

inside:

- 2 **Social Action/Social Justice**
 An Oasis in the Asphalt Desert
 A Recap of Recent SA/SJ Activities
- 4 "Rabbi, the Dog Ate My Homework."
 5769 will it be Mine?
- 5 **Announcements**
- 6 **Calendar**
- 8 **Youth and Family Education**
 Junior Congregation:
 A Child's Perspective
 Important Dates for December
 Introductory B'nai Mitzvah Meeting
- 9 **Upcoming Limud**
Community Events
- 11 **Donations**
- 12 **Contacts**

A Closer Look at Three New Staff Members

BY SIAN GIBBY

Rabbi Esther Lederman. Marshall T. Meyer Rabbinic Fellow

Anyone who has met Rabbi Esther Lederman or taken one of her classes can tell you that she is a sharp and focused person. "Resolute" is the word that springs to mind. So, it might be a little surprising to hear that she was nervous the first time she led Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat Services at BJ. She admits to having been very comfortable up to that point being anonymous, out in the darkness singing as part of a group. "But the first time being in front of 500 or 1,000 people, giving the kavannah, I found myself worrying: was my offering strong enough?" She says she was struck that first night at the bimah by the powerful sense of awe. But she realized that "it wasn't a performance" and that no matter what happened, she was working in the service of God, and she took comfort from that. "Whatever happens is OK."

A lot of stuff happens to you when you are a Marshall T. Meyer Rabbinic Fellow. When asked what had been the most challenging part of her position up to now, she said, "Coming in and getting to know people, being the new face." The myriad new situations she's been introduced to, like doing the teaching for *tashlikh* this Rosh Hashanah, tap all her strengths and abilities. She says she feels pushed to the limit—but that's a good thing.

The parts she most enjoys about her Fellowship are people-centered: leading services, being with the community. She can spend a whole day in the office working, but then she goes out in the evening and does a teaching for 20 people and finds herself suddenly re-energized. "Those moments talking with Panim leaders or in a meeting with a conversion candidate let me know that I'm doing what I'm meant to be doing."

Esther has been heavily involved with the burgeoning Tze'irim initiative, and she wants to expand it to include even more people in their 30s. She's organizing a leadership-training group for Tze'irim and hopes to continue to encourage the group's development in areas around social justice issues.

When asked about her future after the Fellowship, she speaks, characteristically, in terms of goals. She aims to find a pulpit job in an urban area where she can put her emphasis on the things that drew her into the rabbinate in the first place: teaching and community organizing. She hastens to add, "Instead of saying it's my hope, I'm saying it's my *plan*."

(continued on page 10)

An Oasis in the Asphalt Desert

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Sol spoke about the need for Jews to fulfill our dreams for the New Year with their realization in our daily lives.

One of the reasons this moved me was that ten days earlier, I'd been doing just that with fellow members of the BJ Environmental Action Hevra. On September 19 and 20, the Hevra created a "mini-park" in an eight-by-twenty foot parking spot in front of our synagogue on 88th Street. Dubbed an "Oasis in the Asphalt Desert," it was one of fifty such spots in New York City created for Park(ing) Day, an international event sponsored locally by Transportation Alternatives, to provide a breath of relief from the auto-clogged reality in New York and to call attention to the need and the possibilities for using our streets for people, and not only for driving and parking cars.

B'nai Jeshurun's Environmental Action Hevra participated in Park(ing) Day because it connects with one of our two major advocacy campaigns: greening the streets. Greening the streets is the idea that New York City can lower its carbon footprint, protect the health of its residents and become more livable by promoting pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets. Less than half of New Yorkers own cars, but nearly 80% of all public space is devoted to the storage and movement of cars. According to Environmental Defense, over two million New Yorkers live within 500 feet of a major road, and the resulting concentration of vehicle emissions may increase their chances of suffering from asthma, heart disease and cancer. Children are especially vulnerable to the health consequences of traffic-related pollution, which for them include stunted lung development. New York was once a City where kids played stickball on the street, and the space between buildings was ours in which to stroll and socialize. Park(ing) Day is about reclaiming the streets for people, and reclaiming parking spots around the City for parks, demonstrating the positive effect of reversing our misappropriation of public space. Despite the seriousness of the issue, Park(ing) Day is a lighthearted campaign, and consistent

with our desert oasis theme, we fitted out our park with a lawn of sod, palm trees on loan from The Plant Shed, and a kiddie pool that tempted children, disobeying adults, to take off their shoes and wade in up to their ankles. Then we settled in for a day of frisbee, playing cards, and shmoozing with over a hundred curious passersby, most of them neighbors from the Upper West Side. In the evening, before and after Kabbalat Shabbat services, several hundred BJ members dropped in on



our whimsical installation and we hope went away with a little vision of what people-friendly streets could look like.

