

Congregation OR ZARUA

NEWSLETTER / VOLUME 19:3

TEVET / SHEVAT / ADAR 5767

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2007

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA Celebrates “Coming of Age”

By Diane Okrent

We will be 18 years old on January 28, 2007! On that date in 1989, the Congregation held its first Shabbat services. We plan to commemorate our “Chai” birthday by feeding our bodies, our minds, and our souls. Let the celebration begin:

- A new art exhibit tracing the history of Or Zarua and its buildings will be mounted in the social hall.

- On Saturday, January 27, the Congregation is invited to a special Shabbat Kiddush Lunch featuring The Shabbatoners, a Jewish a cappella group. The Shabbatoners will lead us in song and dance as we celebrate this milestone birthday.

- On Thursday, February 1, Professor Leon Kass of the University of Chicago will deliver the Lucy Dawidowicz Memorial Lecture in honor of OZ’s 18th

birthday. Professor Kass will speak on “Religion and Science: Can Judaism Meet the Challenge?” This timely lecture will be followed by a birthday celebration, including birthday cake.

Professor Kass is a physician, scientist, and scholar. For over 35 years, he has been engaged with ethical and philosophical issues raised by biomedical advances. More recently, he has focused on broader moral and cultural issues. He was chairman of the President’s Council on Bioethics from 2002 to 2005. His books include *Toward a More Natural Science: Biology and Human Affairs*; *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature*; *The Ethics of Human Cloning* (with James Q. Wilson); *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying* (with Amy A. Kass); *Life,*

Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics; and, most recently, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis*. His widely reprinted essays in biomedical ethics have dealt with issues raised by in vitro fertilization, cloning, genetic screening and genetic technology, organ transplantation, aging research, euthanasia and assisted suicide, and the moral nature of the medical profession.

Our celebrations will entertain and enlighten us while honoring our community and history. We look forward to your participation in these very special events.

If you plan to attend the Shabbat Kiddush Lunch (January 27) and/or the Lucy Dawidowicz Memorial Lecture (February 1), please call the synagogue office (212-452-2310, extension 39) by January 24.

CANTORIAL SHABBATON

February 9 and 10, 2007

Hazzan Henry Rosenblum, Dean of the H.L. Miller Cantorial School and College of Jewish Music at The Jewish Theological Seminary, will lead us in prayer and song during a Cantorial Shabbaton on February 9 and 10, 2007. Look for details in the mail and on our website.



Thanksgiving meals provided courtesy of Eli’s and The Vinegar Factory were packed and delivered by Or Zarua volunteers to brighten the holidays of people in need at the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter and Ronald McDonald House.

ק"ק אור זרוע
CONGREGATION

**OR
ZARUA**

A CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE
FOUNDED 1989

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Family Activity Day and Hug Ivri

The next Sunday Family Activity Days will be on January 28 and February 11. Here are two responses to previous events.

Jodi Sisley: On Sunday afternoon, December 18, we attended Family Activity Day at OZ. My daughter immediately went to the art room to make a hallah cover using crayons and puff paint. She designed a most beautiful cover for the following Shabbat! We had a great time. Yael Goren showed us some techniques and helped with the design.



Top: Nadia Sisley and Eli Cohen. Bottom: Judith, Elizabeth, and Suzanne Lawrence

Allan Yaillen: On November 18, a crisp fall Shabbat afternoon following Kiddush, a group of more than ten of us—adults and youth—got together for a Hug Ivri! Some in the group were native-born Hebrew speakers, while the rest of us were at different levels of Hebrew fluency. Regardless of our varied levels, we sat around the lunch table comparing and discussing two Israeli songs: “Yerushalayim

Shel Zahav” by Naomi Shemer and “Yerushalayim Shel Barzel,” a more current song by Meir Ariel, an Israeli soldier. While translating the songs, our conversation wandered into contemporary Israeli history, biblical references, and Hebrew vocabulary. The discussion piqued everyone’s interest. The afternoon was thoroughly enjoyable and we all look forward to getting together again soon! Others who are interested are most welcome to join us.

