

Kol Kneseth Israel

"The Voice of Kneseth Israel"



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AN OPEN LETTER OF THANKS

By Jack B. Fishman

At this time of year, we all reflect on what we have to be thankful for. I am remarkably lucky – as Rebecca pointed out to me (as only a seven year old could) after Sunday School this week, after making her “I am thankful to be an American Jew” turkey for Thanksgiving. She eloquently reminded me that we have so much to be thankful for: good health, happiness, prosperity, family and friends.

But I also have another thing to be thankful for, as do all of us who are part of the family we call CKI. I am thankful beyond words to all of the people who so effortlessly and tirelessly give of themselves, week in and week out, regardless of the weather or their own personal issues, to make CKI not only a “better” place (and who certainly do that), but also make it a “Jewish home away from home” for all of us.

There are so many people who fall into this category, so with sincere apologies to anyone who I forget, and in no particular order, I want to offer a sincere “thank you” on behalf of Liz, Rebecca and I to the following, for all you do or have done over the last few years:

Maureen and Joe Rosenfeld, Fern Raben, Sue and Dick Johnson, Paul Glaser, Michael Finger, Lois and Steve Troy, Mark and Sue Zemel, Tina Wolf, Sandy Phelan, Wendy and Art Shankman, Nancy and Chuck Zimmerman, Nina Finn, Liza Bachrach and Dan Marshall, Amy and Ira Fosco, Anita Hornug, Phyllis and Don Lesser, Saul Mariasis, Wanda and Perry Pitzele, Barb and Ron Razowsky and all the Sunday school teachers.

All of these individuals give of their spare time (and we can all agree that in this ever increasingly hectic society we live in, spare time for any of us is always at a premium) to make OUR experiences at CKI, whether it be a service or a blood drive, a special event or buying something at the gift shop, an important and meaningful occasion for each of us. And lest we forget, most of these people are volunteers, and all of them, even those who do receive some small remuneration, undertake this responsibility because of their love for CKI, not for any monetary reward. That is truly a gift we all should appreciate and cherish. Personally, the efforts of these

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From the Rabbi's Study...

We Don't Make It Up

Is there a meaning to life?

The late, popular author Isaac Asimov said no, and in the November 1967 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* he wrote, "Possibly, no scientific view is so unpopular with nonscientists as this one. It seems to make everything so 'meaningless.'"

"But does it?" Asimov continued. "Is it absolutely necessary to have the entire Universe or all of life meaningful? Can we not consider... that each of us can so arrange his own particular life as to make it meaningful to himself and to those he influences? And in that case does not all of life and all the Universe come to have meaning to *him*?"

This strikes me as a strange position for a scientist. When Copernicus declared that the earth orbits the sun, did the

astronomers of his time say, "The earth orbits the sun for you, and the sun orbits the earth for us"? When Einstein

“Is there a meaning to life?”

contemplated the nature of space and time, was he content to discover what it was to him? Science, of all the disciplines, is most concerned with the world outside ourselves.

"But value judgments are different," Asimov might respond. "The meaning of life really is a matter of individual preference."

This is where Asimov is most clearly mistaken. We may, in fact, be all wrong

about the structure of the physical universe, but as for value judgments, we know with absolute certainty that the difference between a Nazi and a resistance fighter is not just preference. If everyone in the world said that murder was right, it would still be wrong.

If the meaning of our lives were made up by us, then nothing would be forbidden. But certain things that we would like to do are still wrong, because the meaning of our lives comes from outside ourselves. We may be taught some of the laws of right and wrong, and others we may discover on our own, but we don't make them up. More clearly than we know anything else we know that we are commanded. When we trust that sense of commandment, we begin to realize life's meaning.



A Message from Our President

January has always been somewhat of a challenge for me with the return from vacation and the end of various office and family celebrations and events. In general, it marks for many of us a return to normality and the business of dealing with the serious side of winter. (Is there such a thing as post-*Chanukah* depression syndrome?) You're probably saying, "Thank you, Mr. Sunshine, for bringing us all down!" I assure you that is not my intent. As a matter of fact, it's just the opposite.

There is much to look forward to besides the cold and long dark nights. First, there's something to be said for taking a break after a period of high level activity. It gives us a chance to pause and take stock of ourselves and evaluate where we are with goals that we perhaps set earlier this year during the High Holidays.

Did you promise yourself to improve your spiritual life by increasing your attendance at *Shabbat* services? Or perhaps to improve your knowledge of Judaism? As it turns out, there are a

number of options available to you in our adult education offerings. There is Saul Mariasis' weekly Hebrew class on Sundays, and there are the Rabbi's Judaism 101 classes each Tuesday night. There is always room for more congregants.

And, let's not forget weekly *Shabbat* services on both Friday night and Saturday morning. I am happy to report that we usually manage a *minyan*, but we would definitely welcome more people at services. Those of you with children in *Torah* School with service attendance requirements could use this as an opportunity to re-acquaint yourself with the spiritual side of Judaism. Remember, this isn't just for children.

For our children there are *Kadima* and USY events such as the trip to Gameworks. Our Men's Club is planning to join the club from North Suburban Synagogue to attend a Wolves Hockey game on January 11th (contact Arthur Shankman if you're interested).

Have you checked out the Elgin Jewish Immigration Experience exhibit yet?

This is a fascinating series of displays laying out the early history of Jews in the Fox Valley area.

Last month, the 50+ Club spent a very enjoyable night touring the studio of our own Walter Arnold, a sculptor of some renown. The rumor is the next event will be a fun bowling night.

