



Congregation

OR ZARUA

NEWSLETTER / VOLUME 20:2

HESHVAN / KISLEV / TEVET 5768

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2007

Happenings in Heshvan and Beyond

By Diane Okrent

While Heshvan is often called the bitter month because it has no holidays, it is never bitter at Or Zarua. Here is a sampling of what's happening at OZ in the coming weeks.

● **New Members' Reception on Thursday, November 8.**

Welcome new members and reconnect with ones you already know at the home of Bobbi and Barry Coller from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Invitations have been mailed.

● **Hanukkah Dinner on Friday, December 7.** Join us as we celebrate Hanukkah with traditional foods, song, and dance. All are welcome!

● **Shabbat Dinner on Friday, January 18.** Our member, child psychologist Bonnie Maslin, will talk about successful child rearing. Each family who attends will receive a copy of Bonnie's latest book, *Picking Your Battles*.

● **Musical Shabbat Celebration of OZ's 19th Birthday on Friday, February 1 and Saturday, February 2.** An a cappella group, Kol Zimra, will lead us in song and dance at both Shabbat dinner and our free Kiddush lunch.

● **Arnold Eisen Lecture on Wednesday, March 12.** We will welcome to Or Zarua the new Chancellor of JTS, Arnold Eisen. A reception will follow the chancellor's address.

● **Talmud Class** meets every Wednesday night at 8:00 p.m. All are welcome to join this study group at any time.

Look for news of our Yiddish Theater exhibit and the annual Lucy Davidowicz lecture in the coming weeks.

We are planning Shabbat meals as well as programs to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the State of Israel in 2008.

We welcome your suggestions for future programs.

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Congregational Shabbat Hanukkah Dinner

JOIN THE OZ COMMUNITY FOR
TRADITIONAL FOODS, SONG AND DANCE.
FUN FOR ALL GENERATIONS!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2007

Immediately following services, which begin at 4:08 p.m.

*Please make reservations by
Tuesday, December 4*

\$30 adults; \$15 children (ages 5-12); children under 5, no charge

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

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 CONGREGATION
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 ZARUA**
 A CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE
 FOUNDED 1989
 127 EAST 82ND STREET
 NEW YORK, NY 10028
 phone:212-452-2310 fax:212-452-2103
 www.orzarua.org
 DR. HARLAN J. WECHSLER, Rabbi
 MICHAEL W. SCHWARTZ, President
 VICKY A. STEIN, Executive Director
 ILANA BURGESS, Youth Education Director
 LYNN NACK, Newsletter Editor

YOUTH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

By Ilana Burgess

The tweens and teens are taking over OZ! Our Kadima and USY Chapters are already over 30 members strong. For our first event, "METNY Meets the Mets," we attended a Mets baseball game on September 9 with hundreds of other Kadimaniks and USYers from the metro New York region. It was a beautiful day and the Mets won—making those of us who are Mets fans even happier. Thanks to Shay Salhov, Alan Yaillen and Laurie Dien for accompanying us.

A lively party on Saturday evening, October 20 featured fun and games, line dancing led by a professional DJ, and a sundae bar.

Matt Check, our new youth advisor, is familiar to many of the tweens and teens at OZ. He also teaches Hebrew School and helps with our youth services.

Sixth through twelfth graders who are interested in participating in Kadima and USY should email Ilana Burgess at ilana@orzarua.org.

OZ Committee Chairs

AESTHETICS	Aaron Shelden
BOOK DISCUSSION	Reed Schneider
BUILDING	Alan Ilberman
CEMETERY	Andrew Frackman Mort Schwartz
DEVELOPMENT	Mimi Alperin
EVENTS/ADULT ED	Diane Okrent
HESED	Robin Blumenthal Stephanie Failla
HEVRA KADISHA	Vera Silver Gerry Solomon
HOUSE	Janet Katz
ISRAEL	Aliza Kaplan
LIBRARY	Barry Feldman
MEMBERSHIP	Brett Cohen
MINYAN	Sheldon Adler
OROT	Ron Meyers
PLANNED GIVING	Jim Breznay
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Aaron Shelden
PURIM SPIEL	Arthur Rosenbloom Bonnie Maslin Tibor Feldman Barbara Sassoon
SCHOOL	Betsy Dizengoff
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.



