
A Reconstructionist Congregation
190 Camp Hill Road
Fort Washington, PA 19034
215.283.0276 Fax 215.283.4822
office@orhadash.com
www.orhadash.com



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SAVE THESE DATES:

Friday, May 14
Annual Congregational Dinner,
Meeting, and Service

Tuesday, May 18
Shavuot Service and
Confirmation

Sunday, May 23
Last Day of Sunday School
Assembly and End-of-Year BBQ

Friday, June 11
Send-off Shabbat Service
for Rabbi Josh

From Rabbi Josh

“Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. But in the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath of complete rest, a Sabbath of the Lord; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.” — Leviticus 25:4



It is hard to believe that six full years have passed since I was privileged to become the rabbi of Or Hadash – six years that have gone by in the flash of an eye meeting new people, building relationships, learning, celebrating, praying, grieving, planning, and discovering together. The time has been exciting, challenging, and rewarding and I have been delighted to grow in wonderful and unexpected ways in my service to the congregation. Now I am blessed in the seventh year with the opportunity for revitalization that the Torah pronounces, a Sabbath year of renewal and replenishment designed to restore those resources that have been channeled into nurturing the community over the past six years. The Torah emphasizes the importance of not regarding the land – or ourselves – as a commodity to be used down but as a precious resource that must be periodically renewed. This imperative is at the heart of Shabbat, where we are to cease from our labors every seven days to replenish ourselves and to recognize that we are more than simply what we produce. It is the basis of the sabbatical year as well and in the busy-ness and high demands of our contemporary society, opportunities for longer periods of reflection and renewal are indeed a treasure.

My sabbatical year begins this August, and Aimée, Tzvi, Yael, Adir and I are making plans to spend the year in Israel. We will live in Jerusalem where parents and children alike will be navigating the challenges and joys of Hebrew language and Israeli life, living in a place that moves according to the sacred rhythms of Jewish life. During that year, Rabbi Roni will be serving the community in my place. She is a wonderful teacher, talented service leader and compassionate pastoral presence who has already formed connections with many of you during her exceptional work as an intern this year. I am confident the congregation will be in the best of hands while she serves the community in the coming year.

I am grateful and humbled for this tremendous opportunity for growth and renewal with which all of you have provided me. I look forward to a year of discovery and replenishment, and to sharing the fruits of my sabbatical with the community when I return.

B'shalom,

Rabbi. Josh

Please join us for a send-off Shabbat service for Rabbi Josh on Friday, June 11 at 8 PM.

President's Message

By Rick Dzubow

This will be my final President's message for Ha Kesher, as my fourth and final year as President will be ending at the Congregational Meeting May 14th at around 7:21 p.m. (assuming the meeting starts 8 minutes late because people go back to the buffet an average of 3.5 times)...

Presidents of Or Hadash are destined to always look good because of the exceptional team of volunteers and professionals that do all the hard work. Matter of fact, Presidents at Or Hadash look good even when they don't look so good.

That's not to say that we haven't had some mighty fine-looking Presidents - we most certainly have. But then there are presidents like me, who's losing hair in all the wrong places and somehow getting shorter every year. I think the only thing preventing me from being a Richard Nixon look-alike is my mustache. I think I've mastered Nixon's shifty smile, beady eyes, awkward mannerisms, and profuse sweating surprisingly well.

But unlike Nixon, I made it through the four years without being impeached and run out of town. This actually comes as a bit of a surprise to me, because the only living beings I've ever led were my two springer spaniels. Of course, my dogs only agreed to be led when sufficiently bribed by milk bones. I tried the same strategy with Board members, but Board members found the milk bones hard to chew and fairly bland, so the strategy failed miserably.

Luckily for me, and for all of you, our volunteers and professional staff do not need milk bones to do an incredible job. Everyone's energy, dedication, skill, and commitment are inspirational, and our community is so very special because of all of their efforts and because of all of your contributions and participation.

Or Hadash is an equal opportunity community. Our future depends on everyone's contributions; our community's character and uniqueness depends on everybody's participation. It is not easy to form and sustain a real community; in our high-tech age, communities are in some ways being redefined and challenged to incorporate the popular on-line social tools for networking and connecting.