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Ha Kol Information

Kol Kneseth Israel is published monthly by Congregation *Kneseth Israel* of Elgin, Illinois. It is mailed to CKI members via first class postage.

Non-members who would like to receive a copy may do so by forwarding a yearly donation of \$18 (*Chai*) to cover cost of production and mailing.

Make checks payable to CKI.



All material for the February issue is due NO LATER than January 10, PLEASE.

All items should be emailed to ronrazowsky@wowway.com

Ha Kol Editor: Ron Razowsky
Design/Production: Jana McFarlane



Torah School News

I have this clock. Now that's hardly unusual. Not that it does anything different from any other clock, but it is special. Fern gave it to me fifteen years ago on my 50th birthday. It's one of those clocks that hung above a blackboard in a Chicago public school during the early decades. Remember them? I remember how the custodian came in the classroom every Monday morning to wind it up. I remember the tick-tock as the pendulum gently swung back and forth. I remember looking at the clock and watching the minute hand move – sometimes very quickly and sometimes verrrry slowly. The face on the clock is the original one. Fern had the clock case refinished to its original state, and now it proudly hangs on the wall between our kitchen and family room.

What a special gift. Sometimes I'll just sit and listen to the sounds of the pendulum and watch the minute hand move. Immediately, I am back in a classroom at Blaine Elementary School filling my Schaeffer fountain pen from the inkwell in my desk. Funny thing – this clock brings back so many of my childhood school memories. And like the custodian, once a week, I stop the pendulum, take the key, open the glass covering the clock face, wind it up, set the time, and put the pendulum back in motion. What a nostalgia trip!

But there's more hanging on my wall than just an old school clock. There's something here about this precious gift of time. We all have it, and it's up to us as to what we do with it. We can savor it, waste it, create it, fill it, crave it, blame it, anticipate it, mismanage it, rearrange it, but we can't change it. We can't slow it down or speed it up. We can't reverse it. We can't stop it.

So many have written about time. Shakespeare writes in *Macbeth*, "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, Creeps on this petty pace from day to day, To the last syllable of recorded time." Emerson writes, "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in." Jim Croce sings, "If I could save time in a bottle."

Kahlil Gibran writes in *The Prophet*, "Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's timelessness, And knows that yesterday is but today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream."

And often we find the most thought provoking written in the most unlikely of places. I found this piece on the side of a Celestial Seasons box of tea. Written by Diane Loomans, it tells us about time and our children. Listen.

If I had my child to raise all over again, I'd finger paint more, and point the finger less.

I'd do less correcting, and more connection.

I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.

I would care to know less, and know to care more.

I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.

I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.

I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging, and less tugging.

I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.

I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.

I'd teach less about the love of power, And more about the power of love.

Time! In *Torah School* we try to use that time to do so many things – to help our children become the best they can be. To help our children be good Jews and compassionate human beings. To give our children the time to learn Hebrew, holidays, *halacha*, humility, and humanity. And there are many in our community who give so much of their precious gift of time to help *Torah School*. It's time to take the time to tell you who they are. At another time, I'll tell you specifically about what some of them do with the time. It's a partial list, but here's some.

Thanks for your time Wendy Barrash, Hillary Schneider, Hank Schillmoeller, Et Schillmoeller, Anita Hornung, Jack Fishman, Amy Fosco, Ira Fosco, Liza Bachrach, Dan Marshall, Joe Rosenfeld, Maureen Rosenfeld, Marc Stone, Scott Miller, Tina Wolf, Nancy Cox, Zahava Raz, Herb Gross, Sandi Phelan, Jana McFarlane, Bill McFarlane, Fern Raben, Saul Mariasis, Estee Berg, Marina Fink, Marcie Monteith, Kara Gauthier, Lisa Schulman, Daniel Schulman, Roddy Frankel, Ed Brody, Pearle Brody, Lucy Marshall, Jerry Himmelfarb, Earl Sternfeld, the Men's Club guys and the Sisterhood gals.

Torah School staff: Wendy Barrash, Tova Kaplan, Judi Schweinler, Adele Stein, Jessica Astrug, Debbe Astrug, Aaron Wolfensohn, Marty Wolfensohn, Marc Zemel, Wanda Pitzele. Emily Burkner, Shayna Stein, Dori Stein, Sara Shankman, Jessica Shankman, Rachel Pitzele, Lucy Marshall, Molly Rosenfeld, Deanna Phelan, Robyn Phelan, and Rabbi.

So spend some time at CKI this month to be a part of some of January's "events" – Junior Congregation, Family Services, the adult Hebrew class, the Rabbi's class for parents, the adult study group. And plan on attending Roddy Frankel's stimulating discussion on Sunday morning, January 14 – "Jimmy Carter Unshelled."

You won't waste your time at CKI! You will fill it with meaning and great community.

Thank you, Fern, for the incredible gift of time you have given me.

And let us all in *Torah School* really work to make sure that "yesterday is today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream" and make time something very special for everyone!

L'chaim,

Sisterhood News

December started with our Sisterhood *Shabbat* and, once again, it coincided with a major winter storm. We talked about finding a different time of year for this special *Shabbat*, one without a winter storm. But Karen Kaufman, President of Central Region, explained that the winter storm is part of our tradition. And, really, almost everyone managed to come to the service, in spite of the weather. And the service was beautiful. We might as well accept it! Winter is part of our lives! Many thanks to Adele Stein for all her hard work to plan this wonderful program.