On the more serious side, our partner in our solar-energy advocacy campaign, Solar One, demonstrated a photovoltaic panel that converted sunlight into electricity that powered a laptop computer. And in a different application of solar power, we cooked a pot of couscous using a simple aluminum-foil solar cooker like those being provided by Jewish World Watch to women in refugee camps in Darfur.

It was a great experience. The Environmental Action Hevra came together and created an adorable park, and helped to make our dream—of a city filled with parks instead of traffic—a reality for a couple of days. ■

—Barbara Leiterman
and Gil Kulick

The Environmental Action Hevra... helped to make our dream—of a city filled with parks instead of traffic—a reality for a couple of days."

A Recap of Recent SA/SJ Activities

Bike Riding for the Environment With the BJ "Revolutionaries"

The 2008 Hazon NY Jewish Environmental Bike Ride was once again a thrilling, challenging, and moving experience—two days of riding with the BJ Revolutionaries team in absolutely perfect weather with great, highly diverse people through the gorgeous countryside of Dutchess, Rockland, and Bergen Counties. I rode with nearly 200 other riders and another 100 crew members, ranging in age from 12 to around 70. I think I was probably among the five oldest riders. The diversity was striking not only for the age range; it also spanned the Jewish denominational range, from Orthodox to secular.

... The joyous, ebullient, at times raucous spirit of the assemblage... was something I'll long remember."

The route on the first day of the ride, in Dutchess County, offered three options: 55-, 75-, or 100-mile loops starting and ending at Camp Kinder Ring. I had planned to do only the basic 55-mile loop, but when I got to the "decision

point" I felt so good that I decided to go for the 75-mile circuit. And I'm glad I did; it was the most beautiful part of the ride, through some of the lushest, most genteel countryside I have ever seen. There were some very challenging hills along the way, but the moment I reached the top, and started whizzing down the backside, I totally forgot the ordeal on the way up. On the second (Labor) day, we rode across the Bear Mountain Bridge, along the Hudson, and back across the George Washington Bridge, ending with a tired but spirited closing rally at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

As moving and as memorable as the ride itself was, the Shabbaton spanning the Friday night and Saturday preceding the ride was perhaps even more so. The combination of the joyous, ebullient, at times raucous spirit of the assemblage and my own spiritual (a word that doesn't come easily to me) encounter with the nature that surrounded us was something I'll long remember. It all took place in the context of deep, almost elemental commitment to both Jewish and environmental values. Never did I imagine that the two could be so intimately linked!

From the Ride thus far, the BJ team has raised over \$35,000 dollars for Hazon—and the Ride on the whole has collected more than \$284,000. The goal of this year's ride is to raise to \$340,000, which will be used by Hazon to fund significant environmental and food projects both in the U.S. and in Israel. Donations to the Ride are still being collected through October 31.



Next year, I plan to do 150 miles over the two days and I hope my fellow riders and crew can count on our community's support again. Better yet, maybe you'll ride with us (or if you don't ride, come help out as crew.) ■

—Gil Kulick

Komen for the Cure

The 2008 Komen for the Cure 5k Race/Walk on Sept. 14 was a heartwarming success. 55 members joined our team, and we raised over \$17,338, above our goal. The pre-race service began with a bagel breakfast in honor of Larry Riskin, who had sponsored it for several years. Rabbi Esther Lederman led the service and Joni Brenner guided us through simple yoga exercises to ready us to pray with our feet. As always, the most moving moments were before the walk, when we sat in a circle and shared our stories of illness and courage. Then we joined the 25,000 runners and walkers.

"It takes a lot of courage to live openly and honestly in the wake of breast cancer. Being in the race gives me a needed infusion of courage as I walk alongside the thousands of other courageous survivors and our friends." —Susan Kaplow ■

—Glenda Frank



“Rabbi, the Dog Ate My Homework.”

I put the assignment on my calendar, prominently circled: Torah reading, September 20. *Thou shalt not take the mother bird with the young. And: Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.* Beautiful teachings, and I enjoyed studying the reading during a stressful and hectic time when fluorescent Post-its were proliferating on my calendar like strange flattened mushrooms. I was doing things like showing up for appointments twenty blocks away from the doctor's office and wondering why the building numbers looked so wrong. I'm usually not like that. I needed to commune with birds.

Fast-forward to the middle of the Torah service on Shabbat morning. I sensed a presence hovering by my side and looked up, my gaze rising from Shabbos suit to thematic tie to the friendly face of Freddy Goldstein, the gabbai, who said, “You're next, right?” I must have looked so relaxed that he figured I didn't know I was next.

Hevre, it was September 13.

