

# Or Zarua

NISAN/IYAR/SIVAN 5771

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MAY/JUNE 2011

## Learning to Read Torah at Or Zarua

Four new Torah readers are now ready to read

*Congregation Or Zarua is a lay led congregation. Congregants guide and participate in all aspects of the service, including the reading of the Torah. In order to guarantee sufficient numbers of congregants who are capable of reading Torah, Or Zarua offers classes in Torah reading taught by congregant Mark Somerstein. In this issue of the Or Zarua Newsletter, Mark and this year's students—Benjamin Charkow, Sharon Seiler, Lynda Wertheim and William Zaiantz—reflect on the reasons they decided to undertake this important mitzvah. It is hoped that by reading these short essays, each of you might be inspired to consider Mark's class and join the cadre of Torah readers at Congregation Or Zarua!*

—CHARLIE SPIELHOLZ

### Mark Somerstein

When I was a teacher, I used to envy the school music department. At the June concert, every year, their pupils could demonstrate what they had learned, by performing in front of everyone. Even if my students had mastered their conjugations, I would not have wagered on their ability to speak Spanish fluently, in public.

Many years later, enter Torah and Haftarah reading instruction and Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring. I had always loved the Hebrew language and the texts, liked singing, enjoyed teaching, and loved the students. And, as in the music department I envied, the results of the entire process were performance based. Everyone could see it.

Something of this order has developed with the latest adult Torah reading class at Or Zarua, except in spades. I was struck by the motivation to learn, the

camaraderie that developed, the mutual support that grew, the entire atmosphere of friendliness mixed with commitment to a common purpose. It has been a pleasure to watch the growth that has taken place, as the students brought their own experiences and ways of learning to bear on the process. I learned much from the students as well. In a burst of creativity, we even developed a new way to represent a difficult note combination. We began at the very beginning, learning trope in a seventh floor classroom, and ended with practice sessions in the Sanctuary, reading from the Torah itself.

On the last day of Passover, Tuesday, April 26, and the second day of Shavuot, Wednesday, June 2, our group will exhibit the fruits of our collective and individual efforts by doing the Torah reading for the day. As I look forward to those holidays, I can already say that there is no longer a need to envy the music department.

### Benjamin Charkow

Around the time of my Bar Mitzvah, I was given a tape of the Torah reading for Yom Kippur. Later I received a tape for Rosh Hashanah. Then, for nearly 25 years I have read Torah on one or both of these days when I attend the shul where I grew up. I haven't seen the tape in years, but I still remember the rich, Ashkenazic voice from the old country, chanting the aliyot, which I repeat in my head when I brush up each year.

However, I wanted more. For years I have wanted to expand beyond my two tapes and learn the trope. Yet, despite a failed attempt to do so in eighth grade—from which I retained the knowledge of two notes—my desire has been unrealized, until now.

Mark Somerstein approached me  
*continued on page 8*



Or Zarua's current Torah Reading class (from left): Sharon Seiler, Lynda Wertheim, Mark Somerstein, William Zaiantz and Benjamin Charkow.

CHARLIE SPIELHOLZ

ק"ק אור זרוע  
Congregation



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*If you are interested in serving on a synagogue committee, please contact the office for the committee chair's email address.*

# President's Message

by Andrew J. Frackman

As I finish my three-year term as president of Congregation Or Zarua, I would like to share a few thoughts with you. One of the key gifts of being president was having the opportunity to spend regular time with Rabbi Wechsler. I have learned much in the course of those meetings and I will miss them. Similarly, it has been a privilege to work with the committed and capable group of fellow officers and trustees at Or Zarua. The vice presidents and other officers bear much of the burden of the detailed work of running our synagogue—whether it be programming or finance or building issues. To the extent we have had modest success in certain areas over the past three years, it is largely the result of their hard work and dedication.

As I look back over the past three years, I take greatest pride in the following accomplishments.

First, through persistent focus, we have made significant steps in upgrading the musicality of our tefilah. The quality of our tefilah is central to our *raison d'être*. In order to keep our services fresh, we need to train new service leaders and Torah readers. We will need to commit additional resources, both time and money, to this effort, whether it be for additional classes with Joey Weisenberg (or a similar musician), hiring a suitable cantorial intern, or, ultimately, appointing a music director. The principal obstacle to doing even more in this area is funding.

Second, we have expanded programming considerably, both in volume and variety. Our programming is varied because we are a diverse community. I am particularly proud of the Friday night programming that we have put in place, including our successful Shabbatonim. The Family and Friends Friday night dinners that we recently started are key to our ability to attract and retain younger members, which is critical for our long-term viability. As we struggle with the need to control our budget, we will face new challenges to our ability to continue this level of programming. Again, the answer is we need more funding.

Third, over the past three years, we have undertaken a number of projects that may not be obvious to all. We have hired a new executive director and a new comptrol-

ler. We have purchased a new portable ark for use on the High Holy Days and for children's services in the library. We are updating the layout of the library so that we can use that space more effectively for youth and other alternative minyanim. We have upgraded our accounting system, and we are in the process of improving our website, including making it possible for payments to be made on-line with credit cards. We face a number of very significant capital projects as our building begins to age. These capital projects include repairing and improving the lighting in the sanctuary and possible external facade work required to comply with Local Law 11. We will need to commit significant resources to these capital projects and will need a capital campaign to accomplish them.

Fourth, we have a number of new members, and we continue to bring on to the Board new trustees and appoint new officers. This is all part of a generational change that we, as all institutions, must undergo. I have heard repeatedly the statement that there is an "in" group that runs Or Zarua. Those of us who hold leadership positions and have served on the nominating committee find that assertion to be far from the truth. We are constantly looking for new leaders, who are interested in participating actively in a collegial manner in addressing the challenges facing our community. Not everyone can serve as a trustee or an officer, certainly not at the same time, but if you are interested in doing so, you should let one of the officers know.

Now, let me say a few words about the main challenge facing us this year. You have all received my letter and the Rabbi's letter concerning his retirement on July 1, 2012. As one could anticipate, this announcement has caused some concern, indeed, anxiety, among some in our community. That is to be expected, especially with the retirement of a founding rabbi. As I tried to make clear in my letter, we have a plan to address this transition in an orderly fashion, and our search committee will begin work soon. Despite what I said in my letter, some in the community have already expressed their anxiety by misconstruing my intent. We will have an appropriately transparent process, consistent

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# The Arab Spring: What Does It Mean to Israel?

Herb Keinon, *Jerusalem Post* diplomatic correspondent, speaks on Yom Ha'atzmaut, Monday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.

**H**erb Keinon, diplomatic correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post*, will speak on "The Arab Spring: What Does It Mean to Israel?" at Congregation Or Zarua on Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, Monday, May 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Keinon has been at the *Jerusalem Post* for the last 20 years. During this time he has covered a wide variety of different beats, including Jerusalem, immigration and absorption, religious parties, haredim, and the settlements. He has also been a features writer and weekly columnist at the paper. Mr. Keinon took over the diplomatic beat in August 2000, just after the failed Camp David summit, and just before the start of the current violence.

Mr. Keinon is responsible for covering the prime minister and the foreign minister, and often travels with the prime minister on his trips abroad. As such, Mr. Keinon has up-close knowledge and an intimate perspective of the current confrontation and



**Herb Keinon, diplomatic correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post*, will give the Yom Ha'atzmaut lecture at Or Zarua.**

the various diplomatic attempts at solving it.

In addition, Mr. Keinon appears frequently on a variety of radio and television programs in the U.S., Canada, and Europe as a guest commentator on the situation in Israel. He has also lectured widely both in the U.S. and in Israel on the subject.

Originally from Denver, Mr. Keinon has a B.A. in political science from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and an M.A. in journalism from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. He has lived in Israel for 25 years, is married with four children, and lives in Ma'ale Adumim, just outside of Jerusalem.