But these forms of high-tech connecting will never take the place of "in-person" communities. While the on-line tools dramatically increase the scope of your connec-

tions, it comes at a real cost. You lose much of the opportunity to form connections that are lasting and meaningful. You lose the ability to be part of a larger, wonderful whole. You lose the ability to find a place of belonging and caring. These are tangible things that Or Hadash offers. At Or Hadash there are no barriers, there are no pre-conceptions; there are no exclusions. At Or Hadash, there is unfettered acceptance, and there is a genuine warmth and caring that forms the central character of our community.

We must retain our central character while adapting to a changing world. It is not an easy balancing act. That will be the biggest challenge of our future leaders, and it is also the biggest challenge for all of you. I know Or Hadash will meet that challenge, because over the past four years, I have experienced the character of many, many of our members, and know with certainty that our future couldn't be in better hands.

I often am asked what the best part of President has been, and the answer to that question is very easy for me. The best part of being President these past four years is that it gave me the opportunity to meet and form deepening connections with many of you. Being President has been one of the most satisfying and meaningful experiences of my life. It has been an honor to serve as your President. May you and yours have a future blessed with good health and happiness. See you around!!

MAZEL TOV!

- To **Laura and Marc Feller**, on the arrival of their new grandson Noah Jacob, on March 21st.

B'NAI MITZVAH

MAY 1

Bar Mitzvah of **Andrew Meyer**, son of Veronica and Andrew Meyer

MAY 8

Bar Mitzvah of **Benjamin Forman**, son of Lisa and Ross Forman

MAY 22

Bat Mitzvah of **Rebecca Mann**, daughter of Maxine and Harris Mann

JUNE 5

Bat Mitzvah of **Sydney Ross**, daughter of Lauren and Matthew Ross

JUNE 12

Bat Mitzvah of **Abby Rubin**, daughter of Lori and Jon Rubin

JUNE 19

Bat Mitzvah of **Carly Plotkin**, daughter of Lenore and Robert Plotkin

Message from the Incoming President

By Janet Karp

Here we are welcoming May (my favorite month) 2010, and in Jewish time Iyar-Sivan 5770. Spring is in full bloom and it is beautiful! It's full of possibilities. Don't you just feel it? At Or Hadash, a change is taking place. Our very capable Rick Dzubow has served us so very well as President; and, most thankfully, he has served a full four years. We are an extremely lucky congregation to have such an excellent person in that role. Presidents at Or Hadash can serve one two-year term with an option for a second term. How fortunate we are that Rick decided to serve for two terms. We really owe a lot to Leslie for agreeing to share so much of Rick's time and energy. Thank you, Leslie! It has been a pleasure to serve on the Executive Committee with Rick. He has been a wonderful mentor these last three years while I held the position of Executive Vice President. If I am ready for my new role, a great deal of thanks is due Rick for keeping me in the loop and consulting with me along the way. I know I have really big shoes to fill!

And so it is with great anticipation and humility that I am stepping forward to assume the role as your new president. I have been at Or Hadash for a long time. I have held lots of positions over the years. I love this congregation. I want to see Or Hadash continue its successes and become even more the place to be for Jewish life in this area.

As has been the case for our ten presidents over the past twenty-seven years, I will need your help. As a Reconstructionist Jewish Congregation, Or Hadash is very participatory. We have but a handful of paid staff. What we are and what we do is accomplished by working together. We are a community of volunteers. Please take an active role in your congregation. It can be a small role or a large one, short term or long. You might use well-developed skills or discover new talents. If you have an idea, suggestion, or comment, please don't keep it to yourself. Let's talk about it. Use the suggestion box in the community room, my mailbox in the office, email or telephone, janet0517@comcast.net, 215-886-4812.

Truly, we are embarking on an adventure together. Rabbi Josh will leave us temporarily as he embarks on his sabbatical adventure. For the year, we will have the good fortune to have Rabbi Roni take the kippah (sounds more Jewish than take the reins) as our spiritual leader until Rabbi Josh's return. You will have lots of opportunities to get to know Roni and to benefit from what she has to offer to our congregation.

I have a favor to ask of all of you. My first request as president is that you put on an

ambassador's hat. What that means is that each of us is a potential ambassador of Or Hadash. Talk about your congregation. Focus on what brought you to Or Hadash and what keeps you at Or Hadash. Invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to attend an Or Hadash event with you. Those personal stories will do the most good at spreading our name around and letting unaffiliated and disengaged folks know what we are doing well.