The *Chanukah* Bazaar was also a success! Thanks to all who helped to set up, gift wrap, guide young shoppers, etc. A special thank you goes out to the many, many *Kadima* and USYers who also lent a helping hand and all of you who shopped! As of today, we have brought in approximately \$4,000 – about half of which is profit!

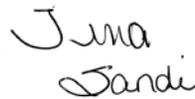
In **February**, we're going to combine our monthly board meeting with a program. After we finish the business portion, we'll go on to discuss the book *Those Who Save Us*, by Jenna Blum. This is Women's League book Club Selection. We should have a great time – getting together to talk and exchange ideas. We look forward to seeing you there!

And lastly, *Purim* is coming! (Notice how we try to bypass the rest of winter quickly!) We are going to offer the *Shalachmones* gift bags. And, of course, after that, it's time to prepare for Passover.

So, even though winter is definitely part of our traditions here in the Midwest – we still can look forward to spring and all its celebrations!

See you at the book review!

Tina Wolf and
Sandi Phelan



UPCOMING EVENTS

No SISTERHOOD MEETING IN JANUARY!

February 13th – Sisterhood meeting at CKI, 7:00 pm. Book discussion of *Those Who Save Us* by Jenna Blum.

We Send You To Hebrew School Because...

- **Because** whatever career or role in life you pursue, the knowledge and information you gain in Hebrew school will enrich you in ways you cannot even imagine.
- **Because** Judaism is more than just a religion – it is a way of life.

More next month...

Men's Club News

Jimmy Carter, "Unshelled"

Back by popular demand, **Dr. Roddy Frankel** is preparing another stimulating presentation/discussion on Carter's recently released book "*Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*"

Come join us and bring a friend! to the sanctuary on Sunday morning, **January 14, 2007**. 10:15 a.m. to noon.

Congregation Kneseth Israel • 330 Division Street, Elgin, IL 60120
www.ckielgin.org



Men's Club Family Event – AHL Hockey!

The Chicago Wolves vs. the Syracuse Crunch
Sunday, February 11, 2007 • 4:00 PM
Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim Rd., Rosemont
Tickets \$12.00 each

This family oriented is being organized with FJMC congregation,
Northwest Suburban Jewish Congregation

Please reserve seats BY FEB. 1 by contacting Arthur Shankman,
shankart@aol.com or 630-377-5465

SAVE THE DATE:

Jan 14th – "Jimmy Carter Unshelled."
Speaker Roddy Frankel – 10:15 am to noon.

Jan 28th – Café CKI meeting – 10 am.

Feb 8th – Gen Mens Club Meeting – 7:00 pm. Set up for Café CKI after the meeting

Feb 10th – Café CKI Comedy Nite

Feb 11th – Wolves Hockey Game – 4:00 pm

Feb. 24th – Men's Club Shabbat – 9:30 am



USY and Kadima News

Last month, our December event took place immediately following a service project. On the night of Saturday December 2, a large group of USYers and *Kadimaniks* helped Sisterhood with setting up the *Chanukah* Bazaar. Then we went ice skating at City Skate on the Civic Plaza in downtown Elgin. It was pretty chilly outside, but the skaters kept warm! Thanks to the parents who helped drive and chaperone.

This month, the USY Board Meeting takes place on Monday, January 8 at 8:00pm, immediately following Confirmation. All members and any prospective members in grades 8-12 are encouraged to attend.

Starting in January, our 8th grade *Kadimaniks* are welcome to attend any USY programs and events, both for our own chapter and for CHUSY Region. We look forward to helping you transition from *Kadima* into USY!

On Sunday January 14, we will hold a joint event for *Kadima* and USY - we'll

go to Gameworks in Schaumburg immediately following *Torah* School for lunch and fun. You should have already received a flyer via email about this program. Either meet at CKI at noon for a ride or meet us at Gameworks at 12:30pm.

Looking ahead to next month, *Kadima* will have a chapter event on Sunday, February 18 at noon, so watch for a flyer. The Regional *Kadima Kallah* takes place February 23-25. All participants must be current paid members of *Kadima* in order to attend. The USY Regional Israel *Shabbaton* takes place February 2-3, and the regional SATO Marathon/*Tu'BShevat* event takes place February 3. (Eighth graders, remember that you are invited to attend!)

Please be in touch with any questions.

Happy secular New Year to all!

Maureen Rosenfeld, *Youth Chair*
847-888-1950 or JustSayMo18@cs.com

HEARTLAND SAYS: "YASCHER KOACH!"

Printing deadlines prevented an earlier report, but CKI's Fourth Annual Blood Drive, held last November 19, wound up being our most successful such event ever. Heartland Blood Centers reported that 25 units were donated that morning, making this, officially, an "awesome" drive.

A heart-felt thank you goes to all who came and donated, or even just tried to donate. Rest assured that your gift meant very much to someone truly in need.

Plans are underway to make the Sunday before Thanksgiving CKI's Annual Blood Drive Day. So now that you probably have a new 2007 calendar open, mark November 18 as the date for our Fifth Annual Drive, and make plans to help us surpass this year's results.

CKI COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

ADULT EDUCATION - Barbara Sharf
BY-LAWS - Malcolm Morris
CEMETERY - Ben Rifken
ENDOWMENT - Charles Zimmerman
FUND RAISING - Anita Hornung (New Donor Tree)
HA KOL EDITOR - Ron Razowsky
HOUSE - Carl Schweinler
MEMBERSHIP - Dr. Joe Rosenfeld
PUBLICITY - Melinda Abrams and Marcie Monteith
RITUAL - Paul Glaser
SOCIAL ACTION - Sherry Wiesman, Fern Raben and Tina Wolf
YOUTH ACTIVITIES - Joe & Maureen Rosenfeld

To contact a Committee Chairperson,
call CKI at 847-741-5656

"Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow..."