A reception with Israeli food will follow Mr. Keinon's presentation. He will also be signing copies of his book, *Lone Soldiers: Israel's Defenders from Around the World*, which be available that night and in advance from the Or Zarua office for \$28. Please help the Program Committee with planning by contacting the office at 212-452-2310, ext. 39 with your reservations.

## President's Message

*continued from page 2*

with the Rabbinical Assembly's recommended best practices. You all will be kept informed, and you all will have an opportunity to participate, through Town Hall meetings and other processes.

As we work on this challenging task, we must exercise the discipline to avoid taking actions that could be divisive. We all know of communities that have failed to meet the challenge of selecting a rabbi in a cohesive and productive manner. Our community, as any diverse community, has and will have differing views on everything that we do. But, it is incumbent on all of us, especially our leaders, to work to ensure that our discourse remains civil and that together we achieve that which we all surely desire—the continuation of a community embodying those attributes on which we were founded 22 years ago. I hope and am confident that, with the requisite discipline and good will, we as a community will succeed in this effort.

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## HEBREW SCHOOL CALENDAR

## May 2011

- Sun 1** Yom Hashoah/Holocaust Memorial Day, 7:30 p.m.
- Sat 14** Junior Congregation, 10:30 a.m.
- Mon 16** B'nai Jeshurun
- Mon 25** Last day of school

## June 2011

- Sat 4** Junior Congregation, 10:30 a.m.

## SPONSORS NEEDED FOR OZ PROGRAMS

## Shavuot Ice Cream Sundaes and Cheesecake

Full Sponsorship: \$600

## Israel Independence Day Food

Full Sponsorship: \$1,000

## Tar Beach Picnic before the Annual Meeting

Full Sponsorship: \$2,000

If you wish to sponsor one of these popular programs, either in part or in full, please contact the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, extension 14 or Sara Stone at 212-628-0129.

## Hebrew and Jewish Studies

For post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students

Starting this coming fall (5772), Or Zarua will be offering a class for post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students who are looking to continue their Jewish education while developing social relationships with like-minded kids. The class will offer the students two major opportunities. The first will be an environment to advance their ability to use conversational Hebrew in the form of an Ulpan. The second will be the chance to build upon their knowl-

edge of Torah or Talmud.

The class will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Mondays. After a pizza dinner at 6:00 p.m., a 45-minute Ulpan, to be taught by Ilana Burgess, will encourage students to hone their Hebrew skills and speak the language as it is used daily in Israeli life. Students will then engage in the study of Torah or Talmud for 45 minutes. For further information, please contact Ilana Burgess at 212-452-2310, extension 15, or email [iburgess@orzarua.org](mailto:iburgess@orzarua.org).

## The Social Network and the Internet: Friend or Foe?

Tikkun Leyl Shavuot, Tuesday night, June 7

Rev Shavuot will begin at Or Zarua with Minhah/Ma'ariv services on Tuesday, June 7 at 8:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Following the service, a panel of Or Zarua members, led by Rabbi Wechsler, will discuss "The Social Network and the Internet: Friend or Foe?" in the Or Zarua library. It is planned that the panel will address such topics as cyberbullying,

privacy and other issues involving the social network.

After the panel discussion, everyone is invited to the social hall where a feast of ice cream sundaes and cheesecake will be served in keeping with the tradition of eating dairy on Shavuot.

A brief discussion of some traditions on Shavuot can be found in the box below.

## Blintzes and Branches on Shavuot

## Why is it customary to eat dairy foods on the first day of Shavuot?

Among the many explanations is that the custom derives from a verse in the Song of Songs, "Honey and milk shall be under your tongue...." This is considered a reference to the sweet and nourishing Torah, which we received on Shavuot. A practical explanation is that the Israelites at Sinai, having just received the Torah, realized that any meat they had already prepared was not kosher, so they had to eat whatever dairy foods they had on hand. A symbolic explanation is that consumption of meat represents indulgence while consumption of dairy foods represents restraint, and the Torah is more accessible to those who exercise restraint and self-control.

## Why is it customary to decorate the synagogue with foliage on Shavuot?

In addition to its association with receiving the Torah, Shavuot is an agricultural festival—the beginning of the wheat harvest (and the end of the counting of the omer) and the beginning of the fruit harvest. The Torah itself refers to the holiday in terms of the first fruits that grow in the Land of Israel. During Temple times, Shavuot was a pilgrimage festival, and bikkurim—first fruits—were brought to the Temple as offerings. Bringing the fields into the synagogue recalls these ancient customs.

# Aging and the Persistence of Mind

A presentation by Jonathan Canick, Ph.D., Tuesday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.

**S**teep mental decline is neither inevitable nor a normal part of aging. Cognitive function generally persists in normal and successful aging, and in some areas actually increases. Myths about cognition and aging abound despite a revolution in our understanding of aging and those living long. Biases about the nature of aging result in pathological, potentially treatable, conditions going undiagnosed. By contrast, there are many benefits to the aging mind. And it is possible to promote those conditions that favor neurogenesis—the brain's capacity to generate new brain cells throughout the lifespan.

Jonathan Canick, Ph.D., will discuss "Aging and the Persistence of Mind," at

Congregation Or Zarua on Tuesday, June 14 at 7:30 p.m., Light refreshments will be served after the discussion.

Dr. Canick is a licensed psychologist and neuropsychologist at California Pacific Medical Center and assistant clinical professor at the University of California Medical Center, San Francisco. For over 25 years, he's provided evaluation and treatment of cognitive disorders, memory decline and dementia. He trains residents in both internal medicine and psychiatry regarding cognition and aging.

In addition to co-authoring several scientific articles, Dr. Canick has been mentioned in *The New York Times*, *O Magazine*, *USA Today*, and a book on memory and aging entitled *Carved in Sand*.



**Dr. Jonathan Canick, psychologist and neuropsychologist**

He integrates his knowledge of the brain and mind in his evaluations and treatments of individuals and their families who have suffered a head injury, stroke, dementia, or brain tumor, helping them manage their changing lives.

Dr. Canick also practices psychotherapy in San Francisco.

# Seeing the World Through the Eyes of a Child

A review of "Through the Window: Enchanted Places and Magical Spaces" by Madeline Austin

**S**ome people are blessed with a gift for making meaning and true beauty out of their memories and, above all, never letting go of their childhood fantasies.

Artists like Caroline Golden, remind us that we can recapture the wonder of our youth and live in those stories and pictures through our imagination and art.

On Monday, January 31, Ms. Golden came to speak to Congregation Or Zarua, and the 7th grade of the Hebrew School about her art collage collection, "Through the Window: Enchanted Places and Magical Spaces," on display in the social hall. She shared stories of when she was a young girl, and expressed the thrill she derived from fairy tales of all kinds. Ms. Golden shared a Jewish fairy tale with us, based on the very well-known story, Cinderella. She recalled that even as a child, she preferred to be on the outside looking in, assuming the role of an observer rather than the stunning princess, "almost as though I were peeking out from behind the bushes."

After all these years, it is evident that she still feels the same enjoyment from fairy tales and relishes stories just as much as she did when she was a child. Her collages bring this enthusiasm to life for her audience and offer them a "peek"



**A collage by Madeline Austin**

into another world. Look deeper, and Ms. Golden's art offers even more, for there is also melancholy in many pieces. Being young is a rare, beautiful moment in life that sadly does not last forever. I am learning that if you completely let go of this cherished time, some of these magical moments will be gone forever. Ms. Golden reminds us not to let go completely and to find ways to weave the past into the present.

To me, collages are like any person's life. Every little detail is there, layered upon another, overlapping but never completely obscuring or covering something that came before. Every one views these extraordinary collages in a different way, just like everyone has an individual perspective and way that he or she sees the world. But few possess a unique insight like Ms. Golden, who can see the world through the eyes of a child and make it a world we wish to recapture.

*Madeline Austin is in seventh grade and attends the OZ Hebrew School.*



# Hesed Events and Programs

"The world exists for the sake of kindness." —Rashi

● Or Zarua feeds formerly homeless men and women at NCS's East 81 Street Residence on Mondays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to commit to one Monday a month to serve pizza, soda, salad and good cheer.

