

OR ZARUA

Congregation

NEWSLETTER / VOLUME 19:5

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MAY / JUNE 2007

Programming Committee: HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS

By Diane Okrent

The work of the OZ Programming Committee never ends, but our schedule gets lighter in the summer months. Here are some special events planned for May and June:

● **Friday, May 4 will bring Shabbat Across America.** On the first Shabbat in May, OZ will join hundreds of congregations across the country in welcoming Jews from the community to a traditional Friday night service and dinner. Our speaker will be Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, a Masorti rabbi in Berlin. Rabbi Ederberg was recently hired by the Berlin

Gemeinde (Jewish Community Council) to serve in an official capacity as rabbi. We look forward to hearing her perspective on current European Jewry.

● **Saturday, May 5 is our Lag B’Omer observance.** We will study Zohar with Yaron Milgrom-Elcott beginning at 9:00 p.m.

● **Sunday, May 6 is the Salute to Israel Parade.** See page 12 for details.

● **Tuesday, May 15 is Yom Yerushalayim and our annual meeting.** Come for a rooftop picnic dinner, followed by the annual meeting and a commemora-

tion of the 40th anniversary of the Six Day War. Members of the Congregation will share their recollections of the war.

● **Tuesday, May 22 will bring our Tikkun Leyl Shavuot.** We will discuss the subject “How Free Should Free Speech Be?” in the light of Torah. Shavuot is Wednesday, May 23 and Thursday, May 24.

● **Saturday, June 2 will feature a Kiddush Lunch to honor all our students and graduates.**

We look forward to having you join us at these wonderful events.

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Purim Spiel 2007: OZ Congregants and friends of all ages spent long hours rehearsing “Captain Shnook and the Island of the Farloyryn Kinder.” The spiel was presented at the Lycée Français on Sunday morning, March 4. The OZ Players invite anyone interested in being a part of this wonderful theatrical experience to join our cast next year.

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OZ's Model Matzah Bakery



OZ Committee Chairs

| | |
|------------------|--|
| AESTHETICS | Aaron Shelden |
| BOOK DISCUSSION | Reed Schneider |
| BUILDING | Alan Ilberman |
| CATERING | Diane Okrent Sara Stone |
| CEMETERY | Andrew Frackman Morty Schwartz |
| DEVELOPMENT | Mimi Alperin |
| EVENTS/ADULT ED | Diane Okrent |
| HESED | Robin Blumenthal Stephanie Failla |
| HEVRA KADISHA | Vera Silver Gerry Solomon |
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| LIBRARY | Barry Feldman |
| MEMBERSHIP | Anne Schneider |
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| PURIM SPIEL | Arthur Rosenbloom Bonnie Maslin Tibor Feldman Barbara Sassoon |
| SCHOOL | Pamela Gold |
| TORAH/HAFTARAH | Yaakov Shechter |
| WEBMASTER | Jay Palmer |

Hebrew School students learned to roll their own dough when Congregation Or Zarua became the site of a model matzah bakery on March 22. The families of each participant received a box of Matzah Sh'emura and a "Searching for Hametz" kit. The young OZ bakers are: Top row, from left: Emily Abelow, Elisabeth Lawrence, Allegra Weintraub, and Sadie Solomon. Center row, from left: Tobin Bromberg, Matthew Kreitman, Hart Rapaport, Zoe Fleishaker Sophia Katz, and Michael Katz. Bottom row, from left: Ben Fitts, Jonathan Trachtenberg, Yael Goren, Tobin Bromberg, Matthew Kreitman, and Hart Rapaport.

Hebrew School Registration has begun. For information on registering both returning and new students, please contact Ilana Burgess at 212-452-2310, extension 15 or ilana@orzarua.org.

SHABBAT IN THE PARK • MAY 12 AND JUNE 9 • 4:00 P.M.
 Enter Central Park at East 79th Street and go to the bottom of Cedar Hill.
 Bring a blanket to sit on and a dairy or parve snack to share.
 Please contact Meredith Katz at 212-879-5408 or 2mlk@netzero.com.