Meals on Wheels will make its rounds again in January (15-19) and will need two volunteers each day. Put this *Mitzvah* on your calendar today and call to advise me of the day that suits you best. I will start making calls by January 7 to fill in the schedule. As usual, your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Nancy Zimmerman
(847) 695-6540

The Mazal Tov Corner...

Our hearty congratulations to...

Lauren T. Astrug, daughter of **Debra Astrug**, who was accepted to Loyola Medical School in Chicago (Stritch School of Medicine) through the Early Assurance Program.

Stuart Heyman for being selected to the Illinois State Basketball Coaches' Hall of Fame.

President's Message (cont'd from p. 2)

Also, there are next month's activities including of course, *Purim*. I understand we have a new special program planned for *Purim* besides the usual carnival. Stay tuned for details in *Ha Kol*. You can also look forward to this year's Café CKI Comedy night.

Perhaps by now you are beginning to realize that January doesn't have to be a month of "cocooning" at home in front of the TV. It can also be an opportunity to get out and experience life with your Jewish community. I hope to see you all there!



ELGIN CHAPTER HADASSAH PRESENTS

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THE PHOTO THAT STARTED IT ALL

On September 30, 2000, The New York Times, Associated Press and other major media outlets published a photo of a young man --- bloodied and battered --- crouching beneath a club-wielding Israeli policeman. The caption identified him as a Palestinian victim of the recent riots --- with the clear implication that the Israeli soldier was the one who beat him.

The victim's true identity was revealed when Dr. Aaron Grossman of Chicago sent the following letter to the Times:

"Regarding your picture on page A5 of the Israeli soldier and the Palestinian on the Temple Mount --- that Palestinian is actually my son, Tuvia Grossman, a Jewish student from Chicago. He, and two of his friends, were pulled from their taxicab while traveling in Jerusalem by a mob of Palestinian Arabs, and were severely beaten and stabbed."

**Join us at Congregation Kneseth Israel
330 Division Street, Elgin
Sunday, February 18th, 2007 @2:30 p.m.**

Light refreshments will be served.
Questions: call 847-985-1122 or 630-289-3349

Ritually Speaking

For more years than many can remember, Don Lesser has very ably, and passionately, served as the Chair of CKI's Ritual Committee. Leaving large shoes to fill, he has "passed the yad" to yours truly.

The Ritual Committee is charged with the responsibility of insuring that CKI continues to meet perhaps its primary function: to serve as a *bet tefillah*, house of worship. Working with Rabbi Kohn, the Committee meets throughout the year to plan weekly *Shabbat* and special holiday services and to consider policies pertaining to religious practices. The Committee has already begun to organize next year's High Holy Day observances, which, like it or not, will be here sooner than you think.

Also, beginning sometime in the next couple of months, *yahrtzeit* remembrance letters will start being

mailed to members a month or so before the date in question. The letters will serve to remind members to attend the service when their loved one's name will be called from the *bimah*, and that hosting an *oneg*, or contributing *zedakah*, is appropriate at that time.

The Committee is not a Secret Society. New members are welcome; the only requirement is a commitment to participating and learning.

I hope to offer regular reports on Committee activity in future issues of *HaKol*. For now, though, I'd like to call attention to two matters emphasized by Mr. Lesser: First, whether you attend services occasionally or regularly, it is important that we have your correct Hebrew name for our list on *bimah*. If you haven't yet done so, please let the office know your name, as well as the names of the rest of your family

members. And while you do that, be sure to let us know whether you are a *Kohen*, *Levi*, or *Yisrael*. The second item is our *mishberach* list. While we wish to call attention to those loved ones in need, the list can sometimes become unwieldy when names remain long after the person has gotten well. Consequently, unless the office is advised otherwise, names will be removed after 30 days.

It is an honor to serve as the new Chair of the Ritual Committee. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, or if you would like to join the Committee, please feel free to contact me.

Paul Glaser



Classes with Rabbi Kohn:

Understanding Hebrew,
Sundays 10:30 am

Judaism 101,
Tuesdays 7 pm

Star Trek presentation,
back by popular demand,
Monday 1/22, 6:30 pm

Greeting the Bride

"We have little *kiddush* cups for all the children. They all have their own little *kiddush* cups with their grape juice. I used to always give them cups that they made in school, but now I have little *kiddush* cups that are just like Larry's and that's what they want. They want the real thing. They don't want plastic cups."

— Debra Neinstein
in *The Art of Jewish Living: The Shabbat Seder*

Parashat HaShavu'a – Weekly Torah Portions

January 6
16 Tevet

Vayehi – Genesis 49:27-50:26
Haftarah: 1 Kings 2:1-1

January 13
23 Tevet

Sh'mot – Exodus 4:18-6:1
Haftarah: Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

January 20
1 Shevat

Vaera – Exodus 8:16-9:35
New Month *Shevat* begins Friday & Saturday
Maftir: Numbers 28:9-15
Haftarah: Isaiah 66:1-24; 66:23

January 27
8 Shevat

Bo – Exodus 12:29-13:16
Haftarah: Jeremiah 46:13-28



Honorable Menschen...

...to **LUCY MARSHALL** for being an exceptional primary grade song leader and a "cantor" in Junior Congregation.

...to **BILL and JANA McFARLANE** for the donation of coffee and extended loan of a "Foosball" table for *Purim*.

...to **JOE ROSENFELD** and **MARC STONE** for repairing the broken lectern.