METNY Meets the Mets: About 20 young OZ fans and their friends helped cheer the Mets to victory on September 9 during the first event attended by the new Or Zarua Kadima and USY Chapters. Future events promise to draw even larger crowds. Sixth through twelfth graders are invited to join in the fun.



My Summer in Israel

By Sophie Dizengoff, Grade 6

This past summer my family and I went on a trip to Israel. There were two places that were special to me because they helped me connect to being a Jew and to Israel.

I went to the Western Wall. It was amazing. I was there for Kabbalat Shabbat. There were many other people there—tourists and all kinds of Jews. The square was crowded and noisy, with everyone pushing so they could see. There was a sound dominating the whole place. The young, orthodox Jewish men came down the steps, towards the Kotel, singing. Then they came into the middle of the square just before the Western Wall. There were hundreds of them—from the yeshiva, our tour guide Ava told me. A few carried their guns, because they serve in the army. These are the religious men who pay their dues to Israel. They began to dance in a circle. People moved out of the way and I watched. Then they formed into lines, still singing. And they headed toward the holy place. They picked up people from the crowd. At the gate to the men's entrance of the Kotel, the yeshiva boys marched down the ramp, and when they reached the wall, it was like a competition about who could pray loudest, because they wanted to make sure their voices were heard by God.

On the other side were the women, who are not allowed to pray loudly

because their voices would distract the men. But something happened that night, which doesn't usually happen. A large group of young women in their twenties started to sing and dance. These women wanted to pray out loud and even though the "rules" said they couldn't, that didn't stop them. I was proud that they weren't afraid to stand up and pray and sing.

Another place I visited in Israel was Meir Dizengoff's house. This was very exciting, especially for me, since I am a Dizengoff. I never really knew who Meir Dizengoff was, but I learned that he was the first mayor of Tel Aviv and also helped create the land of Israel. I felt honored to see his house and discover who he was and what he did. Meir Dizengoff looked upon the people of Israel as his children. His only daughter died at a young age. When Meir died, he donated his house to the land of Israel as an art museum for the people. In 1948, in his home, the Jewish people declared the state of Israel. Now his home is known as Independence Hall and thousands of people visit it each year—the place where Israel was born.

My trip to Israel was fun, very exciting, and I learned so much traveling. I only talk about a few things here, but if I told you everything, I could go on forever. Israel was an amazing experience. Every Jew should get the chance to go there.

Youth Education Calendar

NOVEMBER 2007

- Sat 10** Shabbat Class, 10 a.m.
Mon 12 Veteran's Day (*no classes*)
Sun 18 Talent Show, 11 a.m.
(all children are invited)
Mon 19 Cooking at BJ, 6 p.m.
Wed 21 Thanksgiving (*no classes*)
Thu 22 Thanksgiving (*no classes*)

DECEMBER 2007

- Wed 5** Hanukkah Celebration
Thu 6 Hanukkah Celebration
Fri 7 Family Hanukkah Dinner
(all children are invited)
Sat 15 Shabbat Class, 10 a.m.
Mon 17 Cooking at BJ, 6 p.m.
Mon 24 Winter Break (*no classes*)

JANUARY 2008

- Mon 7** Back to school
Thu 10 Mitzvah project, 6:30 p.m.
Mon 14 Cooking at BJ, 6 p.m.
Sat 19 Shabbat Class, 10 a.m.
Mon 21 MLK, Jr. Day (*no classes*)
Tue 22 Report cards mailed
Tue 22 Tu B'Shevat Celebration
Wed 23 Tu B'Shevat Celebration

SECOND ANNUAL OZ YOUTH TALENT SHOW

Sunday, November 18, Social Hall, 11 a.m.