Nominations to the Board of Directors – 2010

President	Janet Karp	Community Inreach Chair	Carolyn Savitzky
VP Admin.	Amy Grossman	Building/Grounds Chair	Rich Freifelder
VP Membership . . .	Robyn Pollack & Donna Brian (Co-Chairs)	Publicity Chair . .	Gail Morrison-Hall
Secretary	Jay Cohen	Finance Chair	Fred Wilf
Treasurer	Barry Brian	Development Chair	Lani Moss
Education Chair . . .	Stacey Goodman	SATO Chairs	Debbie Bernstein & Alisa Belzer (Co-Chairs)
Ritual Chair	Marty Jacobs	At-Large	Michelle Smithman, John Shapiro, Rhoda Gansler, Jill Rall, Shelly Homer, Scott Crespy
Exec. VP	TBD		
Past President	Rick Dzubow		
Adult Ed. Chair	David Toub		

Non-Board Committees/Sub-Committees

Hesed Chair	Shelley Sanders	Investment Chair	Rich Malkin
Community Life Chair .	Gyl Zelesnick	Darfur Chair . .	Burt & Barbara Siegel (Co-Chairs)
Havurot Chair	Rhoda Gansler	Israel Chair	Elley Rosenberg
Kitchen Chair . . .	Michelle Smithman	Environmental Work Group Chair	Doug Smithman
Aesthetics Chair	Mike Oswald		
Website Chair	Jim Hall-Morrison		
Ha Keshet	Debra Schaeffer		

From the Administrator

By Laurie Albert

Or Hadash is part of a larger Jewish community. We have good neighboring congregations and we work collaboratively when possible. We also have organizations like the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia's Kehillah of Bux-Mont as partnering resources that help make much of what we do possible.

This spring, in partnership with the Kehillah of Bux-Mont, we were able to present Aliza Green's INTERNATIONAL CHAROSET WORKSHOP where Or Hadashers and friends from all over the region learned to make a variety of delicious charoset recipes from around the world. We hosted the Community Yom HaShoah Observance Holocaust Remembrance Day service with incredibly moving musical performances by violinist Yuval Waldman and pianist Inesa Sinkevych. In celebration of Israel Independence Day, we participated in the MANY FACES, FACETS & FLAVORS OF ISRAEL Festival sponsored by the Kehillah of Bux-Mont hosted by Tiferet Bet Israel. We had the opportunity to meet correspondent and author of Lone Soldiers, Herb Keinon, at Temple Sinai. We hosted journalist and commentator Yossi Alpher's program, "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ISRAEL-ARAB PEACE PROCESS?" which was co-sponsored by the Kehillah of Bux-Mont and the JCRC.

This programming is spiritually, intellectually and culturally rich. I invite you all to take advantage of it whenever possible.

From the Education Steering Committee

By Amy Grossman

The 2009-2010 school year marks my sixth and final year as chair of the Education Steering Committee. Working side by side with Lori Rubin has been a treat. As we all know she is a dedicated, talented force to be reckoned with - on a community level, a local level and even on a national level. As a Reconstructionist Educator, Lori is a true leader. In addition, our committee is made up of dedicated, bright, and talented lay leaders.

These six years have been a journey for me and for this Committee; a Committee that has been transformed, and has, in turn, transformed the functioning and vision of our school program. As a Designated School Program, Or Hadash's religious school is in elite company. We can say proudly that we are graduates of the ACAJE program that worked with lay and professional education leaders to improve our religious school's organizational structure. This was accomplished through components such as development of shared vision and mission statements, improving School Committee functioning, teacher education and leadership development. This process prepared us for planning and implementing improved direct Jewish educational programs and services in the religious school. *(continued on page 5)*



The Tuttleman/Lasko Program offered by JEVS Career Strategies is a paid internship for Jewish high school students and includes:

- SAT tutoring
- Work experience with Jewish organizations
- College admissions and financial aid counseling

Call 215-854-1834
to learn about eligibility requirements.