Fast-forward to internal mayhem and silent but Yiddish-accented gevalting after I said, “No, I'm next week!” and Freddy pointed to my name on his assignment list. Frantically, I leafed through the parashah, which (mea culpa) I hadn't read yet. Oops. *Thou shalt not take the mother bird with the young. And: Thou shalt not see thy brother's Torah reader fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from her: thou shalt surely help him to lift her up again.* It was like some hallucination of one's worst fear about appearing in public, or a replay of those dreams I used to have about forgetting to practice my oboe solo or even buy my plane ticket for the big college-band concert in front of

bejeweled ladies in old St. Petersburg. *Sorry, Rabbi, but the dog ate my homework.*

I promise, I'm usually not like that! Although, come to think of it, I've probably always had a secret desire to forget to practice the oboe for borscht-sipping ladies. Hmm.

As if in a recurring dream, I wandered behind the kindly concerned Freddy to the bimah, where I recovered my wits and commanded Roly, “You're going to have to prompt me the whole time. I thought I was reading next week.”

He said calmly, “Don't worry. I'll sing the whole thing and you can just follow me.”

Well, I actually remembered most of my reading, and Roly did prompt me with the melodies for the few parts I'd forgotten. I did just fine! It was like that trust exercise where you see if you have the courage to fall straight back, trusting that someone will be there to catch you. And there was. Including the congregation of my community and friends, who wish me well.

Interesting, 'cause why did I think I wouldn't know the reading when I did know it? These things are probably all about trust, on their deepest level. If we fall down by the way, failing to live up to our preconceived standards of achievement, can we recognize when we can rely on others to raise us up, so we don't have to panic? Something to think about. Still, though, I'm double-circling the date of my next Torah reading in red marker, and will check it against various lunar and solar calendars. Presidents Day weekend. July 15. It's always good to do a little planning! ■

—Jenny Golub

5769 will it be Mine?

It is the Jewish year of 5769,
But will it be mine?

The days have passed and so did 5768,
How did it get so late?

Elul is here and so is the new year,
What have I been focused on, myself? my family? my career?

As a new beginning is coming again,
It is time to decide what should continue and what should end.

What is truly I in all that surrounds?
And what are simply outdated personal views & sounds?

For when the Bet in B'nai and the Yud in Yeshurun join,
“Be” which is “In Me” is created in Hebrew's side of the coin.

And In Me=Mine put in another way,
Will I remember that in every passing day?

I can only own the now in the present,
What a truly wonderful way to enjoy this daily present!

The richness In Me is so unique and vast,
Goes beyond any time, present or past.

I am here now ready to begin,
To own the now and beyond what was already won to continue to win.

5769 can truly be Mine,
It is In Me to decide this year to actually “Bring the wine!”

—Guy E. Felixbrodt

Mazal Tov

To the following members and their families on their b'nai mitzvah (through November):

Braden Bochner	Liad Mansky
Alison Schalop	Sophie Bokor
Maxwell Baren	Jonathan Nachmany
David Krasner	Dani Lewittes
Adam Gross	Joshua Rosenblatt
Clio Sherman	

To the following members and their families (through November 7):

Alissa and Ray Kaplan and their family on the naming of their daughter, Lexi Rose.

Jeanne and Shane Lipson, and Nina and Marvin Levin on the birth of their sons and grandsons, Marshall Ethan and Ross Theodore.

Ivy and David Schreiber on the birth of their son, Brady Solomon.

Cindy Levy on her niece Brenna Michelle Levy becoming a Bat Mitzvah

Condolences (through November 7)

The community of B'nai Jeshurun mourns the death of our beloved member Marian Weinman, and we extend our sincere condolences to her entire family.

The community of B'nai Jeshurun extends sincere condolences to the following members and their families:

Aviva, Maurice, Henry, and Hannah Raichelson on the death of their beloved grandmother and great-grandmother, Pola Zuckerman.

David Slavin, Bari Moss, and Sophie and Stella Moss-Slavin on the death of their beloved mother, mother-in-law and grandmother, Alberta Slavin.