In another room, children were having fun stretching and doing yoga—in Hebrew. Participants learned the body parts, the movements, and some strange vocabulary.

On another floor, students compared and contrasted the rhythms and the scales of Sephardic and Ashkenazic music.

It was a lovely afternoon!

OZ Committee Chairs

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CATERING	Diane Okrent Sara Stone
CEMETERY	Andrew Frackman Morty Schwartz
DEVELOPMENT	Mimi Alperin
EVENTS/ADULT ED	Diane Okrent
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MINYAN	Sheldon Adler
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OROT	Ron Meyers
PLANNED GIVING	Jim Breznay
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Aaron Shelden
PURIM SPIEL	Arthur Rosenbloom Bonnie Maslin Tibor Feldman Barbara Sassoon
SCHOOL	Pamela Gold
SHABBAT USHERS	Phyllis Solomon Gerry Solomon
TORAH/HAFTARAH	Yaakov Shechter
WEBMASTER	Jay Palmer

If you would like to serve on a synagogue committee, please contact the office for the committee chair’s email address.

Hebrew School Events

JANUARY 2007

- Mon 8** First day of school
- Mon 15** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no classes)
- Thu 18** Report cards are mailed
- Sat 27** Shabbat Class
- Sun 28** Family Activity Day, 1:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2007

- Mon 5** Tu B’Shevat celebration
- Tue 6** Tu B’Shevat celebration
- Thu 8** Parent-Teacher conferences
- Sat 10** Shabbat Class
- Sun 11** Family Activity Day, 1:30 p.m.
- Mon 19** Presidents’ Week (no classes)
- Mon 26** School resumes

Purim 2007 Season Begins for OZ Players

Our Purim Spiel rehearsals begin on January 11. We will meet on Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. and on Sundays from 5 to 7 p.m. in the OZ social hall.

This year, we will have two—yes, TWO—Purim Spiel performances: Saturday, March 3 after evening services at OZ and Sunday, March 4, after morning services at OZ.

Children are invited to celebrate with us at the Sunday morning performance. Those in costume will join a parade of revelers.

To participate, please contact Barbara Sassoon at barbdee@aol.com.

Attention OZ Children

Make your birthday even more meaningful by doing a mitzvah! Remember those who are less fortunate by choosing one of the gifts you received and making it a donation. You can place your donated gift in the large box next to Ilana's office on the sixth floor. We will distribute the gifts to charities serving children and families in our area, starting with Ronald McDonald House.

Be sure to include your name and address so we can send you a special certificate of recognition for this important mitzvah. If you have any questions, please call Meredith Katz at 212-879-5408.

Hebrew School Talent Show

By Reuben Dizengoff

On November 19, the youth of Or Zarua sang, danced, and played music to raise money for a school in Sderot, near the Gaza Strip. The performers, aged 8 to 17, displayed their talents to a cheering audience. Rachel, Melodie, and Talia Rosen sang and played guitar. Gabriel and Daniel Norflus played lead and bass guitar. Reuben and Sophie Dizengoff tap danced. The Altman brothers, Michael and Dan, along with their friend Thomas O'Hagen, rocked the house with their band. Shay Salthov, a Hebrew School teacher, played the saxophone as our special guest. The performers raised \$200 from the show. Fundraising continued through winter break, December 21.

Thank you to the artists who donated their skills to our first Hebrew School Talent Show. We hope next year more performers will join in the beat reverberating off the walls of the OZ social hall.

WINTER INTO SPRING

By Ron Meyers

Given the Jewish preoccupation with history and memory, it is interesting to note that our calendar has us continually looking ahead to the future. Think of the seven-week countdown from Pesah to Shavuot, the four haftarat of rebuke leading up to Tishah B'Av, and then the seven haftarat of comfort easing our passage from Tishah B'Av to the High Holy Days.

The midwinter brings a quiet watershed in the direction of our view. The eight days of Hanukkah are our last echo of Sukkot and the fall holidays; once the solstice has passed, we begin to look ahead to the spring. A series of small observances move us through the winter and provide glimmers of things to come.