● Visit and cheer up ill or homebound Or Zarua congregants.

● Jewish children come from across the U.S. and around the world to undergo

serious medical treatment at New York City hospitals. Many reside with their families at Ronald McDonald House and often have no local support system of friends or relatives. The Chaplin at Ronald McDonald House alerts us when OZ may be of service to families who may require kosher meals, synagogue services and other assistance.

● "Green Thumbs" are needed from spring through fall to help care for The Ronald McDonald House's 7th Floor

Terrace Butterfly Garden.

● Donations needed for the Hesed Fund! Please consider making a donation to cover the \$180 cost per week of Monday evening dinners for the residents of the Neighborhood Coalition for the Homeless Shelter Residence.

To participate in any of these Hesed programs, please contact Richard Stadin at [stadin1@aol.com](mailto:stadin1@aol.com) or 212-879-0448.

## Celebrate Israel Parade

Sunday, June 5, 2011



Participate with Congregation Or Zarua, like these enthusiastic members marching in the 2010 Salute to Israel Parade on a sunny day last spring. This year's parade takes place on Sunday, June 5 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. along Fifth Avenue, starting at 57th Street and ending at 74th Street. Details regarding the step-off time for the OZ contingent will be available soon.



# Bagels, Babka and Balabustas

New Menu Item in the Or Zarua Gallery, opening Thursday, May 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Leave it to the Jews to put the “Ess!” in U.S.A! Could it be otherwise? Are we not the people whose observance of a major festival is called Chag Ha’matzot? Do some not jokingly recall our history in these three simple phrases: “They tried to conquer us. We won. LET’S EAT!” In many ways we are what we eat, and cook, and celebrate.

This loving—some might say reverential—relationship between Jews and food is the impulse behind the new exhibit opening in the Or Zarua social hall on Thursday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m. Special guest Rabbi Michael Strassfeld of SAJ will speak at 7:00 p.m. “Bagels, Babka and Balabustas: 100 Years of Jews and Food in America” is a colorful and vivid display of Jewish food signs, advertisements, food products, vintage cookbooks and cooking tools. It pays tribute to the rich blending of America and Jewish food and to the devoted homemakers—the balabustas—who have prepared and preserved these foods for generations.

As exhibit curator Bobbi Coller notes, the exhibit begins at the turn of the 20th century, the period of peak Jewish immigration to America. Most of the Jews who came to these shores followed traditional foodways. But as time passed and the impulse to assimilate and adapt to new American and ethnic foods grew, many of those traditions were relaxed. But they were never completely forgotten. How Jews adapted and conserved traditional foodways is a major part of the story. The exhibition traces how tradition was blended with modernity, or how it adapted and sur-

vived and thrived. One hundred years later, the fastest-growing segment of the American food industry today is kosher food—healthy and nutritious! Today’s balabusta is more than likely to be an observant, health-conscious calorie-buster! (He might even be a man!)

“Bagels, Babka and Balabustas” is based on the collection of Rabbi Michael Strassfeld, supplemented by cherished cookbooks and kitchen utensils owned by

Jewish cookbooks, and current trends in kosher foods.

This new exhibit will be on display at Or Zarua into the fall. In the meantime, recent Or Zarua Gallery shows are going on the road. “From Yankel to Yankee” is slated for SAJ on Manhattan’s West Side and the recent “From Jaffa to Java,” the celebration of Israeli foods and wine, products and technology, is being exhibited at Temple Beth El in Fairfield, Connecticut.



The denizens of Katz's Delicatessen on the Lower East Side in 1932.

Or Zarua congregants. Panels in the exhibition will cover the Americanization of eating, kosher wines, Passover food, delicatessens and Jewish eateries, Jewish foods that entered mainstream America,

Or Zarua congregants and friends are not the only ones tasting our exhibitions. Our neighborhood and regional friends are also now able to feast on the fruits of Or Zarua.

—GERRY SOLOMON

## PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 18, 8:15 a.m. in the Or Zarua Library

The Program Committee of Congregation Or Zarua is looking for new members. We need the creative input from congregants who can be instrumental in advancing and enhancing the variety of programs that Or Zarua offers. If you are interested in helping out, please attend the next meeting of the Or Zarua Program Committee, which is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18 at 8:15 a.m. in the Or Zarua Library. If you are unable to attend on that day or that time, please contact the Or Zarua office.

## KOSHER DELIS IN NEW YORK

by The Kosher Konnoisseur

Savor Louis Barash's critique of four traditional kosher delicatessens still serving in New York—2nd Avenue Deli, Fine and Schapiro, Ben's Kosher Deli, and Mendy's—on page 16.

# Learning to Read Torah at Or Zarua

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after services one day last fall to ask if I would be interested in joining his Torah class. My initial reaction was to decline—we have two small boys at home and the thought of consistently getting out of the apartment weekly seemed unfathomable. In fact, it is something I haven't done in over six years. Further, eating at home together as a family is very important to us and ten weeks at a class seemed like a long break in our routine.

Nevertheless, I thought it over, consulted with my wife, Anna, and thought: Not now, when?

So I contacted Mark and told him I would be interested in the class. And, as they say, the rest is history.

The class started on Thursdays at 8:30 p.m., late enough so that I was still able to dine with my family. (The one night I needed to watch the kids, we met earlier, my boys made a guest appearance at the class, and they still got to bed on time.) The class was an intellectual indulgence and wholly-satisfying on many levels. Not only did I leave the class able to sight read the trope and with the ability to prepare a reading sans tape, the class delved into arcane grammatical minutiae that has given me a new-found appreciation of the Hebrew language. I cannot look at the Shema or any other prayer that still retains the trope without hearing the proper cantillation in my mind.

I am privileged to belong to a shul where such evening study is possible and am grateful to Mark for giving his time—and to my fellow students for helping us reach the critical mass needed to make such a class possible. As I was let in the door the last few sessions by the Purim Spielers, who were busy rehearsing for their big performance, I was reminded each time by the diversity and breadth of the offerings by our shul.

I look forward to our “graduation” reading on the last day of Pesah. If you miss it, we will be giving a reprise on the second day of Shavuot.

## Sharon R. Seiler

**A**lthough I grew up in the Conservative movement, I celebrated my Bat Mitzvah in an era when girls and women were not counted in a minyan, were not called for aliyot and, most certainly, did not read from Torah. For my Bat Mitzvah, I read the Haftarah at a late Friday night service that seems to have existed almost entirely as a vehicle for Bat Mitzvahs. By the time that the Conservative movement decided that women should, in fact, be counted in minyanim, be called for aliyot and read from Torah, my formal Jewish education had ended, and, although, I suppose, I could have found an opportunity to learn to read Torah, I didn't. I enjoy the Torah reading at Or Zarua, and I like the idea that the Torah is read by congregants, but, initially, it didn't occur to me that I, myself, could or should read Torah. In the last year or two, my daughter and her friends celebrated their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs; virtually all read Torah (even the girls whose families belong to Orthodox congregations). It dawned on me that, if twelve and thirteen year olds could read Torah, probably I could, too. Then, with Or Zarua calling for more Torah readers, it dawned on me, that, since I am in shul virtually every Shabbat, probably, I should read Torah (as my father did and as one of my sisters does). I have neither a great ear nor a great voice, and a teacher less patient than Mark Somerstein might have dissuaded me, but he and I and my classmates have persevered, and I hope to become, over time, a frequent reader of Torah at Or Zarua.

## Lynda Wertheim

**T**he total number of letters in the Torah is 304,805. Thanks to Mark Somerstein, I am fortunate to have learned how to chant the words which comprise 231 of that total.

I am not quite sure why I decided to take Mark's Torah reading class. As a former yeshiva student, I was very comfort-

able following the Torah reading in synagogue and listening to others read from the Torah. Having grown up in an Orthodox family, I did not have the opportunity to have a Bat Mitzvah and Torah study was simply part of my daily class schedule in school.