JEVS Human Services partners with the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

CONDOLENCES

- To **Philip Lindy**, on the passing of his wife, Annabel, mother of Alan and Frank, grandmother of Joshua, Jacob, Jeremy, Jason, Rachel, and Michael.
- To **Rhoda Gansler**, on the passing of her cousin, Sonny Miller.
- To **Burt Siegel**, on the passing of his mother, Rose Siegel, mother-in-law of Barbara, and grandmother of Joshua, Leah, and Sarah.
- To **Gladys Gershenfeld** on the passing of her husband, Walter.
- To **Jennifer Hoagland**, on the passing of her brother-in-law, Bill Hair.
- To **Len Zangwill** on the passing of his grandmother, Lorna Pearl Heinstein
- To **Debi Ettinger** on the passing of her father, Neil Ettinger, father-in-law of Bob Glantz, grandfather of Brian, and on the passing of Debi's great-aunt, Sylvia Stern.
- To **Penny Aronson** on the passing of her fiancé, Bob Arrow.
- To **Alyson Bell** on the passing of her grandmother, Toby Avery, great-grandmother of Mazzy, Raven and Cooper.

From the Education Director

By Lori Rubin

Relevance is always on my mind. In the 21st century, how do we keep ancient Biblical stories relevant to our students? How do we engage them in thinking about Jewish values on a daily basis? What does Hebrew or prayer have to do with their lives?

A recent experience involving my daughter, Abby, got me to thinking about this issue once again. Abby had overheard a conversation in which an educator was trying to explain to a student why religious school is important. Eventually, the student came to realize that, even though it isn't always where she wants to be, as an adult she will appreciate having had the experience. After overhearing the conversation, Abby "brainstormed" a program about the meaning of religious school. My perception is that it's all about building a Jewish identity.

In her own words, here are Abby's thoughts about her hypothetical program:

- Ask the kids about a time or place in their lives where they are happiest (i.e., snowboarding, playing guitar, at camp).
- Ask them what makes that time or place Jewish. This CANNOT be because G-d made it (i.e., hills and snow or wood for the guitar).
- The students must play the part of Lori, the educational director, and plan a Hebrew School activity involving both Judaism and their time or place (i.e., make up Jewish lyrics to a song, weave friendship bracelets while learning Hebrew prayers).

This program would be very experiential, allowing the students to find what's relevant to their own Jewish identity, which, as we know, can change over time. It would invite students to explore their thoughts while explaining that those thoughts might change over time; and that's okay. Allowing our students some creative input in their religious school experience would make it more meaningful to them. Perhaps we'll try this program next year.

In fact, our school structure has changed. As we continue to listen to the needs of our families, we have modified school programs, curriculum, and textbooks to provide our students with the best possible Jewish educational experience. Next year, we look forward to modifying the school structure to meet the needs of our current population. This will include experiential learning, mixed age groups, technology, cooking, theater and art. Parents had the opportunity to hear about these changes during our Town Hall Meeting on April 25th. I will be explaining the new structure again during our Congregational Meeting on May 14th. If you didn't have the opportunity to hear

about it and are interested, please contact me at school@orhadash.com. I can send you the power point presentation and answer any questions you may have. I look forward to a productive, fun-filled school year in 2010-2011.

On another note, I would like to invite all of you to be part of my family's celebration of Abby's becoming a Bat Mitzvah on June 12, 2010. Services begin at 10:00 a.m. and a Kiddush luncheon will follow. Or Hadash is an important part of our lives. Your sharing this special day with us would be a marvelous way to honor our community.

From the Education Steering Committee *(continued from page 4)*

Our success depended upon the willingness of all participants to "buy in" to the need for working together to improve the educational organization. Our committee members have included Tobi Mackler, Debra Schaeffer, Stephanie Fields, Stephanie Zangwell, Elizabeth Horry, Vivian Lichtman, Bonnie Ritterman, Jill Rall, Stacy Goodman, Marianne Adler, Mike Oswald, Lori Rubin, Rabbi Josh, Rick Dzubow, Karen Freedman, Elizabeth Horry, and Debra Brosan (ACAJE Consultant). We have worked to strengthen our committee's structure to enable our religious school education to achieve the shared vision and mission. The outcome is a result of careful program evaluation, planning for improvement in agreed upon areas, and implementation of the short- and long-term goals.

Please take some time to look at some of our accomplishments: the ESC's Mission Statement; our statement on policy development; our improved and updated Religious School Organizational Handbook; B'nai Mitzvah Guide; the creation of a Parent Organization; a new fire evacuation drill procedure; expectations and responsibilities of substitute teachers and student aides; a policy regarding a student's entering school after third grade; B'nai Mitzvah reflection questions; first aid procedures; and new policies for special need students, homework, financial assistance, communication with parents, and student discipline.