Of course there is Tu B'Shevat (February 3), the new year of the trees, when their sap begins to run. And there are four special Shabbatot, which involve special additional Torah readings and which point the way from winter darkness to the joy of Purim and the

profound festivity of Pesah. Shabbat Shekalim (February 17) recalls the half-shekel contribution that each Israelite was required to make to the community as spring approached. Shabbat Zachor (March 3) raises the memory of Amalek and the threat he posed to our ancestors, as Haman did in the Purim story. On Shabbat Parah (March 10) we read the commandments regarding purity rituals that were necessary for participation in the Passover sacrifices. And Shabbat Hahodesh (March 17) marks the arrival of the month of Nisan with readings about the laws of Passover.

These four Shabbatot, together with Shabbat Hagadol during the week of Passover, form a sequence of seven weeks that leads us in a forward-looking procession from one season into the next.

SOURCES:

Shabbat Shekalim: Exodus 30:11-16

Shabbat Zachor: Deuteronomy 25: 17-19

Shabbat Parah: Numbers 19:1-22

Shabbat Hahodesh: Exodus 12:1-20

PRE-PASSOVER WINE AND SCOTCH TASTING

Saturday, February 3, 7:30 p.m.

Sample and order kosher-for-Passover wines and scotch (for other times) weeks before the seders!

OZY SERVICES

Each Shabbat, we have three different grade-level services:

Infant through Kindergarten

11:00 a.m. to noon

Alef Bet Corner

Grades 1 to 3

10:00 a.m. to noon

Junior Congregation

Grades 4 to 6

10:00 a.m. to noon

Each month during the school year, we have a special Hebrew School Shabbat Class, which all Hebrew School students in the third through sixth grades are expected to attend. Parents and students from other schools are welcome as well.

The next Hebrew School Shabbat Classes will take place on January 27 and February 10.

The Me'ah Temptation

By Joanne Feierman

I have always been tempted to join Me'ah. Everyone who has taken the course has raved about it. They speak enthusiastically about the quality of the instruction, the pleasure of learning together, and the joy they have found in study. But while the potential rewards of Me'ah have always been tempting, the day-to-day commitments have always been scary. After all, participants attend class once a week for two years. How could I commit to that? And all the required reading would take so much time and effort. For those of us who are frustrated because there are not enough hours in the day to finish reading the *Times*, the entire Me'ah enterprise seemed daunting. But I finally yielded.

As a new participant, I have learned that Me'ah is a serious but manageable commitment and that the rewards make the effort worthwhile. Ideally, one should attend every class. But the classes are taped, should you need to miss a session or two. There are readings for each week, but the texts are divided into core and

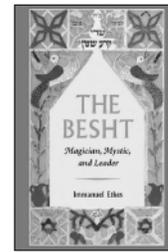
supplementary materials. The latter are wonderful to read, but not essential. I have found (should I be admitting this?) that it is possible to be totally comfortable in class without having done all the reading. And about that two-year commitment: it's actually a two-semester-a-year commitment. Classes begin in October and end the first week in May.

Now about the rewards: Since our group of 11 gathered in the fourth-floor library for the very first class, we have been fully engaged in study. In modern parlance, our minds have been blown. In more formal English, our minds have been stretched by the provocative perspectives our instructor offers for our consideration. I leave each class surprised by how fascinating it all is and by how much I didn't know that I didn't know! Between classes, I often find myself reflecting on issues that have been raised in our discussions.

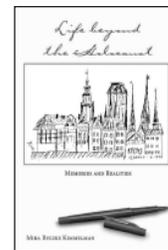
As you see, I have totally succumbed to the Me'ah temptation. I urge you to do the same.