Maybe I decided to take the class because it was being held at a convenient time in the evening or maybe because I have always dreamed of being able to chant parashat Lekh-Lekha, the first parashah I learned in yeshiva. Or maybe I chose to take the course because of an encounter I had with a female scribe who was writing a Torah at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco.

I approached Mark's class knowing I had a strong command of Hebrew and no command of music or singing. As an accomplished Moreh, Mark knew how to introduce the elements of the course to a group of aspiring Torah readers with varied abilities. I left the first class with a sense of confidence that at least I could pronounce the words with no difficulty and the first notes sounded melodious to my unsophisticated ear. The second class left me a little less enthusiastic because my ears could not adjust to the sounds of the next series of musical notes. With the help of some Torah reading internet sites and Mark's encouraging pedagogical style, I am now able to read from the Torah. I have come to feel more comfortable with the melodies which previously were “unmelodious” to my ears and have adopted two series of tones as my “personal favorites.”

While I am far from joining the ranks of the Olympic Torah readers at OZ, I am proud that I can stand at the bimah, “yad” in my hand and chant the first aliyah in the Torah reading for last day Pesah and last day of Shavuot.

Who knows, reading the first aliyah in parashat Lekh-Lekha may yet be in my future.

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# The Or Zarua Crafts Club

A retrospective of the past year

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## William Zaientz

I first learned to read Torah when I became Bar Mitzvah, reading one aliyah. I read a few more times in high school, but in the subsequent decade had stopped, and forgotten much of what I had learned. This past year, I was looking for ways to get more involved with the shul, and thought about learning to read again. On Simhat Torah, "bidding" on the verses of Atah Hareitah, I made the promise that this year I would learn, and I signed up for Mark's class shortly thereafter.

It is interesting coming back to reading Torah after being away from it for so long. Some skills came back easily, and some I don't even remember learning. In approaching Torah reading as an adult, there was much more that I was able to understand and appreciate. Chief among these is the structure that trope, the cantillation marks that set the melody, adds to the verses of Torah. More than being just musical notes, the trope serves as a sort of punctuation for the verse, leading to connections between some words, and separation between others. Understanding this has made me much more sensitive to the meaning of many verses. It is also amazing that the basic principles learned in this class will allow me to read any part of the Torah.

I am really glad that I had made the decision to learn to read Torah again. I would like to thank our teacher, Mark Somerstein, who is extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of reading Torah and is able to convey them in a very accessible way. I would also like to thank the other students in the class who were supportive as we tackled this together. I know that I have only scratched the surface with my learning; I look forward to continuing to learn more. I am proud that the promise I made on Simhat Torah will be fulfilled by Passover.

This past year, the Or Zarua Crafts Club expanded the scope of the Sunday morning group's programming. In January we held one of our meetings at the Annie & Co. Knitting Shop. There we received guidance and enjoyed conviviality while knitting blanket squares at the shop's large wooden table.

In February, Or Zarua hosted fiber artist Heather Stoltz. Her wonderful workshop, "Translating Text to Textile" explored Jewish holiday themes for inspiration. Participants quilted individual squares

displaying montages of holiday concepts in fabric. The final part of that project is to assemble those squares into a wall hanging. The completed wall hanging will be donated to Jewish Board of Children and Family Services (JBFCFS) group homes.

On Sunday, April 3, our small but lively group scheduled a home meeting in the tradition of knitting or sewing circles of the past. The purpose of these circles is to share hand-crafted art and cherished family textiles which have been either acquired from or made by our mothers, sisters or grandmothers. This past tradition has recently experienced a revival.

Next year's programming for the Crafts Club will continue with occasional ventures from our Sunday morning meetings in the OZ Library and will expand the frame of reference in terms of knitting and other textiles and our community service. We hope to schedule a special viewing of

the newly restored Chagall Wall Hangings at Lincoln Center with a docent in order to appreciate anew the majesty of both their art and fabrication.

We also want to continue encouraging interested youngsters to join us, either independently or with their mothers or friends. By building on the successful start with this initiative at Annie's this year, it is hoped that we can pass our experiences with this craft on to future generations.

We invite the OZ community at large to be collateral members of the Crafts Club

by knitting squares and baby blankets at home. Such pieces can be included with our contribution to the Jewish Board's Sanctuary Stitchery Project. The simple instructions for the project squares are listed below and



**Heather Stoltz**  
*Miriam and the Israelites rejoicing  
in song after crossing the Reed Sea*  
approximately 35" x 45"

there will be a designated drop-off at Or Zarua for all contributions. You may also participate in sewing the squares together.

The JBFCFS Sanctuary Blanket Project instructions are as follows: The squares need to be 7" x 9" and can be knitted or crocheted with washable worsted weight wool. All knitting should be tightly woven. Note that the patterns call for 7" knitting needles, but some yarns require 8" needles. More information on patterns and other details can be found at [www.sanctuarystitchers.org](http://www.sanctuarystitchers.org).

The next meetings of the OZ Crafts Club are Sundays, May 22 and June 12 at 10:15 a.m.

—TERRY EDELSTEIN



127 East 82nd Street  
New York, NY 10028 • 212-452-2310

May 2011 • Nisan/Iyar 5771

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1 • 27 Nisan</b> 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:00 am Ashley Adult Education Course 7:30 pm Yom Hashoah Service	<b>2 • 28</b> <b>Yom Hashoah</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>3 • 229</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>4 • 30</b> <b>Rosh Hodesh Iyar I</b> 7:00 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	<b>5 • 1 Iyar</b> <b>Rosh Hodesh Iyar II</b> 7:00 am Minyan 6:00 pm Party in the Garden at JTS	<b>6 • 2</b> 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:38 pm Candlelighting	<b>7 • 3</b> 9:00 am Shaharit Emor Bat Mitzvah of Yael Rayport
<b>8 • 4</b> <b>Mother's Day</b> 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	<b>9 • 5</b> <b>Yom Hazikaron</b> 7:15 am Minyan <b>Yom Ha'atzmaut</b> 7:30 pm Herb Keinon on "The Arab Spring: What Does It Mean to Israel?"	<b>10 • 6</b> <b>Yom Ha'atzmaut</b> 7:00 am Minyan	<b>11 • 7</b> 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	<b>12 • 8</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>13 • 9</b> 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:45 pm Candlelighting	<b>14 • 10</b> 9:00 am Shaharit Behar 10:30 am Junior Congregation
<b>15 • 11</b> 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:00 am Ashley Adult Education Course	<b>16 • 12</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>17 • 13</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>18 • 14</b> 7:15 am Minyan 8:15 am Program Committee Meeting 8:00 pm Talmud Class	<b>19 • 15</b> 7:15 am Minyan 6:00 pm OZ Gallery Opening: "Bagels, Babka and Balabustas"	<b>20 • 16</b> 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:52 pm Candlelighting	<b>21 • 17</b> 9:00 am Shaharit Behukotai Bat Mitzvah of Alexis Kushner
<b>22 • 18</b> <b>Lag B'Omer</b> 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:00 am Ashley Adult Education Course 10:15 am Crafts Club	<b>23 • 19</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>24 • 20</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>25 • 21</b> 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Rooftop Picnic 8:15 pm Annual Meeting <i>Last day of Hebrew School</i>	<b>26 • 22</b> 7:15 am Minyan	<b>27 • 23</b> 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:58 pm Candlelighting	<b>28 • 24</b> 9:00 am Shaharit Bemidbar
<b>29 • 25</b> 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	<b>30 • 26</b> <b>Memorial Day</b> 7:15 am Minyan <i>Office closed</i>	<b>31 • 27</b> 7:15 am Minyan				