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

Saturday, May 5, 9:00 p.m.

LAG B'OMER STUDY: *The Zohar*



Milgrom-Elcott

Congregants are invited to follow the mystical tradition and join our Lag B'Omer study of *The Zohar* on Saturday, May 5. Yaron Milgrom-Elcott will lead the discussion, which begins at 9:00 p.m. in the OZ library. This will be a Melaveh Malkah, a light meal following the end of Shabbat.

The Zohar, traditionally attributed to Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, is a mystical Torah commentary written in medieval Aramaic and medieval Hebrew. It deals with the nature of God, the origin and structure of the universe, souls, sin, and redemption.

Lag B'Omer is the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai. In Israel, masses of people visit his grave at Meron outside of Tzfat. In New York, we will study the mystical writings attributed to him.

Hebrew School Events

MAY 2007

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| Sun 6 | Salute to Israel Parade |
| Sat 12 | Shabbat Class, 10:00 a.m. |
| Wed 16 | Yom Yerushalayim program |
| Thu 17 | Yom Yerushalayim program |
| Mon 21 | Cooking at BJ (High School) |
| Tues 22 | Erev Shavuot (no classes) |
| Wed 23 | Shavuot (no classes) |
| Thu 24 | Shavuot (no classes) |
| Mon 28 | Memorial Day (no classes) |
| Wed 30 | Last day of school |
| Thu 31 | Last day of school |

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA SPEAKER *Gesa Ederberg, Masorti Rabbi* Friday, May 4, 6:30 p.m.



Shabbat Across America welcomes Jews from the community to a traditional Friday night service and dinner. Our speaker on Friday, May 4 will be Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, a Masorti rabbi in Berlin. Serving in an official capacity as rabbi for the Berlin Gemeinde (Jewish Community Council), Rabbi Ederberg will offer her unique perspective on European Jewry today.

Space at dinner is limited. Please use the OZ website or call the synagogue office at 212-452-2310 (extension 39) to reserve a place. Services begin promptly at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner.

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 Class will take place on May 12.

TIKKUN LEYL SHAVUOT

On Erev Shavuot, Tuesday, May 22, Minhah/Ma'ariv will begin at 8:00 p.m. The service will be followed by a night of study on the topic "How Free Should Free Speech Be?" Watch your mail and email for further announcements.

SHAVUOT: Giving and Taking Away

By Ron Meyers

When the Torah was given at Sinai—the Revelation we commemorate on Shavuot—God engraved the words of the Law into the tablets of stone. The words were not written in ink or forged in gold—not affixed to the stone, but taken away from it.

Law is always a taking away. If we are created by being placed in nature, we are civilized by pulling ourselves away from nature. We agree to not to do some of what comes naturally to us—and to do some things that don't come naturally. In return, we help to ensure security and social order. Law has rightly been called a structure of "wise constraints that keep us free."

But if freedom is the goal of law in a modern democracy, the Law from

Sinai—the laws between Humanity and God—aim at the deeper fundamental goal of defining and refining our human nature. Laws such as those of Shabbat and kashrut, of ritual and atonement, describe our place in creation, our relation to the divine, and our own potential for sanctity. As music is made of both the notes and the silences between them, our lives are defined both by what we do and by what we agree not to do. The Law, by calling upon us to sacrifice certain of our human possibilities, opens the possibility of our being more fully human.

SOURCES:

Revelation: Exodus 20; 31:18; 34:1-4, 27-28.
Festivals: Exodus 23:14-19; Numbers 28; Deuteronomy 16.

Rooftop Picnic, Annual Meeting and Yom Yerushalayim

Tuesday, May 15

7:15 p.m. Picnic • 8:15 p.m. Meeting

Please join us at Congregation Or Zaru'a's 18th annual meeting on Tuesday, May 15 at 8:15 p.m. in the sanctuary. An important agenda item will be the election of new officers and Board of Trustees members.