New Books in the OZ Library

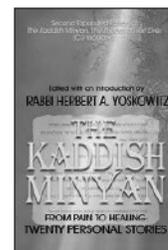
The OZ library is a welcoming place to spend some free time. Our wide selection of books includes histories, biographies, novels, encyclopedias, biblical commentaries, and more. Here are some recent acquisitions:



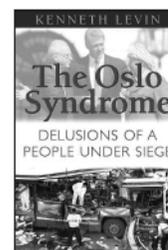
The Besht: Magician, Mystic and Leader
by Immanuel Etkes



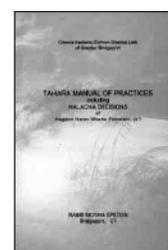
Life Beyond the Holocaust: Memories and Realities
by Mira Ryczke Kimmelman



The Kaddish Minyan: From Pain to Healing, Twenty Personal Stories
edited by Rabbi Herbert A. Yoskowitz



The Oslo Syndrome: Delusions of a People under Siege
by Kenneth Levin



Tahara Manual of Practices including Halacha Decision of Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein
by Rabbi Moshe Epstein

Congregational Shabbat Dinner

featuring Jeremy Yoskowitz, Rabbinic Intern

Shabbat dinner is always wonderful—and more delightful when it's shared.

It's even better when you don't have to cook or clean up!

Join OZ for a community Shabbat dinner. Enjoy making new friends and getting closer to those you already know!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2007

Immediately following services, which begin at 4:38 p.m.

Please make reservations by Tuesday, January 16

\$40 adults; \$20 children (ages 5-12); \$5 children (under 5)

RSVP: Tel 212-452-2310, extension 39 / www.orzarua.org

FIFTH ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE

Sunday, February 11 • 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Looking for an opportunity to give the gift of life? Then sign up for the OZ Blood Drive!

On Sunday, February 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Or Zarua will host its Fifth Annual Blood Drive, in partnership with the New York Blood Center. Please enlist friends, family and co-workers to help achieve our goal of 50 pints. You can also sign up for a bone marrow donation.

As in the past, we will provide a sumptuous brunch as well as hesed and arts activities for children. You can even start off the day at our morning minyan at 8:45 a.m.

If you can spare more than an hour, please volunteer to help with registration, food set-up, or children's activities, including preparation of sandwiches for the homeless.

Please support this important event! We also need your monetary contributions to help sponsor the drive.

To donate blood or to volunteer, please contact Robin Blumenthal at 212-420-2942 or rblument@chpnet.org

Why is blood donation so important?

- 1 out of 3 people will need blood at some point in their lives.
- 5% of the U.S. population donate blood, but only 2% of New Yorkers donate.
- Every three seconds, someone will need blood in the United States.
- 1 in 10 hospital patients needs a transfusion—an average of 3 pints!
- One donated pint is often broken into blood components and can be used to help many different people. Donated blood is used to help patients with many conditions and is critical to patients who need surgery, have some types of cancer or have had an organ transplant.
- Donating blood is literally giving the gift of life. Each day, the New York Blood Center needs close to 2,000 people a day to give the gift of life. There is simply no substitute for voluntarily donated blood. Without volunteer donors, our community would not have an adequate community blood supply.

How do I know whether I am eligible to be a blood donor?

If you are at least 17, weigh at least 110

pounds, are in good health, and haven't donated in the past two months, you will most likely be able to donate. People over 75 may continue to donate blood if they meet all donor criteria and present a physician's letter allowing them to donate. Of course, you should be feeling well on the day you give.

What should I do to prepare?

You should eat normal meals with plenty of fluids before giving blood and avoid aspirin for a day or two before donating.

How long will it take? How long will it take for my body to replenish the blood that is drawn?

The actual donation of one pint takes about 10 minutes. Your body will replace the blood volume in a day or so and the red blood cells in four to eight weeks.

What if I'm not sure I can give blood?

There are some medical conditions that can prevent someone from donating blood. These guidelines are set by federal, state and local health agencies to protect both donors and patients. For more information, visit: <http://www.nybloodcenter.org/donate/index.do?sid0=2&sid1=16>.