127 East 82nd Street  
New York, NY 10028 • 212-452-2310

June 2011 • Iyar/Sivan 5771

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 • 28 Iyar <b>Yom Yerushalayim</b> 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class (final session)	2 • 29 7:15 am Minyan	3 • 1 Sivan <b>Rosh Hodesh Sivan</b> 7:00 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:04 pm Candlelighting	4 • 2 9:00 am Shaharit Naso 10:30 am Junior Congregation/Teen-led Services
5 • 3 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 11:00 am Celebrate Israel Parade	6 • 4 7:15 am Minyan	7 • 5 <b>Erev Shavuot</b> 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv and Tikkun Leyl Shavuot 8:06 pm Candlelighting	8 • 6 <b>Shavuot: First Day</b> 9:00 am Shaharit 8:00 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv	9 • 7 <b>Shavuot: Second Day</b> 8:45 am Shaharit Yizkor	10 • 8 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:08 pm Candlelighting	11 • 9 9:00 am Shaharit Beha'alotekha Bat Mitzvah of Isabella Negrin
12 • 10 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:15 am Crafts Club 7:30 pm Book Discussion	13 • 11 7:15 am Minyan	14 • 12 7:15 am Minyan 7:30 pm Jonathan Canick lecture on "Aging and the Persistence of Mind"	15 • 13 7:15 am Minyan	16 • 14 7:15 am Minyan	17 • 15 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:11 pm Candlelighting	18 • 16 9:00 am Shaharit Shelah
19 • 17 <b>Father's Day</b> 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	20 • 18 7:15 am Minyan	21 • 19 7:15 am Minyan	22 • 20 7:15 am Minyan	23 • 21 7:15 am Minyan Bat Mitzvah of Madeline Austin	24 • 22 7:00 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:13 pm Candlelighting	25 • 23 9:00 am Shaharit Korah
26 • 24 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	27 • 25 7:15 am Minyan	28 • 26 7:15 am Minyan	29 • 27 7:15 am Minyan	30 • 28 7:15 am Minyan		

# The Kosher Konnoisseur

by Louis Barash

Four New York Delis:

2nd Avenue Deli, Fine and Schapiro,  
Ben's Kosher Deli, and Mendy's

It is subject to fair argument whether New York has the best restaurants in the world. While its supporters might ardently claim that title, international reviewers seem to favor Paris and Tokyo. But it is almost beyond reasonable debate that any city in the world comes close to New York in terms of the breadth of its fine cuisine. Asian and Continental cooking dominate in Paris and Tokyo, but New York has excellent examples of those, plus countless other cuisines. As befits the largest city in the melting pot of the world, one can find outstanding examples of fine cuisine from the four corners of the globe.

Over the last quarter century, that picture of New York dining has been mirrored in its kosher restaurants. Many new establishments have opened, representing a broad range of cultures. Visitors from abroad are astounded by the range of quality kosher fare in New York. From sushi to spaghetti, pongal to pistou, one can find it featured on the menu of a kosher establishment. The range and quality clearly exceed any city in the world, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In this cornucopia of fine cuisine, what more could the kosher diner conceivably ask?

Well, how about a pastrami sandwich? Or a potato knish? A kosher hot dog? In case you hadn't noticed, the ubiquitous corner kosher deli is neither ubiquitous nor on the corner any more. If you desire traditional kosher deli, you're going to have to search for it.

The reasons for this decline (and the virtual extinction of traditional kosher dairy with the demise of restaurants like Ratner's and Famous) are not completely clear. Certainly, dining trends have changed, and a desire for greater variety and the cuisines of other cultures must be a part of it. And the kosher deli menu is a high fat, high cholesterol smorgasbord not exactly in tune with modern dietary recommendations. Yet the non-kosher version of the traditional delicatessen is thriving, with

two iconic establishments, Carnegie and Stage, constantly crowded despite being just two blocks apart. Tourists flock to these famed citadels of Jewish food, certainly unaware that their progenitors—kosher delis—verge on extinction.

Kosher delis do not have that long a history. They are a New York phenomenon, first sprouting up with the huge immigration, starting in about 1880, of Jews into a then very German city. Yiddish-speaking Jews from Romania, Lithuania and Bessarabia discovered a city filled with German delicatessens: retail shops with a variety of foods including smoked German meats and fishes, wieners, wursts, her-rings, pickles and sauerkraut. In German, "delicatessen" means eating ("essen") delicacies; it has the same meaning in Yiddish, and not surprisingly kosher versions of the delicatessen were established for the growing Jewish population. Originally retail shops where one might also get a sandwich to go, some of the more successful ones, like Volks on Delancey Street, expanded into full fledged restaurants. The best and most famous (like Katz's, still open but no longer kosher) grew into gastronomic palaces.

Walking into a real delicatessen, one is immediately in a uniquely ethnic world, yet on familiar turf. Salamis hang from the ceiling. A long glass counter displays a variety of smoked meats and salads and often smoked fish. Behind the counter are huge jars of pickles and peppers. Somewhere a grill is heating hot dogs and knishes. Further into the establishment is a dining area, and by the time you arrive at your seat the scents of garlic and steamy meat have surely whetted your appetite. The waitstaff is almost always surly, but your food will come quickly. In addition to what's on display up front, one can usually order a variety of soups, Eastern European delicacies like stuffed cabbage and stuffed derma, and full meals (including sides of impossibly overcooked green vegetables). There's no need for a wine list, everyone is drinking Dr. Brown's.

Those delis are an ever dwindling number. For those who, like this diner, some-

times have a yen for a good pastrami sandwich, here is a rundown on some of the few kosher delicatessens left in Manhattan.

## 2nd Avenue Deli

162 East 33rd Street, 212-689-9000  
www.2ndavedeli.com

(Kosher certified, open on Shabbat)

Things are so bad for kosher delis that this famous establishment isn't even on Second Avenue. It's new, smaller location, tucked away on a side street in Kips Bay, still has the trappings of a traditional deli, including the hanging salamis in the front window. (An outpost on the Upper East Side is scheduled to open this year.) The food at 2nd Avenue is marvelous. Pastrami is warm, moist, salty, spicy and delicious, served on excellent rye bread. The rye also hosts terrific corned beef and beef brisket. Round (baked) knishes are meals in themselves: the potato version almost a puff pastry with a creamy potato filling, the kasha version nutty with groats. Mushroom and barley soup is well seasoned and fresh, and the chicken soup, with a fair heaping of dill (and perhaps a little too much salt) comes with a choice of sublimely light matzoh balls and perfectly meaty pierogen (don't agonize: ask for one of each). A perfectly good kosher hot dog is available as are square (fried) knishes. The cole slaw is more of a health salad than a traditional deli slaw. The stuffed cabbage, in the Romanian sweet and sour style, had far too much sugar, but that is one of the few criticisms. Prices are a little higher than the others, a pastrami sandwich is \$14.50, but overstuffed with meat and more than one person can likely finish.

## Fine and Schapiro

138 West 72nd Street, 212-877-2721  
www.fineandschapiro.com.

(Kosher certified, open on Shabbat)

In business since 1927, one can believe that not much has changed in that time. The pastrami and all of the other meats are still wonderful, available on very good rye and club roll, with excellent sour pickles. Hot dogs and knishes are all very good, potato salad and cole slaw are traditional deli recipe, and while not a deli stan-



dard, the french fried potatoes are excellent. Mushroom and barley soup is flavorful, and the pierogen in chicken soup are outstanding, as are the fried pierogen, a delicacy infrequently found these days. (If you've never had fried pierogen, you might find a picture in a dictionary, accompanying the definition of cholesterol.) The matzoh balls are quite good, not as feathery light as 2nd Avenue, for that reason they will more likely remind you of those your grandmother made. Chicken or Flanken in the Pot is a Fine and Schapiro standout, a full meal for two with soup, boiled chicken or rich, fleshy flanken, matzoh balls and vegetables. Stuffed cabbage, stuffed derma, kasha varnishkas and egg barley with mushrooms are often outstanding, but it is best to ask when they were prepared, they sometimes sit for a few days and are not quite as tasty then. While dessert is usually more than I want when eating at a deli, the apple strudel here is tasty, the filling sweet with apples and cinnamon, the crust heavy, not really flaky, in the old world style. Prices are reasonable, the pastrami sandwich is \$10.50, but it is not nearly as overstuffed as at 2nd Avenue.