It's back by popular demand! Based on our huge success last year, the Second Annual OZ Youth Talent Show will be held on Sunday, November 18 at 11:00 a.m. Please join us in applauding Or Zaru'a's own talented youth (10 years old and up) as they dance, sing, and play music. The social hall will

reverberate with sounds of joy as our young people raise money for the young people of Sderot, Israel. Tickets are a suggested donation of \$18 at the door.

If you are interested in performing, please contact Ilana Burgess at ilana@orzaru.org.

Or Zarua Book Discussion FAQs

If you have been considering whether to come to Or Zarua for one of our book discussions, here are answers to some frequently asked questions:

Where are Or Zarua book discussions held?

We meet in Congregation Or Zarua's library on the fourth floor.

When do discussions take place?

We meet on Sunday evenings from 7:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., when we break for decaf and a cookie.

How often do you meet?

Each year we discuss six books. We schedule our meetings about six weeks apart.

Does the same person lead all the discussions?

Participants rotate in leading our discussions. Please let us know if you have an interest in a particular book or have expertise to share.

How do you select books to discuss?

Participants choose books based on personal recommendations and published reviews. We look for fiction and non-fiction on issues of significance to the contemporary Jewish community. If you have read a book lately that you think is terrific, please contact us. We favor books authored by members of the Or Zarua community.

May I still come to a discussion if I don't fully read the book?

Sure you can. We'd be glad to have you and your guests join us.

When is the next book discussion?

We meet next on December 2. The following discussion will be January 13, 2008.

What book will be discussed?

To learn the book selection for December 2, contact Reed Schneider at 212-860-8611 or arlm1199@aol.com.

FROM THE OR ZARUA LIBRARIAN

By Barry R. Feldman

After a brief absence, I returned to the library to find misplaced books, missing labels, books waiting to be catalogued, and magazines scattered on tables. I was delighted!

Here was clear evidence that the library is a vital and dynamic Or Zarua venue. In addition to being a reference and reading room, the library is used by the Talmud class, Me'ah and other adult education activities, the Hebrew School, the Board, and occasionally on Shabbat for a kiddush. Indeed, we remain Am Sefer, People of the Book.

It is the goal of the library to represent all aspects of Judaism by including texts on religion, history, culture, language, literature and folklore. While it is not possible for us to be a comprehensive repository, Or Zarua's library is a supplement to our

neighboring resources, such as the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Center for Jewish History, and the library at the 92nd Street Y.

Another library service is to provide information on publications and exhibits which contribute to the rich fabric of Jewish culture. In that guise, I would like to recommend the following:

- *Emma Lazarus* by Esther Schor
- *The World to Come* by Dara Horn
- *Writing a Modern Jewish History: Essays in Honor of Salo W. Baron* by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
- *Adventures in Yiddishland* by Jeffrey Shandler
- *After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity* by David Ellenson

Congregants also may be interested in a forthcoming exhibit, *Alfred Dreyfus: The Fight for Justice*, at the Yeshiva University Museum, based on photographs, posters, letters, and family archives. An original copy of Emil Zola's famous newspaper article, *J'accuse*, which brought world-wide attention to Dreyfus, will be featured.

You can enhance our collection by contributing to the Library Fund or adding general interest books to our shelves (ideally after consulting with me to avoid duplication). Congregants interested in contributing religious texts should confer with Rabbi Wechsler.

It is my intention to tidy the library shelves, replace labels, and continue to catalogue books, with the happy anticipation that use of the library will require constant maintenance.

RABBI WECHSLER expresses his gratitude to the many Congregants who brought great comfort to him and his family during the recent shivah for his father.

A YIDDISH THEATER EXHIBIT is being planned. Share your memories—and your artifacts, music, and posters. To share something, call Bobbi Collier at 212-987-2067.