Israeli Night at Ronald McDonald House

On Thursday, February 1, Congregation Or Zarua will host its fifth annual dinner at the Ronald McDonald House, a residence for seriously ill children undergoing treatment at local hospitals. Young patients from all around the globe remain here with their families during treatment. On Israeli Night, OZ members provide a catered dinner and lively entertainment. Through song, dance, and friendship—as well as falafel, humus, and all the trimmings—we hope to serve as a momentary distraction from the overwhelming concerns of illness.

The Hesed Committee needs up to 15 volunteers to serve, sing, and schmooze. We can also use donations of kosher desserts for the evening—please drop them off at the House (405 East 73rd Street) by 5:30 p.m. on February 1. To volunteer, please call Stephanie Failla at 917-941-3199 (evening) or

212-472-7506 (day). Volunteers must be at least 18 years old. If you are interested, call soon because space is limited.

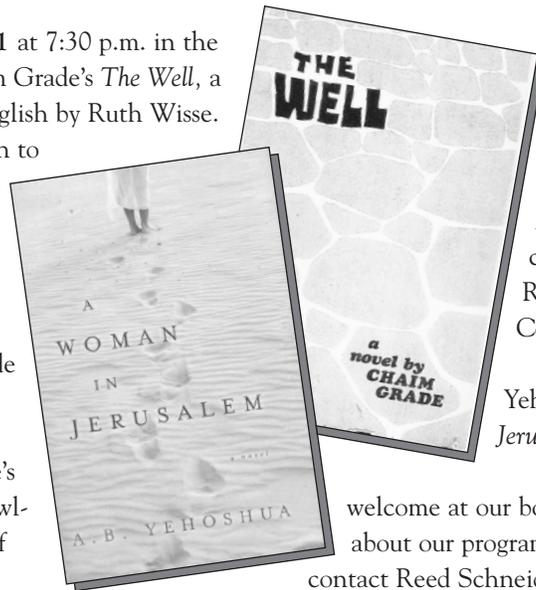
How you can help:

- Donate a kosher dessert (baked goods, for example) and drop it off at Ronald McDonald House, 405 East 73rd Street between First and York Avenues, on Thursday, February 1 by 5:30 p.m.
- Set up and decorate the room (from 5:15 p.m.)
- Serve food (from 6:00 p.m.)
- Clean up (from 7:00 p.m.)
- Lead singing and/or folk dancing (from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)

Israeli Night at the Ronald McDonald House has been a festive event for facility residents and a rewarding experience for OZ volunteers. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

Or Zarua Book Discussions

Please join us on **Sunday, January 21** at 7:30 p.m. in the OZ library for a discussion of Chaim Grade's *The Well*, a classic Yiddish novel translated into English by Ruth Wisse. This fable of Mendel the Porter's mission to raise enough money to repair the old well in the synagogue courtyard is a delightful and sly tour of the Jewish community of Vilna, Grade's birthplace, just after the first World War. In the words of Eli Wiesel, Chaim Grade (1910-1982) is "one of the greatest—if not the greatest—of contemporary Yiddish novelists." *The Well*, like Grade's other writings, reflects an intimate knowledge of the complexities and richness of Eastern European Jewish culture.



Our discussion will be led by OZ Congregant Rabbi Yehoshua Aizenberg. While growing up in Argentina, Rabbi Aizenberg's mother tongue was Yiddish. The yeshiva he attended in Buenos Aires placed Yiddish language and Yiddish classics at the core of its curriculum. Rabbi Aizenberg is Rabbi Emeritus of the Conservative Synagogue of Jamaica Estates.

Our next book discussion of A. B. Yehoshua's newest novel, *A Woman in Jerusalem*, is scheduled for **Sunday, March 11**.

All Congregants and their guests are welcome at our book discussions. If you have any questions about our programs or have a book suggestion, please contact Reed Schneider (212-860-8611; arlm1199@aol.com).

Save the Date: Thursday, March 8 at 7:00 p.m. Join us for a screening and discussion of *The Forgotten Refugees*, a film about the history and destruction of Middle Eastern Jewish communities. Hear the latest about the recently launched International Rights and Redress Campaign, which seeks to document the violations of human rights and loss of property suffered by Mizrahi Jews.