#### **Ben's Kosher Deli**

209 W. 38th Street, 212-398-2367  
(and other locations outside of Manhattan)  
[www.bensdeli.net](http://www.bensdeli.net)  
(Kosher certified, open on Shabbat)

Ben's doesn't have the history of the others. Opened on Long Island in the early 1970s, the Manhattan outpost, an enormous, high ceiling expanse, is more recent. Ben's art deco-inspired room is packed at lunch with "rag dealers" from the nearby garment district; at dinner the cavernous, almost empty space feels like late innings at a Mets game. No matter the crowd, the food is quite good.

Pastrami, corned beef and brisket are thick cut and tasty, served on quality rye bread. The round potato knish certainly meets the definition: about the size of a softball, the potato filling is tasty and the perfect texture. The cole slaw is somewhat unique, neither a creamy deli style, nor a vinegary health slaw, simply fresh shredded, lightly dressed cabbage and carrots that is surprisingly addictive. The matzo balls are okay, light but not very flavorful, but distinctly better than the pierogen, a tasteless meat filling in thick, doughy shell. But the chicken soup in which they come is

tasty and delicious and the delicate noodles remind me of the homemade ones I grew up with (don't agonize: skip the matzoh ball and the pierogen, ask for extra noodles). Stuffed cabbage is well seasoned and the cabbage not overcooked as so many versions of this dish can be. Kasha Varnishkas are an excellent accompaniment or appetizer. Prices are very reasonable, the pastrami sandwich is \$10.50 and sides and appetizers very fairly priced.

#### **Mendy's**

61 East 34th Street, 212-576-1010  
(and other locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn), [www.mendysdeli.com](http://www.mendysdeli.com)  
(Kosher certified, closed on Shabbat)

Mendy's barely qualifies for this list; only its 34th Street location is a true eat-in deli, the rest—in the Park Avenue Atrium, Rockefeller Center concourse and Grand Central Station (where there is also a Dairy Mendy's)—are essentially fast food places with extremely limited seating. Although lacking the deli experience, one stretches to include it because it appears to be the only kosher delicatessen in Manhattan that is closed on Shabbat. Unfortunately, the quality of the food does not match its seven-day-a-week competition. The soups are very good, as are the knishes. The sandwiches—pastrami, corned beef and brisket—are okay, certainly as good or better than what passes for those treats outside of New York City, but not nearly as flavorful or as warm as they should be. The stuffed cabbage, one of the limited specials, isn't very special. One of the soups and a half sandwich make a perfectly pleasant, and reasonably priced, lunch. But the truth is that if time travelers from the heyday of the New York delicatessen were to visit, they would surely say, "You call this a deli?"

The sidewalk in front of the original 2nd Avenue Deli featured a tribute to the stars of the New York Yiddish theatre, a Lower East Side parallel to Grauman's Chinese. The sidewalk plaques remain, now incongruously the welcome mat to a Chase bank branch. It is sad to think that the kosher deli could go the way of the Yiddish theatre and its stars. The good news is that, at least for now, there is still excellent pastrami to be found in New York. It seems timely to recommend getting it while it is hot.

*continued on page 15*

## **RABBI WECHSLER TEACHES ON SIRIUS XM RADIO**

**Sundays at 3 a.m., 5 a.m.  
7 a.m. and 11 a.m.**



Rabbi Wechsler can now be heard on SIRIUS XM Stars Radio four times each Sunday. Subscribers to SIRIUS Radio can access the program, "Rabbi Wechsler Teaches," on Channel 102, and XM Radio subscribers can tune in to Channel 155. Non-subscribers to SIRIUS Radio can obtain a free, three-day trial at [www.sirius.com](http://www.sirius.com).

## **22ND ANNUAL MEETING, PICNIC DINNER AND MUSIC**

**Wednesday, May 25**

Congregation Or Zarua's 22nd Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 25 will begin at 7:00 p.m. with a festive picnic on the roof of our synagogue and a performance by the Or Zarua Klezmer Band. The business meeting at 8:30 p.m. will include reports from Rabbi Harlan J. Wechsler, President Andrew Frackman and Treasurer Alan Nadel, as well as the election of officers and members of the Board of Trustees.

Please make dinner reservations on [www.orzarua.org](http://www.orzarua.org) or by calling the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, extension 39.

# Do You Believe In Miracles? *Between Divine Providence and Intervention*

An Adult Education Course on Three Sundays Between Pesah and Shavuot by Marc Ashley

An appreciation of miracles lies at the heart of notions of religious belief and conceptions of truth and reason. Our understanding of how God may operate within history or beyond nature can shape our perception of what is possible in the natural world. Miracles in the ancient world may have been taken for granted. Yet in this age of cynicism and skepticism—when talk of miracles likely leads many people to think most readily of an Olympic hockey game featuring an unlikely and dramatic upset—can the miracles of the Bible speak to the modern Jew? What should we make of the Torah's prolific narratives of wondrous miracles that belie our everyday experience?

Please join congregant Marc Ashley in his annual adult education course held

between Pesah and Shavuot. This year's course, "Do You Believe In Miracles? *Between Divine Providence and Intervention*," will focus on Jewish conceptions of the miraculous in human experience.

Should Jews believe that miracles indeed occurred in the past and can yet occur today? Does God actually intervene in the affairs of human history? The course is open to all congregants and does not require prior knowledge of any kind. We will meet on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. on May 1, 15 and 22 in the OZ library.

The "problem" of miracles has exercised the minds of great thinkers through time, particularly since Enlightenment thinking began to privilege reason in the quest for knowledge and truth. The modern philosopher David Hume declared that

"a wise man proportions his belief to the evidence," and our empirical observations seem to discredit the plausibility of miracles. For many modern thinkers, miracles have been deprived of their miraculous import, presumably to be stranded in the realm of crude religious aspiration and even delusion.

But perhaps irrelevance need not be the fate of miracles for modern Jews. Confronting the possibility of miracles in human experience can continue to inspire and engage our religious imagination even in the contemporary world.

Please join us for stimulating discussion of this pivotal aspect of Jewish thought. And push yourself to consider a question more challenging for Jews today than ever before—do you believe in miracles?

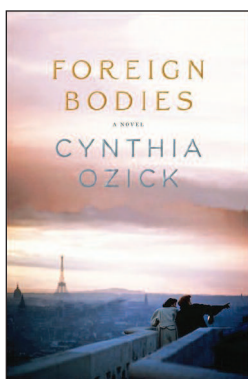
## Or Zarua Book Discussions

*Foreign Bodies* by Cynthia Ozick on Sunday, June 12

Please join us on Sunday, June 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the Or Zarua library to discuss *Foreign Bodies* by the award-winning author Cynthia Ozick.

In her sixth novel, Ozick retells and extends Henry James' *The Ambassadors*. In James' 1903 book, middle-aged Lambert Strether is dispatched to Paris by his wealthy fiancée to bring her culture-accumulating son back to the United States. Strether finds the "remarkable" young man in immoral "intimacy" with a married woman, and the failed ambassador returns alone to America.

As Ozick's title suggests, her characters lack Jamesian refinement. Set in 1952, the characters of *Foreign Bodies*



could easily have stepped out of one of Philip Roth's stories: Rich and domineering Marvin orders his divorced sister Bea from New York, where she teaches English in high school, to fly to Paris to convince his 23-year-old son Julian, an unemployed waiter and sometime writer, to return home. But Julian has secretly married Lili, a Romanian widow and Holocaust survivor. Complicating Bea's mission, Julian's sister

Iris leaves her studies to join her brother in Paris.

Over the course of a few months, Bea travels from New York to Paris to Hollywood, aiding and abetting her nephew and niece while waging a war of letters with her brother. Finally Bea faces her ex-husband and shakes off his lingering sneers from decades past. As she inadvertently wreaks havoc in their lives, every one of them is irrevocably changed.