Jim Posner, Jill Prosky, and Diana Erbsen on the death of their beloved stepfather, father-in-law, and grandfather, Irving Wallace.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
	1	2	3  • 7:00 PM - Introductory B'nai Mitzvah Meeting, 88th St. (SEE P.8)	4
7	8	9 • 7:30 PM - Moment Magazine Event, 88th St. (SEE P.9)	10	11
14 <i>BJHS Reach for Shabbat Retreat</i>	15	16	17	18  • 5:00 PM - Hanukkah Storytelling and Kabbalat Shabbat, 88th St.
21 HANUKKAH: 1ST NIGHT	22 HANUKKAH: 2ND NIGHT BJHS CLOSED	23 HANUKKAH: 3RD NIGHT	24 HANUKKAH: 4TH NIGHT	25 HANUKKAH: 5TH NIGHT BJ OFFICE CLOSED BJHS CLOSED
28 ROSH HODESH TEVET HANUKKAH: 8TH NIGHT	29 BJHS CLOSED	30	31	

SERVICE TIMES

Morning Minyan (88th Street):

• Monday-Friday 7:30 AM • Sunday & National Holidays 9:30 AM

Kabbalat Shabbat:

• 6:00 PM 88th St. • 7:30 PM 88th Street
• Additional Services: Family Kabbalat Shabbat, December 5, 6:00 PM 88th Street
Wandering Minyan, December 5, 6:00 PM 86th Street Social Hall

Shabbat Morning:

• 9:30 AM 86th Street. • Children's services, 10:45 AM 86th Street
• Additional Services: Junior Congregation, December 6, 20 10:30 AM 86th Street

DAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<p>5</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:00 PM – Family Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 6:00 PM – Wandering Minyan, 86th St. Social Hall 7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 	<p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St. Bat Mitzvah: Sara Kern Bat Mitzvah: Charlotte Frankel 9:30 AM – 6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Program, 86th St. Chapel 10:30 AM – Junior Congregation, 86th St. Social Hall 10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St. Following Services – Post-Junior Congregation Lunch, 86th St. Social Hall
	<p>12</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30 AM – Frankel Fridays, 88th St. Frankel Hall 6:00 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. Following 7:30 PM Service – Shabbat Dinner for 30s-40s singles & couples, 88th St. Frankel Hall (SEE P.9) 10:00 PM – Friday Night Off-Broadway with Agada, 88th St. (SEE P.9) <p><i>BJHS Reach for Shabbat Retreat</i></p>	<p>13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St. 10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St. Following Services – Community Kiddush, 86th St. 4:15 PM – Minḥa Bat Mitzvah: Heila Precel <p><i>BJHS Reach for Shabbat Retreat</i></p>
	<p>19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:00 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. Following 6:00 PM Service – Community Shabbat Dinner, 88th St. (SEE P.9) 7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 	<p>20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St. 10:30 AM – Junior Congregation, 86th St. Social Hall 10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St. Following Services – Post-Junior Congregation Lunch, 86th St. Social Hall Following Services – Ledor Vador Luncheon, 88th St. Frankel Hall 4:30 PM – Minḥa Bat Mitzvah: Michal Ben Or Tsfoni 5:00 PM – PJs and Havdalah, 88th St. Frankel Hall 6:30 PM – Men's Havurah, 88th St.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT	<p>26 HANUKKAH: 6TH NIGHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 88th St. 	<p>27 ROSH HODESH TEVET HANUKKAH: 7TH NIGHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30 AM – Shabbat Morning Services, 86th St. 10:45 AM – Children's Services, 86th St. Following Services – Community Kiddush, 86th St. 12:30 PM – Rosh Hodesh Women's Group Potluck Lunch, 88th St. Frankel Hall (SEE P.9)

ADULT CLASSES

Please see the BJ website, www.bj.org, for more information and how to register.

Monday

- Introduction to Judaism 7:00-9:00 PM (through May)

Tuesday

- The Book of Exodus 8:30-9:30AM (through May)
- Davening Workshop: Growing from Participant to Leader 7:00-8:30 PM (December 2, 9, 16)
- Spiritual Practices for Times of Uncertainty 7:00-9:00 PM (remaining classes December 2, 9, 16)

Wednesday

- Abraham Joshua Heschel's Heavenly Torah 6:30-8:00 PM (remaining classes December 3, 10, 17)

Thursday

- Parashat Hashavu'a: Study of the Weekly Torah Portion 7:00-8:30 PM (through May)

YOUTH CLASSES

Monday

- 4-5:30 PM, Kindergarten and First grade
- 4-6 PM, Second through Sixth grade

Thursday

- 4-5:30 PM, Kindergarten and First grade
- 4-6 PM, Second through Seventh grade

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Sunday-Thursday

- BJ/SPSA Homeless Shelter 7 PM

Thursday

- Judith Bernstein Lunch Program 12 PM



indicates Family Life and Hebrew School events

Candlelighting Times

December 5	4:10 PM
December 12	4:11 PM
December 19	4:13 PM
December 26	4:17 PM

Parashat HaShavu'a

December 6	Vayetze
December 13	Vayishlah
December 20	Vayeshev
December 27	Miketz

Havdalah Times

December 6	5:13 PM
December 13	5:14 PM
December 20	5:17 PM
December 27	5:21 PM

Junior Congregation: A Child's Perspective

Last year, two of our BJHS students, Ethan Geismar and Daniel Lerner, won the attendance award for Junior Congregation—attending more often than any other children in the school. They share their thoughts on why they love attending Junior Congregation below. For more information on Junior Congregation, contact Rebecca Rosenthal at rosenthal@bj.org.