...to **ANITA HORNING** for her generous donations of picture frames for student art projects, "poster" boards on which to paint and draw, and bags for the *Chanukah* gifts for *Torah* School students.

...to **LIZA BACHRACH** and **DAN MARSHALL** for their donation of Tempera paints for the students to use.

...to **WENDY BARRASH, HILLARY SCHNEIDER**, and **HANK SCHILLMOELLER** for assuming the task of every Sunday morning's hospitality "crew."

...to **JACK FISHMAN** for literally running out on a Sunday morning to purchase a working cassette recorder.

...to Men's Club members **Jack Fishman, Scott Miller, Marc Stone** and "Alter Cookers" **Steve Eagels, Ira Fosco, Burt Friedman, Paul Glaser, Jerry Goozh, Dick Johnson, Dan Marshall** and head chef **Bill McFarlane** for an outstanding *Latke* Luncheon.

...to **Liza Bachrach** for facilitating the *Torah* School 50/50 Raffle



** NEWSFLASH **

This just in from the National Weather Service – it has been determined that in fact CKI Sisterhood does indeed control the weather. No matter when they schedule their annual Sisterhood **Shabbat** – a blizzard results! After terrible storms the past three years during the fourth Friday of January, the decision was made to shift this event to the first Friday in December. Regrettably, another blizzard occurred. There are unconfirmed reports that next year, this event will be moved to July!

MILK AND HONEY

- Israel's \$100 billion economy is larger than those of all of its immediate neighbors combined.
- Twenty-four per cent of Israel's workforce holds university degrees – ranking third in the industrialized world, after the United States and Holland – and twelve per cent hold advanced degrees.

More next month...

CKI BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT, Perry Pitzele

EXECUTIVE VP, Ira Fosco

Co-VPs/Sisterhood,

Sandi Phelan & Tina Wolf

VP/Education, Anita Hornung

RECORDING SECRETARY,

Carole Burstein

TREASURER, Marc Zemel

FINANCIAL SECRETARY,

Chuck Zimmerman

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT,

Paul Glaser

The "CKI SENIORS"

Lox & Bagel Luncheon

Mark your calendar:

Tuesday, January 9

12:00 noon at CKI



RSVP to Phyllis Lesser

(847) 741-8784 or phyllisCKI@aol.com

Please respond **DEFINITELY NO LATER THAN** Thursday, January 4th.

If you will be paying by check,

PLEASE, make it out for \$8.00 payable to "Cash"

A Measure of Time

by Jonathan Kohn

Now that we've entered 2007, has it ever occurred to you how strange it is for the secular calendar to choose this time as the beginning of the year? The Jewish calendar chooses the autumn, but that seems just as strange. Why autumn? Why winter?

The obvious time to begin the year is in the spring, when all of nature is filled with rebirth. Why didn't either calendar do that? The answer is that both of them did, a long time ago.

In the *Torah*, the very first commandment that was given to the people of Israel came in the spring, right before the first Passover: "This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you" (Exodus 12:2). But isn't *Rosh Hashana*, in the autumn, the Jewish New Year? Isn't that in the *Torah*? Sure it is, but in the *Torah* it's called the Day of Sounding the Shofar, and it's in what the *Torah* calls the seventh month. (Remember, seven is a very important number. The "Sabbath" of months, which would still be in the fall, is a good time for the High Holidays.)

Just as the Jewish year used to begin in the spring, so did the pre-Christian calendar. After all, the prefixes sept-, oct-, nov-, and dec- mean, respectively, seven, eight, nine, and ten. Why isn't December the tenth month?

Well, it was. The year used to begin in March, and March itself used to begin on the first day of spring. The two calendars used to start together.

And end together. After all, what's the oddest month of the year? February, of course. It doesn't have enough days (which is probably a good thing. Who wants a long February?), and its number of days keeps changing. It's the only month that doesn't fit into "Thirty days hath September..." On the Hebrew calendar, we have the same problem with the month of *Adar*. Some years have only one *Adar*, and some years have *Adar I* and *Adar II*. That's because both February and *Adar* used to come

at the end of the year, and the end of the year is the best time to make the adjustments needed for the sun to play catch-up with the calendar.

It goes further. About the end of February comes Fat Tuesday – or, in French, Mardi Gras. In *Adar* comes the Jewish equivalent, the holiday of *Purim*. These big, silly celebrations in both cultures used to herald the onset of the New Year.

“Pagan religions began their days at sunrise – the sun brings on the day. (It was revolutionary of the Torah to deny the sun this honor, and to proclaim that God creates the day, sunlight or no.)”

Times change, and so do calendars. But why did we Jews eventually move our New Year to the autumn, and why did the Christians move it to the winter?

I don't know, but I have a theory.

Remember how the Bible begins – that first chapter about the Creation? "And there was evening, and there was morning, one day [the second day, the third day, and so forth]." Well, there's controversy about what that phrase originally meant (more on that another time), but tradition takes it to mean that days begin in the evening. And so, on the Jewish calendar, they do, most notably in the case of *Shabbat*, which begins on the evening of the seventh day. (A glance at any page of a calendar will show that Christians and Jews agree on Saturday as the seventh day of the week. Christians, though, observe their Sabbath on the first day. Some

denominations call Sunday the Lord's Day, which they celebrate in place of Saturday's Sabbath.)

But if we Jews begin our days in the evening, Christians have a harder time, beginning their days at midnight. I don't mean that it's harder because people had to stay awake (which was no mean feat before the invention of electric lights), but because it used to be much more difficult to identify the moment when midnight arrived. All the heavens announce sunset, but midnight arrives quietly (which, at that sleepy hour, is appropriate). We in the Western world take for granted that days begin at midnight, but nothing in nature suggests that they should.