The following book discussion will be on September 18. If you would like more information on Or Zarua book discussions or have a book suggestion, please contact Reed Schneider at 212-860-8611 or Dina Linsk in the synagogue office at [dlinsk@orzarua.org](mailto:dlinsk@orzarua.org).

### EDITOR'S NOTE

If you have an idea or article that is appropriate for publication in the OZ Newsletter, please contact Charlie Spielholz at [cssrs@earthlink.net](mailto:cssrs@earthlink.net). All copy for the July/August 2011 issue should be received by Thursday, June 2.



# Family and Youth Activities

## May 2011

**Sunday, May 1 • 7:30 p.m.**

YOM HASHOAH

Holocaust Memorial Service

**Monday, May 9 • 7:30 p.m.**

YOM HA'ATZMAUT WITH HERB KEINON

Israel Independence Day lecture on

"The Arab Spring: What Does It Mean to Israel?"

**Saturday, May 14 • 10:30 a.m.**

JUNIOR CONGREGATION/TEEN-LED SERVICE

for 2nd grade and older. Service led by students, teachers and parents.

**Thursday, May 19 • 6:00 p.m.**

BAGELS, BABKA AND BALABUSTAS

Exhibit opening in the Or Zarua Gallery.

**Wednesday, May 25 • 7:00 p.m.**

ROOFTOP PICNIC AND ANNUAL MEETING

Details on page 13.

## June 2011

**Saturday, June 4 • 10:30 a.m.**

JUNIOR CONGREGATION/TEEN-LED SERVICE

for 2nd grade and older. Service led by students, teachers and parents.

**Sunday, June 5 • 11:00 a.m.**

CELEBRATE ISRAEL PARADE

**Tuesday, June 7 • 8:00 p.m.**

TIKKUN LEYL SHAVUOT

Panel discussion on "The Social Network and the Internet: Friend or Foe?"

**Tuesday, June 14 • 7:30 p.m.**

AGING AND THE PERSISTENCE OF MIND

with Jonathan Canick, Ph.D.

## TORAH READERS NEEDED

If you are able to read Torah or Haftarah and would like to do so on a Shabbat, please call the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, ext 12.

## THE LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ LECTURE IS ONLINE

Visit [www.orzarua.org](http://www.orzarua.org)

**Y**ou may have missed Or Zarua's 22nd birthday celebration and the custom cake (pictured at right) on Wednesday, February 2, but that does not mean you have to miss The Lucy S. Dawidowicz Lecture by Lawrence H. Schiffman on "The Dead Sea



ALIZA KAPLAN

Scrolls: Judaism, Christianity and the Western Tradition Reevaluated" because it is available online! Just go to [www.orzarua.com](http://www.orzarua.com) and look under the Resources heading on the right of the Or Zarua home page for the lecture. You will also find many other features on the Or Zarua website, including the calendar of events. So take some time and visit the site!

## The Kosher Konnoisseur

*continued from page 13*

**Kosher Knibbles:** As Kosher restaurants strive to deliver varied foreign cuisine, the strictures of kashruth impose certain limitations. Interestingly, the prohibited foods (certain kinds or cuts of meat, certain fish and all shellfish) are not really a significant obstacle. While it is true that such foods are a meaningful element of many non-Jewish cuisines, there is more than adequate variety within the permitted foods to permit an authentic kosher representation of almost any culture's fare.

The greater challenge to authenticity is the separation of milk and meat. In many kitchens, particularly those on the Continent, milk, butter, cream and cheese are constant recipe companions to meat, or are staples in dishes traditionally served with meat. That is not to say that exceptional French and Italian food cannot be served kosher, it can and often is. But adjustments need to be made and authenticity often must take a back seat.

Notably, however, the mixing of meat with dairy is rarely, if ever, a feature of Asian cuisine. One can search the menu of innumerable non-kosher Asian restaurants, and the only milk to be found comes from soy or coconut. For this rea-

son, it is surprising and disappointing that this city has rarely seen delicious kosher Chinese food. There is simply no reason that high-quality and completely authentic kosher Chinese food cannot be prepared, yet I have never dined at a Chinese restaurant in this city where the food was of high quality. (Fortunately, the same cannot be said of Japanese-inspired cuisine, as there are a number of good dining spots.) This is particularly surprising because Chinese food was the earliest Asian cuisine to reach New York, and was something that many New York Jews became familiar with. Indeed, among Jews of an earlier generation, there was a not insubstantial number who kept kosher homes, would never consider eating in a "non-kosher" deli, but would dine in a Chinese restaurant.

Admittedly, New York has come some way since the days of Schmulka Bernstein and Moshe Peking (if you never dined at them you are fortunate; those who have probably still have trace amounts of MSG in their systems). Yet, so far as I can tell, it has never reached nearly the heights that it should. If you are familiar with a kosher Chinese establishment in the city that you think worthy of a visit (and perhaps a review), the Konnoisseur would be interested in your recommendation.

# Daily Morning Minyan 101

What happens at Or Zarua's weekday service

**O**n weekday mornings at Or Zarua people begin to drift into the sanctuary for Shaharit, the morning service. The first arrivals glance around to assess the number of attendees—will there be enough, 10, for the first mourner's kaddish? Yes, we will need 10 not only for kaddish but for Barechu, the repetition of the Amidah and, on Mondays and Thursdays, the Torah reading. The weekday morning service requires a minyan as do all other services. Why 10 and why not, say, 14 or 9? Rabbi Wechsler explains that the number 10 is based on Numbers 14:27, in which 10 of the 12 tribe leaders appointed to “scout the land of Canaan” to determine the condition of the land and the prospects for conquering it, return with a negative report. They are called “edah,” an assembly. Leviticus 22:32 and Numbers 16:21 use the same word “edah” to refer, under somewhat different circumstances, to the community, giving rise to the mandate that 10 people create the necessary context for sanctifying Him. Therefore, a minyan of 10 is required for communal Jewish prayer.

What goes on at that morning service? What do I need to know and do? How long does the service last? Who else will be there? What if I can not read or follow Hebrew? Will it be an alien intrusion into my morning routine?

Let us start with what happens: the weekday Shaharit contains many elements that are similar to the Shabbat service. It begins with 14 brief blessings of gratitude, although some people who arrive early start their personal prayer with a selection from the prayers and blessings that appear in the Siddur Sim Shalom before those 14 blessings. The minyan then continues with a number of brief blessings and prayers that lead into the first Mourner's Kaddish. Following Mourner's Kaddish are a series of psalms, selections from scripture and the three paragraphs of the Shema, which then lead into the Amidah. The Amidah is followed by Tahanun, which contains supplications and confessions of sin, and is therefore

not included on Shabbat. If the Torah is to be read, the Torah service occurs after Tahanun. The weekday Torah reading is brief—just three short aliyot. The concluding section of the daily service includes Ashrei, Aleinu, and another Mourner's Kaddish and ends with the psalm of the day as was recited in the Temple.

After the service is concluded, Rabbi Wechsler teaches for approximately three minutes on a topic that is always informative and relevant.

So, how long does the service last? We begin at 7:15 a.m. Monday through Friday (8:45 a.m. on Sunday) and on non-Torah reading days finish at 8:00 a.m. Add 15 minutes on the days the Torah is read.

If your ability to read Hebrew is rusty or non-existent that is okay. Some people

who attend the daily minyan read or follow along in English. Most of the men and a few of the women put on tefillin. Or Zarua owns a few sets of tefillin for use by those people who do not have their own. And not knowing how to put tefillin on is not a concern; someone will help you.

People attend Or Zarua's weekday minyan for a variety of reasons. There is a core group of attendees and there are new recruits. Or Zarua is committed to having a minyan each morning to ensure that we are able to have a full service and to allow those who are mourners or observing a yahrzeit to say Kaddish. Some people attend the weekday service because they originally did so as mourners. Others have come to appreciate the value of daily communal prayer and understand the importance of being available for those who are in need of saying Kaddish. Others wish to say a prayer for healing either silently during the Amidah or aloud on the days that the Torah is read.