Yes, the ESC has become the gold standard of synagogue committees!! We have taken our community's values and goals and translated them into a curriculum that is alive and structured to meet the unique needs of Or Hadash. Thanks to the entire committee for your hard work and continued efforts under the leadership of the new ESC Chair, Stacy Goodman.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, May 7 — Three Part Harmony with a tot Shabbat at 6:00, a dairy/vegetarian Pot Luck dinner at 6:30 and Family Service at 7:00. May birthdays will be celebrated. Our next Three Part Harmony will be June 4th.

Friday, May 14 — Annual Congregational Dinner, Meeting & Service
Come for dinner, get updates on synagogue plans, vote on the budget and new officers, and stay for a wonderful Shabbat service with the choir. Dinner is at 6:30, the meeting at 7:00 and services at 8:00. RSVP for the dinner (no charge, but reservations must be in by May 10) to Laurie Albert by email at office@orhadash.com

Tuesday, May 18 — Celebrate Shavuot and our wonderful CONFIRMANDS at 7:00 pm. We have fifteen 10th graders who have continued their Jewish education. Let's honor them with our presence. They have designed a service that looks to be an amazing production. They are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ★ Yale Albert | ★ Carter Merenstein | ★ Rachael Schott |
| ★ Ashley Fisher Tannenbaum | ★ Rebecca Olsho | ★ Alexander Stern |
| ★ Jonathan Gewirtzman | ★ Jenny Oswald | ★ Gabriel Wasserman |
| ★ Joshua Lieb | ★ Jeffrey Ross | ★ Emily Zahn |
| ★ Aaron Marks | ★ Hannah Salzer | ★ Benjamin Zod |

Wednesday, May 19 — The office will be closed in observance of Shavuot.

Saturday, May 22 — Shavuot observances continues at 7:45 p.m. with our Shavuot Evening of Study.

Sunday, May 23 — Last day of Sunday School

- All teachers in grades K through 10th report to their classrooms at 9:00 a.m.
- Students in K through 10th grade will meet in their classrooms at 10:00.
- At 11:00, we will have an all-school assembly to honor our teachers, student aides, and the 7th grade class as they move up to our high school program. A multimedia presentation will highlight the accomplishments of our students.
- At the conclusion of the ceremony, around 11:30, students in grades K through 10 and our fellow congregants will be invited to an end-of-the-year BBQ at Or Hadash. We look forward to hanging out with friends while celebrating another great year. See BBQ flyer for details.

Friday, May 28 — Shabbat Al Fresco at 7 pm led by Ruth Mermelstein.

Monday, May 31 — The office will be closed in observance of Memorial Day.

Friday, June 11 — Erev Shabbat Service with choir will be our opportunity to wish Rabbi Josh a safe journey as he prepares to leave for his sabbatical year.

STAFF TRIBUTES

By Laurie Albert

Or Hadash's home is a wonderful old building that requires a lot of tender loving care. We are most fortunate to have **Albert Thompson** looking after it on a regular basis. Albert is our part-time custodian but being so hard working and caring, he accomplishes more in those part-time hours than most would in a full-time position. He is always willing to lend a hand and takes pride in keeping our building looking good.

This year, Albert took on a new challenge. He was asking questions about our state and federal representatives and we came to learn that he was studying for his citizenship test. He passed with flying colors, and we should all give a big Mazel Tov to Or Hadash's newest citizen.

Albert, we thank you for being a part of the Or Hadash family.

When I became the Or Hadash administrator, my first challenge was finding

a new Shamas to work Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. It was amazing how many candidates I interviewed who just were not what we were looking for. Then a resume crossed my desk that looked interesting. I called and set up an interview, and when **Veronica Beasley** came in with her warm smile and determination, I knew we had found the right person.

Week after week, I hear compliments from Bar Mitzvah families, congregants, and guests about "that lovely young lady who was so helpful." I can go home on weekends knowing that Veronica is here to make sure everything runs smoothly, and that she is not afraid to ask if she has any question about what is needed. We are all grateful that our onegs are in her capable hands.

Veronica, we thank you for being a part of the Or Hadash family.