HANUKKAH: *Lights of Confidence*

By Ron Meyers

Many of us have placed our Hanukkah candles—or orange-bulbed electric menorahs—by our windows so they are visible from outdoors. And in recent years, we have all seen the huge hanukkiah at the southeast corner of Central Park. What may be less well known is that the public display of the Hanukkah lights is not a recent response to the ubiquitous display of Christmas decorations around us, but an ancient Jewish practice.

In fact, the rabbis of the Talmud held it to be a mitzvah, a commandment, to publicize the miracle of the small amount of oil which burned for eight days during the restoration of the Temple after its desecration by the Syrian Greeks who ruled Israel in the second century BCE. The rabbis instructed that the candles should not only be displayed for the

public to see, but that they should be displayed immediately after sundown when the greatest number of people would see them as they returned home from the markets and workplaces.

In Israel today, some homes have windows or compartments next to the front door for this express purpose. It is breathtaking to envision a whole streetscape aglow with candles flickering in the winter night.

It is equally breathtaking to consider that our tradition should call on us to display our rituals to the public. Jewish practices almost always occur behind closed doors. Our customs revolve around shuls and libraries and dinner tables, not around the public square; our ritual arts focus on objects for the home and the Torah scrolls, not on statues and grand facades. Jews tend to have an

ingrained habit of discretion, and have often developed a talent for actual hiding. Witness Anne Frank, the Spanish Inquisition, and the newborn Moses hidden in the basket. With Hanukkah, we are commanded to express confidence. And not only to do so among our own people. The Talmud itself was written by rabbis in exile in Babylonia, and the story of Hanukkah is precisely about our struggle to live in peace among other peoples. We display our lights to all the peoples around us. If living in mixed societies remains an ongoing challenge, Hanukkah reminds us to face the challenge with courage and to celebrate it with confidence.

SOURCE: Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat

DATE: First candle, December 4

Travel to Morocco

with Rabbi Wechsler and OZ

We are planning a Congregational trip to Morocco at the end of May 2008 to explore the Jewish history of that country, to learn about Sephardic traditions, and to visit a Jewish community in existence for 2,000 years.

Our itinerary is still being developed, but we know that it will include the cities of Fez, the home of Maimonides; Rabat and its mellah (Moroccan Arabic for ghetto); and Marrakech. A pre- or post-Morocco stop in Israel is also under consideration.

Please join us for this exciting educational and communal experience. If you are interested or if you have any suggestions or questions, please contact Debbie Breznay at 212-772-0975 or dbreznay@nyc.rr.com.

SAVE THE DATE: ARNOLD EISEN

Wednesday, March 12 • 8:00 p.m.



Jewish Theological Seminary Chancellor Arnold M. Eisen will speak on Wednesday, March 12 at 8:00 p.m. at Or Zarua. A reception will follow the chancellor's address.

Eisen was inaugurated as the seventh chancellor of The Jewish Theological Seminary on September 5, 2007. One of the world's foremost experts on American Judaism, Chancellor Eisen has worked closely for the past twenty years with synagogue and federation leadership around the country to analyze and address the issues of Jewish identity, the revitalization of Jewish tradition, and the redefinition of the American Jewish community.

OZ CRAFTS CLUB Do you like to knit or crochet? Would you like to learn? Join the new OZ Crafts Club and crochet a kipah, knit blankets for someone in a hospital or homeless shelter, or work on your own projects. Our next two meetings will be held on **Sunday, October 28** and **Sunday, November 18** in the library from **10 to 11:30 a.m.** For more information, contact Carrie Fox at carrie@foxshechter.com.