The meeting will be preceded by a rooftop picnic dinner at 7:15 p.m. Congregants are invited to the dinner whether or not they attend the annual meeting.

May 15 is also erev Yom Yerushalayim, which this year marks the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Jerusalem. OZ will honor the occasion with a program of music and reminiscences in the sanctuary following the annual meeting.

Reservations for dinner are essential. Please use the OZ website or call the synagogue office at 212-452-2310 (extension 39) to reserve a seat.

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:



*Diaspora:
Homelands in Exile*
(2-volume set)
by Frederic Brenner



Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation
by Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun
(OZ Congregant)



Synagogue Architecture in America
by Henry Stolzman



Bavli Talmud
(5 new volumes)
by Adin Steinsaltz

WWW.ORZARUA.ORG

Use our award-winning website to:

- View calendar and service times
- Register for meals and events
- Make donations online
- Sign up for morning minyan
- Learn about educational programs

Fifth Annual Or Zarua Blood Drive

By Robin Blumenthal

Or Zarua held its fifth annual blood drive on February 11. Forty people registered to donate, resulting in 26 pints of blood and four new bone marrow donor registrants. Although some Or Zarua members were prevented from donating because of their recent travel to countries included on the New York Blood Center's "prohibited" list, our ranks were augmented by a number of walk-in donors from the neighborhood. These guests were warmly welcomed.

Many participants began the event with morning minyan, partaking of the delicious brunch that followed. The Blood Center staff, including veterans of previous OZ drives, were well trained

and supportive, especially in coaxing a nervous, first-time donor through a successful donation.

While the grown-ups were fressing and donating blood, the children were busy upstairs with their own hesed activities. Under the direction of Gerry Solomon, the youngsters prepared 100 bag lunches for donation to the Coalition for the Homeless. Ilana Burgess and Joanne Ashley were there to oversee their progress on art projects and letters to children in Israel.

Many people helped to make this event successful—especially those who donated blood and those who could not donate but lent support. Thanks to

everyone mentioned above, to Richard Stadin for help in procuring food for the bag lunches and for distributing flyers, to Debbie Breznay and Phyllis Solomon for organizing the brunch, to Julia Blumenthal and Sharon Morris for assistance with registration, and to Vicky Stein and Lidiya Yunatanov for their help with everything else.

Your support for future hesed activities is very important—please contribute to the Hesed Fund and volunteer to help. For information, contact Hesed Committee chairs Robin Blumenthal (212-420-2942; rblument@chpnet.org) or Stephanie Failla (212-472-7506; civilib@aol.com.)

VIEWS FROM THE GALLERY

By Bobbi Coller

Among Or Zarua's many distinctions is that it is one of the only congregations in New York with a gallery to showcase art exhibitions. Each exhibition—given its many limitations—is a small miracle, the accomplishment of an outstanding Gallery Committee. Members of the committee use their individual talents to perform varied tasks such as researching topics, writing text and labels, designing installations, preparing works for hanging, organizing the openings, and coordinating programming.

I want to thank the wonderful and generous committee volunteers who have worked to realize past exhibitions. They

include: Shelley Binder, Cynthia Brodsky, Ilana Burgess, Joanne Feerman, Barry Feldman, Betty Goldberg, Diana Goldin, Judy and Herb Lukashok, Barbara and Ira Nadler, Diane Okrent, Paulette Schneider, Marilyn Shapiro, Judith Siegel, Phyllis and Gerry Solomon, Bernie Tolpin, Miriam Wallerstein, and Barry Yood.

In addition, we have had the continuous support and cooperation of the synagogue—special thanks to Rabbi Harlan J. Wechsler, President Michael Schwartz, past and present Executive Directors Barbara Bolshon and Vicky Stein, and the entire staff, including Lidiya Yunatanov, Shucky Ternava, Anthony

Banfield, and Webster Ward.