Nor does nature suggest the evening. Pagan, nature-based religions do the obvious, and begin their new days at sunrise. The sun brings on the day. (It was revolutionary of the *Torah* to deny the sun this honor, and to proclaim that God creates the day, sunlight or no.) The Jews defied paganism by counting from the evening, while the Christians, for whatever reason, chose to begin at midnight.

They did the same with the year. Pagans begin with the spring, which is like the sunrise of the year, Jews with evening autumn, and Christians with midnight winter. The year is the day writ large, for each tradition in its own way. January first, *Rosh Hashana*, and the equinox festivals are not just celebrations of renewal. Each is an assertion of fundamental beliefs and a distinct way of life, linking large units of time to small ones as well as to sacred texts.

Now why is the Jewish calendar so hard to calculate? Why do our holidays seem always to come out at different times each year?

There are three kinds of calendars, depending on whether you're following the sun, the moon, or...

Well, that's another story. Let's look at it in a future issue of the *Ha Kol*. The calendar has many surprises, and eventually we may be able to uncover them all – in a measure of time.

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Abraham M. and Anna Rose Seltzer Music Endowment Fund – Jewish cultural enrichment programs

CKI Education Fund – Support *Torah* School

Clara Wechter Education Fund – Support *Torah* School

Endowment Fund – See the President

General Fund – For multi-purpose use

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund – Needs decided by Rabbi

Lee Miller Book Fund – New books for Library

Lillian Roth Scholarship Fund – See the President

Major Gifts – \$5,000 and up. See the President

Memorial Plaques – \$300.00

Prayer Book Fund – *Siddur* is \$25; *Chumash* is \$60

Shalom Academy – Pre-school Jewish Education

Simon C. & Ruth L. Kaplan Torah Fund – Repair of *Torah* scrolls

Sisterhood Flower Fund – Pulpit flowers

Sisterhood Vision Fund – Large-type *Siddur* \$50

Tree of Life – Leaf is \$100; Rock is \$1,000

USY/Kadima Youth Group – Support for programs for our United Synagogue Youth

January Birthdays

- 3 Dorothy Perlman
- 4 Cathy Aron
- 4 Jeff Rifken
- 4 Irving Durchslag
- 4 Raquel Cox
- 5 Sarah Burker
- 5 Madeline Lewis
- 6 Anita Hornung
- 7 David Goodman
- 10 Gordon Roth
- 12 Kathy Lange
- 13 Elena Fossa
- 17 Barry Rose
- 19 Irene Loss
- 20 Katie Burstein
- 20 Evelyn Hochstadter
- 20 Edward Stein
- 21 Nicole Zeoli
- 21 Kathryn Moore
- 22 Bridget Hillman
- 25 Merrian Rifken
- 25 Melissa Gerlach
- 26 Estee Berg
- 26 Karen Kehl Rose
- 27 William Metzger
- 30 Zachary Hymer
- 30 Rebecca Hymer

January Anniversaries

- 3 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Kofkin
- 14 Karen & Mark Myrent
- 16 Louis & Merrian Rifken
- 17 Daniel & Lisa Schulman
- 26 Joe & Maureen Rosenfeld
- 27 Daniel & Lily Marlene Flynn
- 31 Robert & Nancy Cox

Acknowledgements

Generous Donations

CKI EDUCATION FUND

In honor of our teachers, Ron Raben, Wanda Pitzele and Debbie Astrug: **Happy Chanukah**

Lucy & Isaac Marshall

In honor of **Pearle & Ed Brody's anniversary**

Richard & Clarice Cutts

In honor of **Jacob's teachers, Rabbi Kohn and Marty Wolfensohn: Happy Chanukah!**

Bill & Jana McFarlane

In memory of **Sylvia & Michael Glaser**

Paul & Lynn Glase

INTERFAITH SERVICE FLOWERS

The flowers for the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service were in honor of our mother, **Lillian Sugar Nitzberg**, who taught us the importance of reaching out to the interfaith community. May her memory be a blessing.

Fern & Ron Raben

SIMON C. & RUTH L. KAPLAN TORAH PERPETUATION FUND

To Don & Phyllis Lesser – *Mazal Tov* on your 45th wedding anniversary

Fern & Ron Raben

In memory of **Nancy Mariasis Ashcraft**

Saul Mariasis

CKI YOUTH GROUP (USY/KADIMA) In honor of **Dr. Ken Jacoby's special birthday**

Maureen & Joe Rosenfeld

Get well wishes to **Manny Lindow**

Barb & Paul Maring

Mazal Tov to **Dr. Milton & Blossom Wohl** on the birth of their great-granddaughter **Netta Mayshar**

Barb & Paul Maring

ABRAHAM M. & ANNA ROSE SELTZER MUSIC ENDOWMENT FUND

In honor of **Pearle & Ed Brody's anniversary**

Barb & Paul Maring

In honor of **Nancy & Chuck Zimmerman's anniversary**

Barb & Paul Maring

Get well wishes to **Manny Lindow**

Sarah Frisch

In memory of **Frieda Simon**

Sarah Frisch

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND Donation

Norma & Alvin Hass

THANK YOU

...to **Laurie Winner** and **Medina Gross** for their thoughtfulness and generosity with their donations to our school and students.

...A big thank you to **every family** who participated in our Yankee Candle sale. It was an extremely successful fund-raiser, bringing over \$1000 to our school and our students.