Upcoming Programs

Thursday, November 8
New Member Reception

Friday, December 7
Shabbat Hanukkah Dinner

Friday, January 18
Shabbat Dinner
with Bonnie Maslin

Friday, February 1
OZ's 19th Birthday
Musical Shabbat Dinner
with a cappella singers, Kol Zimra

Saturday, February 2
OZ's 19th Birthday
Musical Kiddush Lunch
with a cappella singers, Kol Zimra

Sunday, February 3
Super Bowl Party

Saturday, February 9
Blues by the Beach,
Israeli film screening

Tuesday, February 12
Zayin Adar Dinner

Wednesday, March 12
Chancellor Arnold Eisen Lecture

New Shabbat Morning Programs for Children

This fall we are offering four Shabbat morning classes to welcome our children to the synagogue. In addition to the regular classes for grades 1-3 and grades 4-6, we have divided the youngest age group in two. Children ages 4 and 5 now participate in a separate drop-off kindergarten program and children ages 2 and 3 have their own toddler playgroup (drop-off is optional). Children younger than age 2 may join the toddler group if accompanied by a parent.

All four classes meet from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., with supervised social time available for the older children from at 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. When the classes end, all of the children will be escorted by their teachers to join the Congregation in the main sanctuary for the conclusion of the Musaf service. For more information, please contact Ilana Burgess at ilana@orzarua.org.

OZY SHABBAT CLASSES

Each Shabbat, four different grade-level classes will meet from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.:

Seventh Floor

Class I: Kindergarten (ages 4-5)

Class II: Grades 1 to 3

Class III: Grades 4 to 6

Sixth Floor

Class IV: Ages 2-3
(new program)

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 Saturday, November 10 and December 15.

HEVRA KADISHA MEETING

Thursday, December 13 • 7:00 p.m.

Plan to attend the Hevra Kadisha meeting at Or Zarua on December 13 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will include an update on the cemetery, a procedural review, and a discussion of community education ideas relating to Jewish customs and laws surrounding death, burial, and mourning.

The Hevra Kadisha provides many levels of support to Or Zarua families at a time of loss—arranging for shomrim to accompany the deceased and read psalms until the funeral, performing taharat (ritual preparation of the deceased for burial), sending condolence meals to the home of the mourner, and assisting with shiva.

Please also put the annual Zayin Adar Dinner on your calendar for February 12, 2008. The seventh of Adar, the *yahrzeit* of Moses, is traditionally a time for the community to celebrate the work of the Hevra Kadisha. Rabbi Wechsler will teach.

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

HESED COMMITTEE EVENTS

Hesed is the expression of loving kindness—*gemilut hasadim*. According to *Pirkei Avot*, it is one of the three pillars on which the world stands and it is incumbent upon every Jew to participate. The Or Zarua Hesed Committee works to promote hesed through various projects within the Or Zarua and local community, and to help provide for needs in Israel and around the world. *Please donate generously to the Hesed Fund so we can continue and expand our programs.*

HESED EVENT CALENDAR

This year's calendar includes our annual OZ Hesed events as well as room for some new projects. Keep an eye out for flyers, emails and announcements about participating in our upcoming programs and information on our next Hesed Committee meeting in November. All are invited to attend! Bring your ideas and love of hesed. Our events for the coming year include:

Fourth Annual Hanukkah Toy Drive in conjunction with the MET Council. It's time to start collecting toys! *Contact Carrie Fox at carrie@foxshechter.com.*

DOROT Hanukkah and Pesah Package Delivery. Share the spirit of the holidays by visiting with seniors in their homes and bringing friendship along with small packages of holiday treats. This is an excellent activity for the entire family, and a wonderful way to introduce children to the joy and importance of hesed. *Contact Aaron Shelden at 212-734-2888.*

Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve Food Delivery. Volunteers and vehicles are needed to pack up and deliver food donated by Eli's and the Vinegar Factory to Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter Residences and Ronald McDonald House. *Contact Richard Stadin at 212-879-0448 or stadin1@aol.com.*

Israeli Night at Ronald McDonald House. To celebrate Tu B'Shevat in January, we'll want volunteers and donations of kosher desserts for this special evening when we make friends, entertain the resident children and their families with song and Israeli folk dance, and serve our traditional Middle Eastern buffet.