The committee is now formulating guidelines and planning future exhibitions. We would love to show the work of our artist/Congregants and to mount an exhibition about the Yiddish theater. If you have artwork suitable for display in the gallery, please let us know. But please be aware that our display capabilities are very specific, so not all pieces are appropriate for the space.

If you would like to join the committee, we welcome your ideas and help. Please contact me (bcoller@rcn.com; 212-987-2067) or any of the committee members for more information.

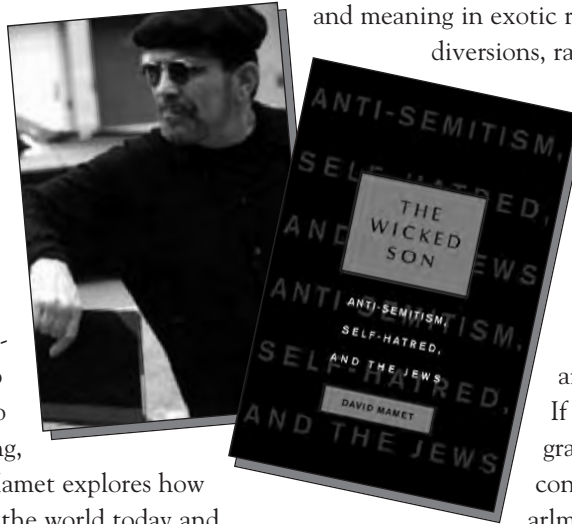
KEEP US UP TO DATE

Please be sure that the OZ office has your current mailing address, phone numbers, and email address. Contact Lidiya (212-452-2310, extension 10; lidiya@orzarua.org) to update your contact information. Please also notify us of family events—marriages, births, illnesses, or other news—that you would like to share with the Congregation.

Or Zarua Book Discussions

Please join us in the Or Zarua library on Sunday, May 20 at 7:30 p.m. when Fred Mendelsohn will lead our discussion of *The Wicked Son: Anti-Semitism, Self-Hatred and the Jews* by David Mamet.

In this new entry in the Schocken Jewish Encounters series, Mamet confronts the two sides of the pernicious hatred of Jews: the side of anti-Semites and that of apostate Jews, who internalize the hatred. The book's title refers to the character in the Passover seder who distances himself from his people, asking, "What does this story mean to you?" Mamet explores how Jews remain wicked sons in the eyes of the world today and



discusses the issue of why so many contemporary Jews seek truth and meaning in exotic religions, political movements or shallow diversions, rather than in observance of their own

tradition. David Margolick wrote in *The New York Times*, "*The Wicked Son* is Mamet's examination of the modern Jewish psyche. Like everything he does, it is blunt and bracing, honest and provocative, original and gutsy."

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).

UJA SOWS SEEDS FOR FLEDGLING BUSINESSES

By Evelyn Kenwin

Most of you are familiar with the important work of New York UJA-Federation in providing aid and social services to Jewish populations in need throughout the world. A less familiar UJA activity is economic development, and for the past few years I have had the privilege of participating in this aspect of the organization's work.

The Israeli banking system provides very limited capital to small businesses. UJA-Federation works with an Israeli bank that will offer loans to entrepreneurs based upon a collateral pool that we funded. Our funds are leveraged at a rate of approximately 3:1, which means that the bank will lend \$3 for every dollar of collateral we provide.

Entrepreneurs are recommended by the Business Development Centers (MATI) in Jerusalem and in the center of the country. The MATIs, nonprofits funded by a combination of government and philanthropic support, provide pro-

fessional business mentoring to entrepreneurs. They often help to put together business plans and provide referrals to financial sources. They consult for startups as well as for expanding businesses.

I visit the program at least once a year to meet with representatives of the bank and the Jerusalem MATI. However, the most satisfying part of each trip is the opportunity to visit some of the businesses we helped to fund. I have led several groups of New York businesspeople while they spent a week with MATI consultants as part of a mentoring team.