Ethan Geismar (Grade 6):

When I first went to Junior Congregation, I walked through the door and saw everyone singing an unfamiliar tune to an unfamiliar song. I sort of freaked out, because these people looked like they really knew what they were doing. I saw some familiar faces, but mostly unfamiliar ones. Over a length of two to three years, I feel I've got to know people better. I was a little scared at first, but over time I got to know the songs and tunes. I began leading prayers, and became comfortable singing in front of the congregation. Not only is it a chance to go to synagogue, pray, and sing, but you get to do all that with all your friends who go to BJ.

Every Saturday morning, I roll out of bed and go to do something fun. My mom tells me to get dressed because we are going to Junior Congregation, and I moan, but when I get there and sit with my friends, and go up and lead prayers with them, it becomes sort of fun. The leaders (like, the actual leaders that tell which page to turn to and sing the harder prayers) are really nice, and help out a lot. It becomes something to look forward to on your Saturday morning, instead of TV or computer or just being lazy (but that doesn't mean those aren't fun). All in all, it's a really great experience.

Daniel Lerner (Grade 5):

What is Junior Congregation? Well, we pray, we sing and we clap along and lead prayers. But it's also families joining together to praise God. As part of Junior Congregation, we all take part of it as a people. It's a chance to get closer to your family because you spend the whole morning with your family on Shabbat. It's a chance to have fun and pray at the same time. Leading prayers shows your love of Junior Congregation. Leading is praying to God. When kids sit in the big services, they feel bored and tired. But in Junior Congregation, they can stay alert, pray and sing with their family. Personally, when I play guitar there, it is an honor to be able to play along to prayers. Being a lover of music, it brings me joy to be part of the musical part of the prayers. And that's what Junior Congregation means to me.

Important Dates for December

Monday, December 1: Gimmel Mishpaha Family Learning Program, 5:00–6:00PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Tuesday, December 2: 5th grade cooks for the Shelter, 5:00PM, 88th Street Frankel Hall

Wednesday, December 3: 4th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Parent Orientation, 7:00PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Thursday, December 4: Reach for Shabbat Family Retreat Meeting for parents and kids, 5:00–5:30PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Saturday, December 6: 6th Grade B'nai Mitzvah Program, 9:30AM, 86th Street Chapel

Saturday, December 6: Junior Congregation, 10:30AM, 86th Street Social Hall

Sunday, December 7: Domestic Service Learning (Louisiana), 4:30PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Sunday, December 7: International Service Learning (Costa Rica), 6:00PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Friday, December 12-14: Reach for Shabbat Family Retreat (3rd, 4th and 5th grades), Isabella Friedman Jewish Retreat Center, Falls Village, CT

Friday, December 12: Frankel Fridays, 10:30AM, 88th Street Frankel Hall

Sunday, December 14: Teen Class 8th and 9th grade, 4:30–6:30PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Sunday, December 14: Identity in Action, 6:00PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Thursday, December 18: Last day of BJHS before winter break

Thursday, December 18: Yale Strom Hanukkah program, 5:00–6:15PM, 88th Street Sanctuary

Thursday, December 18: Teen Leadership Committee meeting, 6:00–8:00PM, 88th Street Frankel Hall

Saturday, December 20: Junior Congregation, 10:30AM, 86th Street Social Hall

Sunday, December 21: First night of Hanukkah

Save the Date!

Introductory B'nai Mitzvah Meeting

Wednesday, December 3 • 7:00–9:00PM • 88th Street Sanctuary. Parents of children in 4th grade, or whose birthdates fall between September 1998 and December 1999 are invited to take the first step on their family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah journey. For more information, please refer to the B'nai Mitzvah link (under "Limud") on the BJ website, www.bj.org.

• **Abraham Joshua Heschel's Heavenly Torah**

Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon

7 Wednesdays (remaining classes December 3, 10, 17)

• 6:30-8:00PM • 88th Street Frankel Hall • Free; registration required. We resume our study of Rabbi Heschel's gigantic work on rabbinic thought in observance of his centennial year. Heavenly Torah, recently translated into English, explores the polarity in Judaism between transcendence and immanence, and between mysticism and rationalism. Heschel also invites us to look at contemporary issues through the lens of classical rabbinic discussions. Please bring the book to class (available in paperback); no photocopies will be distributed. New participants are welcome.