Give the Gift of Life! Or Zarua will again be partnering with the New York Blood Center to host its 6th Annual Blood Drive in February 2008. Volunteer an hour of your time to give blood or sign up for bone marrow donation. As in the past, there will be a sumptuous brunch provided, as well as additional hesed and arts activities for children.

Decorate the newly renovated NCS Residence. Do you have framed prints, posters or art in good condition for donation to NCS? The residence at East 81st Street has seven floors of

newly painted, blank hallways and client rooms to decorate. Clean out that overstuffed closet and start collecting art now! Dates will be announced.

CURRENT AND ONGOING PROGRAMS

Monday Night Pizza Delivery for NCS. Our regular Monday Night Pizza Delivery to the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter Residence at East 81st Street continues. If you can commit to one hour on one Monday per month, please participate by being a server. Enjoy rewarding interactions with the residents while doing a wonderful mitzvah! *Contact Richard Stadin at 212-879-0448 or stadin1@aol.com.*

Computer Roundup. Help disadvantaged adults in our neighborhood by recycling a PC, keyboard, monitor or printer that is no more than five years old. The Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter welcomes donations of used computers for its formerly homeless clients who are now in permanent housing. Fifteen computers have been donated so far! OZ volunteer "techies" led by Noah Eisenbruch will arrange delivery, delete your data, and install the computers for NCS clients. *Contact Richard Stadin at 212-879-0448 or stadin1@aol.com.*

Donation Deliveries. The Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter needs volunteers to pick up donations and transport supplies to volunteer events in various locations in Manhattan. Volunteer drivers are notified in advance, and shifts are based on the volunteers' availability. Willingness to carry boxes is a plus, but is not required. This is a great opportunity for people who have very little free time but who want to volunteer. *For details, contact Millicent Cavanaugh, Director of Volunteer Services, at 212-861-0704 (option 1), x 407 or mcavanaugh@ncsinc.org.*

NEW MEMBERS' RECEPTION

Thursday, November 8 • 6:30 p.m.

Each November, we hold a special reception to welcome Congregation Or Zarua's new members. On Thursday, November 8, 2007 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., all OZ members are invited to the home of Bobbi and Barry Coller to meet and greet these new members. Invitations were sent by mail.

Please join us in this Or Zarua tradition—don't miss a wonderful opportunity to socialize with new and long-standing members of the OZ community in the friendly, informal setting of a member's home.

A FEW HANUKKAH BASICS

What's a menorah? To describe the familiar piece of Judaica we use on Hanukkah, we call it either a hanukkiah (as they do in Israel) or a Hanukkah menorah. A menorah is simply a lamp. The original menorah was the seven-branched candelabra fashioned by Bezalel for the Tabernacle and then for the Temple (Exodus 25). This type of menorah—carved in a relief on the Arch of Titus, stamped into ancient coins, and represented in the seal of the State of Israel—has no ritual function today.

What blessings do we recite before lighting the candles? On the first night of Hanukkah, we say three blessings: "L'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah," "she-asah nisim lavotenu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh," and "shehecheyanu." On subsequent nights, we say only the first two. We say the appropriate blessings and then light the candles.

In which order do we light the candles? On the first night, we put one candle on the right side of the hanukkiah. The second night and thereafter we add lights to the left. After reciting the berakhot, use the shammash (servant candle) to light the new candle first, then the others in descending order. Place the hanukkiah on a windowsill facing the street so that it can be seen from outside.

What about Shabbat during Hanukkah? On Friday night, light the Hanukkah candles first—before Shabbat—then light the Shabbat candles. On Saturday night, light the Hanukkah candles after Shabbat ends.

Congregation Or Zarua

cordially invites all Congregants

to meet new members

at a reception on

Thursday, November 8

6:30-8:30 p.m.

at the home of

Bobbi and Barry Coller

Please RSVP 212-452-2310,

ext. 39 or www.orzarua.org

CONGREGATION OR ZARUA

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