Let me tell you about a few of the businesses I visited when I was in Israel this January. Leo, a borrower in his early 30s, was an *oleh* (immigrant) from Mexico City. Leo worked as a sound engineer in a music recording studio in Jerusalem. In 2005, he was offered the opportunity to purchase the recording studio at a price that represented a fraction of the replacement cost. He had

very little capital and no credit history. With advice from the Jerusalem MATI and collateral provided by UJA-Federation, he was able to purchase the studio, which is now thriving and currently employs three other sound engineers. Leo's customers include an eclectic range of musicians, from ultra-Orthodox klezmer ensembles to rock-and-roll bands.

A second business I visited this year was a car repair shop that recently moved to new and larger quarters. The original garage was funded through our collateral about six years ago. This time, the entrepreneur, a Jerusalem sabra, was able to put up a larger share of the capital himself and to secure equipment financing through a traditional bank loan. Our collateral helped to bridge the small gap that remained between what he already had and what he still needed.

The loan funds we established in Israel follow the adage of supplying a fishing rod rather than a fish.

SHED SOME NEW LIGHT

Have you recently visited Jewish sites or communities around the world? Share your experience with the Congregation by writing a brief article for our annual publication, *Orot*. For more information, please contact Ron Meyers at meyersxyz@yahoo.com.

KIDDUSH LUNCH HONORING THE SCHOLARS OF OZ

Saturday, June 2

after services, which begin at 9:00 a.m.

The Congregation will celebrate the accomplishments of those who have completed a course of study and of those who are continuing their studies.

HONOREES INCLUDE:
Hebrew School Students
Adult Learners of the Community

All are welcome to congratulate those who are dedicated to Jewish learning.

You are not obligated to complete the task,
but neither are you free to desist from it.

— Pirkei Avot 2:21

Ascending
the Ladder
of Tzedakah

Enabling the recipient
to become more self-reliant.

Giving when neither party
knows the other's identity.

Giving when you know the
recipient's identity but the
recipient doesn't know
who you are.

Giving when you don't
know the recipient's
identity, but the recipient
knows who you are.

Giving before being asked.

Giving after being asked.

Giving less than you
should, but giving
willingly.

Giving grudgingly.

Individually and collectively, the Jewish people have been charged with the purpose of *tikkun olam* — literally, the repair of the world. The manifestation of *tikkun olam* is expressed in the Jewish belief that each of us is a "partner" with God, and that it is our obligation to contribute to the healing of the world through acts of *tzedakah* — literally, righteousness.

The fulfillment of the commandment of *tzedakah* may be achieved in countless ways. From visiting the ill and homebound to participating in a daily minyan, from tutoring literacy to volunteering in your synagogue, from donating blood to clothing the homeless, every act of *tzedakah* fulfills us as individuals and advances the restoration of the world.

Activate your partnership with God.
Participate in *tikkun olam*.
Live the commandment of *tzedakah*.

Presented by the New York Metropolitan Region (METNY) of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, 155 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, (212) 533-7800. For resources and more information about the concept of *tikkun olam* and the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, speak with your Rabbi, and contact The United Synagogue Book Service, 152 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, or call (212) 533-700, ext. 3003, or order by e-mail at books@usuk.org.

Salute to Israel Parade, Sunday, May 6

By OZ Israel Action Committee

Our theme this year will be "Israel Lights Up Our Life!" as Congregation Or Zarua marches up Fifth Avenue in the Salute to Israel Parade on Sunday, May 6.

Everyone is welcome to march with us, including Hebrew School students in the second grade and older. We will assemble at 55th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues at 2:00 p.m. sharp.

Please also join us at the synagogue on Wednesday, April 24 and Thursday, April 25 at 5:00 p.m. to help create themed banners and signs for the day of the parade.

This is our sixth year as participants in the parade. Last year, over 80 Congregants marched. We hope for a huge turnout this May to demonstrate the strength of our support for Israel.



Congregants carried signs proclaiming "I care and I'm going" in the 2006 Salute to Israel Parade.

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA

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