• **Davening Workshop: Growing From Participant to Leader**

Rabbi Felicia L. Sol

3 Tuesdays (December 2, 9, 16) • 7:00-8:30PM

• BJ Office, Conference Room #1 • Free; registration required. Have you come to a place where you would like to not only participate in tefillah but have the possibility of leading tefillah (be it a shiva minyan or morning minyan)? Come to this davening workshop to understand the basic structure of the morning and evening weekday service and to learn the nusah. Each evening will have a learner's Ma'ariv minyan. Participants must be capable of reading Hebrew. Please register early, space is limited.

• **Spiritual Practices for Times of Uncertainty**

Rabbi Marcelo R. Bronstein and Rachel Cowan

7 Tuesdays (remaining classes December 2, 9, 16)

• 7:00-9:00PM • 88th Sanctuary • During these sessions we will explore and expand in a contemplative way some of the Jewish practices we spoke about during the Yamim Nora'im: Kehillah—community; Tefillah—prayer; Shabbat; Kashrut; Lashon Ha Tov—positive speech; Tzimtzum—contraction. Rabbi Rachel Cowan received her rabbinic ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and is the author of *Growing up Yanqui* and co-author with the late Paul Cowan of *Mixed Blessings*. She is the Executive Director of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality.

• **Rosh Hodesh Women' Group for Tevet**

Facilitated by Rabbi Felicia Sol and Esther Lederman,

Marshall T. Meyer Fellow

Saturday, December 27 • 12:30PM • 88th Street Frankel Hall • Free; registration not required. Each new month on the Hebrew calendar, we will have an opportunity to study, discuss, celebrate and pray together on this holiday traditionally associated with women. Please bring a dairy/vegetarian kosher snack to share with the group as part of the celebration of Rosh Hodesh.

• **An Evening of Fiction with Geraldine Brooks**

Tuesday, December 9 • 7:30PM • 88th Street. Join BJ, Moment

Magazine, and the Karma Foundation for an evening with Geraldine Brooks, author of *March*, and *People of the Book*. We will also hear from up-and-coming fiction writers and winners of this year's short fiction contest sponsored by Moment Magazine. Wine and cheese will be served. Cost: Free; registration required to Guy at gfelixbrodt@bj.org.

• **Friday Night Off-Broadway: Shabbat at BJ**

Friday, December 12 • Following the 7:30PM service • 88th Street Sanctuary and Frankel Hall. Extend your Shabbat experience beyond services. Following the 7:30PM service, BJ members and non-member singles and couples in their

30s/40s are invited to share an intimate Shabbat dinner together in Frankel Hall. Please visit www.bj.org to register. At 10:00PM, the entire BJ community will be invited to enjoy dessert and celebrate Shabbat together with Agada, who will perform and lead us in joyful Shabbat music.

• **Community Shabbat Dinner**

Friday, December 19 • Following the 6:00PM service • 88th Street Frankel Hall. Please join the B'nai Jeshurun community for the first Community Shabbat Dinner of the year, with Marshall T. Meyer Fellows Rabbi Esther Lederman and Ezra Weinberg, and Cantorial Intern Yosef Goldman. To sign up, please visit www.bj.org or contact Guy at x255.

Youth & Family Education: How Do You Celebrate Hanukkah? (continued from page 8)

We asked children and parents to share some of their unique Hanukkah traditions.

"Each night, I arrange the candles like a rainbow. I like the box with all the different colors in it."

"On Friday night during Hanukkah, we give our children a Jewish-themed present. It could be a story about Hanukkah, a

CD of Jewish music or any other gift that helps them connect the gift they are getting to their Jewish heritage."

"Every year, we like to do a mitzvah project as a family on Hanukkah, so that it is about giving and not just getting."

"We sing lots and lots of songs. My favorite is "Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel." Sometimes we play the songs on our instruments."



Three New Staff Members SIAN GIBBY *(continued from page 1)*

Marshall T. Meyer Rabbinic Fellow Ezra Weinberg

Incoming Marshall T. Meyer rabbinic fellow Ezra Weinberg is rarin' to go: he is anxious to put the experiences he has had so far to good use at BJ. He's been active in creating musical Shabbatot services at Congregation Kol Tzedek in Philadelphia, work that has fueled his sense of devotion to infusing tefillah with ruah. He's helped this small Reconstructionist congregation boost its young adult participation with the assistance of a small group of musicians, bringing about a Kabbalat Shabbat service that has a distinctly BJ-ish flavor, but is also influenced by Tel Aviv's Beit T'fila Israeli congregation, from whom Ezra learned much. Another Israeli congregation, Kol Tehila, was also a big influence on him. "I loved how they danced with the Torah on Shabbat," he recalls admiringly. These are all aspects Ezra has tried to bring to Kol Tzedek and wants to expand even further at BJ. He is a big fan of Sephardi melodies, incidentally: "That sound touches a whole different nerve," he explains eagerly.