FIRST ME'AH CLASS MOVES ON TO "GRAD SCHOOL"

By Phyllis C. Solomon



Barbara Mann inspired by the challenges of their two-year Me'ah program at Or Zarua, a "minyan" of the program's graduates began another first-time learning odyssey after the High Holy Days this October. This time, the study is of modern Jewish art and literature. The course readings are in Hebrew, Yiddish, and—of course—English.

Dr. Barbara Mann, Associate Professor of Jewish Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary, is teaching the course. Her areas of expertise include

Israeli and Jewish literature, cultural studies, modern poetry, urban studies, literary modernism, and the fine arts. Dr. Mann's current research examines the relationship between literature and fine art in twentieth-century Jewish culture.

Dr. Mann is guiding our class through an exploration of Jewishness in the modern world. We are studying the prose of Mendele Mocher-Sforim, I.L. Peretz, Franz Kafka, and Henry Roth; the poetry of Abraham Shlonsky and Lea Goldberg; and the paintings of Marc Chagall and Reuven Rubin.

We are studying the "the Jew," viewed as a prototypically modern hybrid

character—a cosmopolitan identity in a rootless, peripheral state. We are examining why there is a high proportion of Jewish writers and artists among the central figures in European modernism. In addition, we are observing the exciting evolution of Hebrew from a Biblical and rabbinic language into a complex, contemporary modern tongue—an ancient language that is not only flexible enough to come up with words for contemporary issues, but also vital enough to express the feelings of an entire modern nation.

In the spring, we will continue our studies by examining the Jewish Golden Age of Spain.

SHABBAT USHERS NEEDED Please contact Phyllis Solomon (pslegal@aol.com) or Gerry Solomon (gsolomon2@aol.com).

Or Zarua Super Bowl Party, February 4

Come and watch the Super Bowl with your friends at our fifth annual Or Zarua Super Bowl Party, to be held in the synagogue on February 4. Enjoy a family atmosphere and great kosher food from Dougie's, including ribs, chili, giant "sub" sandwiches, buffalo wings, dessert, and much more.

Minhah/Ma'ariv starts at 5:00 p.m.



in the sanctuary. The game should begin about 6:00 p.m. and will be shown on a large-screen TV in the social hall. All are welcome. Voluntary contributions may be made to the Congregation's Hesed Fund or Minyan Fund.

Please contact Sheldon Adler (212-735-2136 or sadler@skadden.com) to let us know that you plan to attend.

GRAVESITES AVAILABLE AT BETH EL CEMETERY

The Or Zarua Board of Trustees is pleased to inform the Congregation that we have begun the second stage of selling gravesites in our section of Beth El Cemetery in Washington Township, New Jersey. Beth El is located approximately 10 miles north of the George Washington Bridge. Next spring, we intend to plant trees and shrubs at both ends of our section and in a seating area in the middle of the section. Otherwise, we intend for the graves to be uniformly covered by grass. Individuals and families will choose their own headstones. We think the area will be serene and beautiful, very much in accord with the aesthetic of our building and the Or Zarua values.

We have worked long and hard to find a suitable site for OZ members who

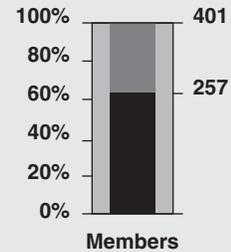
wanted to secure gravesites for themselves and their families, and at last we have accomplished this important goal for our Congregation. If you are interested in purchasing one or more gravesites, please contact the Executive Director in the Or Zarua office for assistance in selecting a suitable location. Once you have made a decision, you will execute a Purchase Agreement and pay the purchase price. The current price for an individual gravesite at Beth El is \$1,400. Beth El informs us that the price may increase on February 1, 2007.

If you wish to visit Beth El Cemetery or if you have any questions about the mechanics of the purchase, please contact the Executive Director at the OZ office.

KOL NIDRE APPEAL UPDATE

Our Goal

100% Participation
(at a level comfortable for each Congregant)



■ Total ■ Participating

We're On The Way!

Thanks to all Congregants who have already given.

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA

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