We look forward to participating again in the fall. ---*Anita and Amy*

...to **Amy Fosco** for her enthusiasm and kindness in partnering with me in our Yankee Candle sale. --*Anita*

...The Big winners of the Yankee Candle sale are: **Shelby, Carlee and Jacob Fosco**. They sold collectively over \$250 worth of candles. They each will be receiving a gift certificate to Oberweis Dairy.

An Open Letter (cont'd from p. 1)

Individuals have made my family and I truly feel that CKI is not just a building, but is our spiritual, religious and cultural home. We should all ask ourselves what CKI would be like without the ongoing and dedicated efforts of this group of people.

But I did leave one name off the above, because from my perspective, and being the parent of a second grader, I have to single out one individual for special recognition. Of course, that person is Ron Raben. As Director of Education, Ron has made an enormous impact on the children who attend school at CKI, but more so, he has made an impact on many, if not most, of the parents, and certainly, has had such an impact on Liz and me.

Ron's tireless and enthusiastic personality, his love for the kids, his connection with the parents, and his attachment to CKI and to Judaism, all show through every time we see him.

In Our Family

HAMAKOM YENAHEIM ETKHEM – CONDOLENCES

The congregation expresses condolences to the families of **...Murial Falk, mother of Cantor Jack Falk**

...Lora Seigle, mother of Harry, Michael, Mark and Marsha Seigle.

May God comfort you and may their memory be a blessing

R'FUAH SH'LEIMAH – GET WELL

Fern Raben	Sarah Frisch
Ben Rifken	Nancy Zimmerman
Rose Goldstein	Sherry Wiesman
Lisa Schulman	Roselle McLaughlin
	Ashkenaz

May God bring speedy and complete healing to you and all others who are ill among the people of Israel.

When I open Rebecca's folder after a Sunday school class and read the weekly update that Ron has put together, I often wonder how much time and thought went into what many of us take for granted as such a simple task, yet that no doubt reflects his devotion to his cause and to the children. Rebecca not only likes going to Sunday school, but looks forward to it and misses it when she doesn't have to go. Certainly, some of this is the cultural experience of being and interacting with other Jewish children, an experience that she does not have in our neighborhood or in her elementary school. But her enthusiasm is also driven by her desire to say "Hi" to Mr. Ron, get her weekly hug from Ron and Fern, and to advance her Jewish knowledge and share in her Jewish heritage, as promoted by Ron and the wonderful teachers at CKI. She adores Ron and Fern, and all the teachers she

(continued on p. 13)

Yahrtzeiten

We recall with loving memory those whose *yahrtzeiten* are commemorated during the coming weeks, and those whose names are read in the Synagogue at Friday evening and Saturday morning Shabbat services during the month of **January**. It is appropriate for members of their families to be present when these names are read.

Dec 30	Jan 1	Erika Lindow*	Jan 6	Jan 6	Henry Grosken	Jan 20	Jan 22	Bessie Puklin*
Dec 30	Jan 1	Mary Dreyer	Jan 6	Jan 7	Irene Kramer*	Jan 20	Jan 22	Bessie Levin
Dec 30	Jan 1	Julia Nichol	Jan 6	Jan 7	Henry Eisner*	Jan 20	Jan 22	Natallie Troy*
Dec 30	Jan 2	Michael Glaser	Jan 6	Jan 8	Irving Gould	Jan 20	Jan 23	Joseph Ruben
Dec 30	Jan 2	Hyman Miller	Jan 6	Jan 8	Lou Brenner*	Jan 20	Jan 23	Sibyl Kaplan Moses*
Dec 30	Jan 3	Celia Flowers Reback*	Jan 6	Jan 10	Irving Paul*	Jan 20	Jan 23	Ruth Kaplan*
Dec 30	Jan 3	Louis Meyer*	Jan 6	Jan 11	Florence Shankman	Jan 20	Jan 23	George Neumark
Dec 30	Jan 3	Sarah Cohen*	Jan 6	Jan 12	Sylvia Coady*	Jan 20	Jan 24	Jean Boskind*
Dec 30	Jan 3	Frances Ruth Hayden*	Jan 6	Jan 12	Miriam Cohen*	Jan 20	Jan 25	Mandel Bochner*
Dec 30	Jan 3	Harold Durchslag	Jan 6	Jan 12	Bertha Beler*	Jan 20	Jan 25	Pearl Harris*
Dec 30	Jan 4	Frances Krause	Jan 13	Jan 13	Harry Seigle*	Jan 20	Jan 26	Marvin Schneider
Dec 30	Jan 4	Benjamin B. Baker*	Jan 13	Jan 14	Betsy Lynn Zeman*	Jan 20	Jan 27	Lillian Roth
Dec 30	Jan 5	Lillian Salk Stein*	Jan 13	Jan 15	Albert Smilgoff	Jan 20	Jan 28	Hyman Ableman*
Jan 6	Jan 6	Martin Fischer*	Jan 13	Jan 15	Molly Levine*	Jan 20	Jan 29	Zeldah Demont*
			Jan 13	Jan 16	Joseph Kleiman	Jan 20	Jan 29	Louis Gordon*
			Jan 13	Jan 17	Jean Fischer Schenker*	Jan 20	Jan 30	Max Kohlhagen
			Jan 13	Jan 17	Sarah Miller	Jan 20	Jan 30	Eugene Bernstein*
			Jan 13	Jan 17	Elizabeth Chesler	Jan 20	Jan 31	Martin Kornstein*
			Jan 13	Jan 17	Arlene B. Schachter	Jan 20	Jan 31	Nathan Cohen*
			Jan 13	Jan 19	Gerald London	Jan 20	Jan 31	Nate Krohn*
			Jan 20	Jan 20	Roy Rifken*	Jan 20	Jan 31	Sam Becker*
			Jan 20	Jan 21	Michelle Diane Fosco	Jan 20	Feb 1	Milton L. Durchslag
			Jan 20	Jan 22	Helen Sugar	Jan 20	Feb 2	Frank Lindow*
			Jan 20	Jan 22	Yetta Bear*	Jan 20	Feb 2	Lester Fischer*
			Jan 20	Jan 22	Maurice Bender	Jan 20	Feb 2	Anna Gombiner*



There are two dates listed above on our *yahrtzeit* list.