What I appreciate about the rabbis is their deep humility in the face of such attention. Learning that balance is a spiritual practice that I aspire to."

He's brought some of that energy to the Reconstructionist College, where he began student-led Monday Mornings With Torah gatherings to "wed drumming with tefillah." "It's important to know how to daven" he says, by way of explaining his core values as a rabbinical student.

When asked what he was looking forward to most in his Fellowship he replied promptly, "Simchas Torah!" He's very excited about the internship as a whole. "I've wanted to experience successful Jewish living, where tikkun olam and prayer are integrated," he says.

Ezra wants additional experience in teaching, and is looking forward to the challenge of speaking extemporaneously before a large group more often. "I expect I will learn a lot," he says. What does he appreciate most about working with our rabbis? "I think just learning the art of knowing when to step up and when to step back. What I appreciate about the rabbis is their deep humility in the face of such attention. Learning that balance is a spiritual practice that I aspire to."

Cantorial Intern Yosef Goldman

Our young cantorial intern Yosef Goldman still has three years left of study at JTS. He appreciates the program, and that they have maintained a lot of good traditional music. He also values the teaching of some excellent cantors.

Speaking of excellence and *hazzanut*, Yosef is almost at a loss for words to describe the experience of working at BJ with Ari Priven. "It's just astounding, all he does for the synagogue," Yosef marvels. "He is so musical, so talented." Yosef is particularly grateful, given how busy Ari is, for how available our *hazzan* makes himself. They meet regularly for Ari's input on the different aspects of the work Yosef is doing: weekday services, working with the b'nai mitzvah kids, and the preparations and performance of Yamim Nora'im duties, which were colossal. "Ari really takes the mentorship seriously. I can ask him any questions I might have," Josef explains, "not just about how to lead the services, but about the fundamental role of music in the service. How to make music serve the service. And what Ari has done is transform that role into something amazing. What he's created is just amazing."

Yosef recognizes the unique character of the *nusah* at BJ, although he sees some traditions beautifully upheld here. "Ari, of course, uses mostly traditional text and liturgy; it's a great balance between traditional text and music." Yosef grew up in a Modern Orthodox community but has also spent time in Renewal congregations, with their greater emphasis on chanting. He contrasts what we do at BJ with Renewal and Reform shuls, where it can be tough to get people to sing along and learn and participate in the service to the degree that Ari promotes at BJ. "Ari and the rabbis really create an atmosphere where the congregation can take some ownership in the service; they take responsibility for knowing the siddur."

Yosef looks ahead to a future that is flavored heavily by his experience here in New York. He'd like to be a synagogue cantor, working in children's and adult education, and, ideally, be a part of a shul that places an emphasis on promoting different kinds of Jewish music, "some kind of Jewish cultural center, musically," he explains—a place that fills a role similar to the one BJ fills. "It's such an honor," he sums up, "to be working at BJ, being a member of the community here." ■

Adult Education Fund

Barbara Goldman
Chaim Steinberger

Bikkur Holim Fun

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Richard Fields and Marjorie Vandow
Ruben Kraiem and Elizabeth Leiman Kraiem
Susan Landau and Thomas Reiner in memory of Susan's parents, Joseph M. and Florence K. Viuker
Galit Lopatin
John Motulsky and Wendy Nacht
Martin Schneider and Debra Fine
Harriette Weisman
Selma Zimmerman in memory of Liz Genn

Children's Services Fund

Jodi Doff in honor of Amy Wachtel's birthday and friendship

Daily Minyan Fund

Morty and Bernice Levine in memory of their loved ones

Etz Hayim Fund

Nadia Todres in memory of her father, I. David Todres

General Fund

William and Vicki Abrams in honor of the marriage of Paul and Nancy Freireich's daughter, Abby
Lawrence Besserman
Howard Chwatsky in honor of his brother, Mort Chwatsky's birthday
Larry Fox in honor of Malcom Fox, for BJ Teens Community in Action program 2008-09
Seth Grossman
Arlene Haas
Judith and Allan Lasky in honor of their sharing an aliyah with their daughter Belinda
Gloria Pasline in honor of Julie and Alex Margolies
Bella Rector in honor of Myriam Abramowicz
Andrea Bigelisen Riskin in memory of Rita Fitterman
Janet Stein in honor of morning minyan, and Talia for on-going support for Kaddish
Eileen Tepper

Joel Ullman in honor of Griffin Avraham Bassman's Bar Mitzvah
Lisa Young

General Fund in support of the BJ Komen Breakfast

Andrea Bigelisen Riskin

Helen Radin Memorial Zayin Adar Annual Teaching Fund

Lois Alexander and Robert Mandel in memory of Helen Radin
Eric and Debra Lerner in honor of Amy Wachtel's birthday