If you would like to have an aliyah in observance of a yahrzeit or for any other reason, come on Monday, Thursday or on other special days that the Torah is read. On those days the opportunity is also available to raise or dress the Torah. On all weekdays, for those who are able, there is the opportunity for people to lead the service.

The unexpected, unanticipated reward of beginning the day with shared and personal prayer, bringing a new aspect to each day, turns out not to be an alien intrusion at all. These just touch on some of the highlights of Shaharit. Choose a day—any day—and come. All will be so glad to have you join us. Spring and summer, when many of our regular attendees are away, present a special opportunity for us to welcome new people to the minyan. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Sheldon Adler ([sadler@skadden.com](mailto:sadler@skadden.com)).

One more thing. After services, we serve a light breakfast along with interesting conversation.

## LIFE EVENTS

at Congregation Or Zarua

**M**embers of our congregation are sometimes faced with painful, and, in some cases, tragic events in their lives. If you know of a member of the congregation who is coping with extended illness, hospitalization, or a death in their family, please contact the synagogue office at 212-452-2310 so that Rabbi Wechsler can be informed. Press extension 14 for the executive director or extension 12 for the rabbi's assistant, Dina Linsk.

## CONGREGATION OR ZARUA OFFICE HOURS

**Monday through Thursday**  
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

**Friday**  
9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

The Or Zarua office is closed Saturday and Sunday as well as on Jewish and federal holidays.

# JTS Party in the Garden

Thursday, May 5, 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.

One of the perquisites of being a New York City synagogue is our proximity to the Jewish Theological Seminary. Due to its world renowned library and its outstanding faculty who conduct frequent public seminars and special events, JTS is a natural focal point for the rich Jewish intellectual life in New York City and the country.

Join us again this year on Thursday, May 5, as members of Park Avenue Synagogue, Sutton Place Synagogue, and Congregation Or Zarua convene for a Garden Party at JTS. This will be an evening of celebration, education, and surprises in a relaxed and stimulating setting. Following refreshments outdoors,

JTS Chancellor Eisen will moderate a discussion among Rabbis Wechsler, Schranz, and Cosgrove, loosely based on the theme, "Spread over us a shelter of peace," a quotation from the Hashkivenu prayer. We will then have a choice of attending any of several breakout sessions conducted by one of JTS's extraordinary scholars, including Rabbi Dr. David Hoffman and Rabbi Dr. Eliezer Diamond.

Last year's multi-synagogue party was a fabulous success. Needless to say, we hope that your appreciation of JTS and its role will be enhanced, and that you will be motivated to increase your support for JTS's efforts. For more information, see your invitation that arrived by mail or contact Sara Stone at 212-628-0129.

## TALMUD CLASS

Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.  
in the OZ Library

This year we will be studying the first chapter of *Masechet Hullin* (Ordinary Things). The tractate is mostly devoted to the Laws of Kashrut. The first chapter covers shechting (kosher slaughtering). June 1 is the final class.

Classes are taught by  
**RABBI WECHSLER**

*No prior knowledge of Talmud, Hebrew or Aramaic is required.*

## OZ Cemetery

Gravesites for Members

The Or Zarua section of Beth El Cemetery is located in Washington Township (Bergen County), New Jersey, just ten miles away from the George Washington Bridge. Beth El Cemetery is



A view of the Or Zarua cemetery section.

well-maintained and landscaped with trees and shrubs. The cemetery's design provides a serene and beautiful final resting place that reflects the values and aesthetics of Congregation Or Zarua. Gravesites within the Or Zarua section are available for sale solely to members of our Congregation. Burial is limited to persons of the Jewish faith. If you are interested in buying gravesites in the Or Zarua section, please contact the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, ext. 14.

## Yehuda Nir Exhibit

at the Gelman Library of The George Washington University

The Gelman Library of The George Washington University, in Washington, D.C., is currently showing an exhibit entitled "Narrative of a Life: The Identities of Yehuda Nir." Yehuda Nir is a child survivor of the Holocaust and a member of our congregation. The exhibit explores the various chapters of Dr. Nir's life, beginning with his birth as Julian Gruenfeld to prosperous Polish Jews; the assumption of a false identity as a Catholic after the murder of his father; and his adoption of a second false identity, this time from a Jewish family from Palestine that was killed in Poland during a "summer vacation" in August 1939, in order to effect his family's entrance into the British Mandate of

Palestine. The exhibit concludes with his identity as Yehuda Nir, developed in Palestine and, finally, his life in America.

This exhibit was created by GWU students who read Dr. Nir's memoir, *The Lost Childhood*, as part of their class on Holocaust Memory taught by Dr. Walter Reich. He holds the Yitzhak Rabin Chair at GWU and was the first director of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

The exhibit centers around a donation of 1,700 books that Dr. Nir collected on matters related to the Holocaust from World War II and the immediate post-war period. The exhibition and collection are located in an endowed exhibition space, the Dr. Yehuda Nir and Dr. Bonnie Maslin Exhibit Hall, developed in order to support scholarship of the Holocaust.

## WELCOMING GUESTS

It is important for us as a community to make guests and new members at our services and kiddushim feel comfortable and welcome. If you are seated next to someone whom you do not know, please reach out and introduce yourself. Making this effort is consistent with our culture and will repay dividends.





**CONGREGATION OR ZARUA**

127 East 82nd Street  
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CONGREGATION OR ZARUA

MAY/JUNE 2011

## May/June Checklist

- Remember Yom Hashoah by attending the Holocaust Memorial Service on Sunday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.
- Learn with Marc Ashley: "Do You Believe in Miracles? Between Divine Providence and Intervention" meets on three Sundays, May 1, 15 and 22, at 10:00 a.m.
- Go to the JTS Garden Party on Thursday, May 5, 6:00-10:00 p.m.
- Hear the Yom Ha'atzmaut lecture by *Jerusalem Post* diplomatic correspondent Herb Keinon on "The Arab Spring: What Does It Mean to Israel?" on Monday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.
- Attend the opening of "Bagels. Babka and Balabustas," the new exhibit in the Or Zarua Gallery on Thursday, May 19, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Attend OZ's 22nd Annual Meeting, complete with picnic dinner and music, on Wednesday, May 25 at 7:00 p.m.
- March in the Celebrate Israel Parade on Fifth Avenue on Sunday, June 5 from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- Participate in the Tikkun Leyl Shavuot discussion, "The Social Network and the Internet: Friend or Foe?", on Tuesday, June 7, 8:00 p.m. Then indulge with fellow congregants and guests in the Shavuot tradition of ice cream sundaes and cheesecake.
- Come to the presentation on "Aging and the Persistence of Mind" by Jonathan Canick, Ph.D. on Tuesday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.
- Sponsor a program or event at OZ (see page 4).
- Learn about the new class for post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah students who wish to continue to develop their skills in Hebrew, Torah and Talmud (see page 4).
- Help out with a Hesed program (see page 6).
- Read about the special exhibition on Yehuda Nir in Washington, D.C. on page 17.
- Listen to "Rabbi Wechsler Teaches" on Sirius XM Radio (details on page 13).
- Discuss Cynthia Ozick's new novel, *Foreign Bodies*, on Sunday, June 12, 7:30 p.m.
- Knit with the OZ Crafts Club on Sunday, May 22 and June 12, 10:15 a.m. or become a collateral member (see page 9).
- Sign up for the morning minyan.
- Study Talmud with Rabbi Wechsler on Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.
- Become a member of the OZ Program Committee by attending the meeting on Wednesday morning, May 18, 8:15 a.m. or by contacting the Or Zarua office (212-452-2310).
- Befriend Or Zarua on Facebook.
- Call the Or Zarua office (212-452-2310) if you have questions about or wish to sponsor any OZ program or event.
- Have an idea or article for the OZ newsletter? If so, please contact Charlie Spielholz (cssrs@earthlink.net).