The first is the **day of the service at which the name are read.**

The second is the **actual date of the *yahrtzeit*, and memorial candles should be lit on the preceding evening.** An asterisk after a name indicates that a plaque is affixed to the Memorial Tablet.

KINDLE THE SHABBAT CANDLES

Jan. 54:16 PM

Jan. 124:23 PM

Jan. 194:31 PM

Jan. 264:40 PM

NOTE: Shabbat ends one (1) hour after candlelighting time on Saturday night.

An Open Letter
(cont'd from p. 11)

has had, as I know other children do, too, and the enthusiasm Ron, Fern and all the teachers exude carries over to the children, as can be seen in Rebecca's love of Sunday school. I know how very lucky we are to have Ron and the teachers guiding our children's Jewish education.

The turmoil of the last several years having subsided, in large part due to the Herculean efforts of the individuals named above, we are able to once again enjoy the simple experience of entering our synagogue and seeing those with whom we share a culture and a heritage. Other synagogues may have more money than we do, or may have both a *Hazzan* and a Rabbi, or may have a building that doesn't need constant attention as ours does. But I challenge any *shul* to produce a group of more dedicated and devoted people who care about the synagogue, the congregation, the community, and of primary importance to me, care about the children and their Jewish future, as much as those named herein do.

And for that, among the many things my family is grateful for, both at this time of year and all year around, we are very appreciative and thankful.

Our heartfelt "thanks" to each and every one of you for all you do to make CKI a very special place for us and for the children.



Painting windows in downtown Elgin with a Chanukah motif.

Chanukah Activities!



Photo by Arthur Shankman



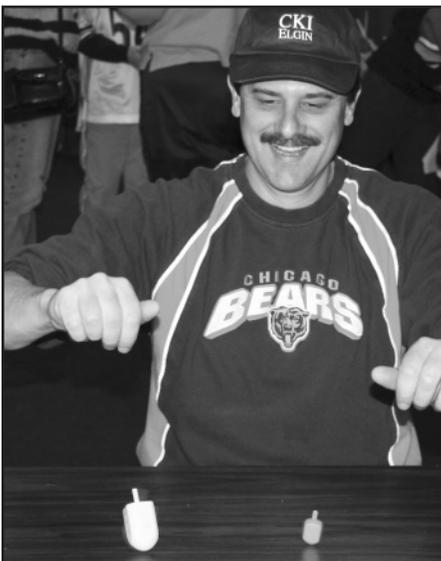
Learning about Chanukah in Aaron Wolfensohn's 4th grade class. Listening attentively are (L-R) Carlee Fosco, Jacob Abrams, Joey Miller, Becky Hymer and Ellie Evans.



Allie Kendall and her new friend at the Chanukah Bazaar.



Dr. Joe Rosenfeld and Tina Wolf assemble one of the many menorahs at the Bazaar.



Ed Wolf checks out some of the merchandise.



Sandi Phelan gives her daughter Robyn some chocolate gelt.

Photos by Herb Gross.

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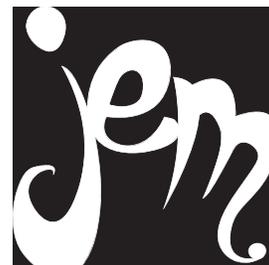
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		Friday evenings	7:30 pm
		Saturday mornings	9:30 am
3	Hebrew school resumes	16	Judaism 101 7:30-9:00 pm
5	<i>Ima & Me</i> 10:30 am	17	PICK UP FUNDABILITY CERTIFICATES
7	<i>Torah</i> School resumes B'nai Mitzvah Parents' Seminar 10:30 am-Noon	19	<i>Ima & Me</i> 10:30 am
8	Confirmation class 6:30 pm USY Board meeting following class	21	Understanding Hebrew 10:30 am-Noon
9	CKI Seniors Lox & Bagel Luncheon Noon Judaism 101 7:30-9:00 pm	22	Confirmation class 6:30 pm <i>Star Trek</i> presentation <i>Hadassah</i> Board
10	ORDER FUNDABILITY CERTIFICATES	23	Judaism 101 7:30-9:00 pm
12	<i>Ima & Me</i> 10:30 am	26	<i>Ima & Me</i> 10:30 am
13	Junior Congregation & Tot Shabbat <i>Dalet</i> in Sanctuary 9:30 am <i>Alef, Bet, Gimel</i> in Library 10:00 am Tots in 1st grade room 10:00 am	28	Understanding Hebrew 10:30 am-Noon
14	Dr. Roddy Frankel presentation 10:15 am-Noon Joint USY/ <i>Kadima</i> outing to Gameworks Noon	30	Judaism 101 7:30-9:00 pm
		<i>Drs. Albert & Frieda Simon Adult Study Group</i> Sunday mornings 10:00 AM	