High Holiday Flower Fund

Fran Collins in memory of her parents, Annette and Louis Collins
Morty and Bernice Levine in gratitude our Rosh Hashanah Aliyah and Marcelo's kind words
Joy Sardinsky in memory of her mother, Betty Sardinsky
Raymond Shanfeld and Lois Rappaport in memory of Mildred Singer and Fannie Kugelmass
Dorothy Winter and Jeanette Winter to honor the Sabbath Call Ladies

Israel Trip Scholarship Fund

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Justin Mandelbaum

Judith Bernstein Lunch Program

Lois Alexander and Robert Mandel in memory of Ida Brown, mother of Les and Aaron Auster
Lois Alexander and Robert Mandel in memory of Ketty Yoeli
Mark Highman and Rachel Goldfine
Richard and Rosemary Kalikow in memory of Katie Rachel Pasternak

Marshall T. Meyer Memorial Fund

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Richard and Rosemary Kalikow in memory of Beatrice Schneider

Shabbat Oneg Fund

Zachary Bercu
Lauren Rott

Social Action Fund

Andrea Bigelisen Riskin in honor of Amy Joy Wachtel's birthday

Yizkor Fund

Harriet Abraham in memory of her beloved father, Saul J. Abraham
Lois Alexander and Robert Mandel in memory of Lois' father, Maurice Alexander
Rose Alpert in memory of her husband, Benjamin Alpert, her father, Max Wilfand, and her brother, Harold Wilfand
Irwin and Arlene Brandon in memory of Irwin's father's, Joseph Brandon, his aunt, Frances Brandon and friend, Jon Altman
Jacqueline Braverman in memory of her father, Robert Becker
Bart and Terri Eagle in memory of Herman Eagle
Nancy Kahn in memory of her mother, Helen Kahn
Jane Gabin in memory of her parents, Billie and Al Gabin, and her aunt, Norma Gabin
Rhoda Glass in memory of her husband, Harry David Glass
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Martin and Halina Igel in memory of Sarah Weisglass
Ilene Katz in memory of her father, Charles Katz
Melanie Katzman and Russell Makowsky in memory of Melanie's mother, Selma Katzman
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Jacqueline and Arthur Lasky in memory of Miriam Kasdan, Barbara Goldman's mother and Jonathan Goldman's grandmother

Sarah Lazin, in memory of her beloved mother, Hannah Lazin
Kenneth Levin in memory of his uncle, Sanford Levin
Joel Levy & Barbara Blum in memory of her brother, Buddy Blum
Batya Lewton in memory of her mother, Tzipa, her father Asher, her grandmother, Esther, her grandfather, Yaacov, her aunt Leah, and her dear sweet friends Irving and Dorothy Litt in memory of her mother, Eva Olan
Jules Love in memory of his mother, Jenny Yoselevitz
Peggy Moss in memory of her father, Martin Moss
Ellen and David Nesson in memory of Liz Genn
Amos and Andrea Neufeld in memory of Andrea's father, Joseph Greenman
Lilli Platt in memory of Hanna Platt
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Herman and Myrna Rosen in memory of Myrna's brother, Herbert Wener, and her father, Irving Wener
Ellen and Dale Saltzman in memory of Ellen's father, Louis Glassman
Eric Schlesinger in memory of Anne Schlesinger
Shelly Sherry in memory of her husband
Barbara Simon in memory of her father and mother, Wink and Florence Toretsky
Barry and Joan Winograd in memory of Barry's father, Maxwell Winograd

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Accounts Payable227
 Accounts Receivable237
 Adult Education Information233
 Bar/Bat Mitzvah223
 Bekef255
 Bikkur Holim256
 BJ Reads.....391
 Conversion.....264
 Daily Minyan232
 Deaf & Hard of Hearing.....
 e-mail: clzak@aol.com
 phone: 212-628-7061

Development
 & Donation Information.....228
 88th Street Rental223
 Family Activities: Hotline318
 Hakhnasat Orhim255
 Havurot255
 Hevra Kadisha256
 Homeless Shelter212-339-4250
 Interfaith Committee 379
 Kiddush Scheduling255
 Kol Jeshurun275
 Kol Hadash275
 Ledor Vador224
 Life Cycles256

Lunch Program.....338
 Membership Information.....224
 Ralph Bunche School Partnership...301
 Shabbat B'Yahad255
 Social Action259
 Telephone Language Companion
 212-721-9037
 Teen Programming253
 Torah/Haftarah Reading.....232
 Tze'irim264
 Ushering305
 Volunteer Information.....255
 Youth & Family Education225

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