

OrZarua

IYAR/SIVAN/TAMMUZ 5772

NEWSLETTER/VOLUME 24:5

MAY/JUNE 2012

Remember Our Past, Plan Our Future

COME HONOR RABBI WECHSLER AND OUR PRESIDENTS. BUILD OZ'S FUTURE.

Gala Tribute, Monday, June 4, 6–10 p.m., Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers

With its theme Hadeish Yameinu—Renew Our Days, the Gala Tribute on Monday evening, June 4, at Pier Sixty, overlooking the Hudson River, will be a milestone event in the life of Congregation Or Zarua. We will honor the distinguished service of our founding rabbi, Dr. Harlan J. Wechsler; recognize the dedicated work of OZ's past and current presidents, who helped organize and shape Rabbi Wechsler's vision; and build our future through the establishment of The Rabbi Harlan J. Wechsler Education Initiative, as detailed in the Gala invitation, in the information letter that has been mailed to each Congregant, and on the Gala website.

Doors to the Gala will open at 6:00 p.m. Soon thereafter, we will be swaying to the freilich music of OZ's Klezmer Band, augmented with professional musicians, enjoying an over-the-top buffet dinner, view-



Rabbi Harlan J. Wechsler

ing our Virtual Journal, and sipping some of the best single malt scotches around. It's rare that, as a Congregation, we get to socialize with so many of our fellow Congregants and guests, in an evening

given over to celebrating the accomplishments of the institution we have built, even as we lay a pillar for its future growth.

At 7:30 p.m., we will move from the site of our buffet down the hall to our program room for dessert, tea, and coffee. During the program that follows, we will learn with Chancellor Arnold Eisen of the Jewish Theological Seminary, call our past and current presidents to the dais to recall the milestone events during their incumbencies, and honor Rabbi Wechsler. Following the Rabbi's drasha and a Champagne toast, we will close with Israeli and other Jewish dancing. In all, this will be a celebration, OZ-style, with plenty of fun and serious learning at the same time.

Please respond using the reply card included with the invitation or visit our Gala website at www.orzarua2012gala.org to learn more and purchase tickets and Virtual Journal ads.



SUNDAY, JUNE 3
"Israel Branches Out"

page 13

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, May 21, 7:00 p.m. Supper/8:15 p.m. Meeting

The agenda for will include:

- The election of officers and new Board members
- A vote to amend the By-Laws to allow for proxy voting
- Treasurer's Report
- Remarks from the President and Rabbi
- A vote concerning the selection of the next rabbi, if a candidate shall have been agreed to by the Search Committee and the Board

According to the By-Laws, we need a quorum of 200 members to conduct synagogue business at our Annual Meeting. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Please make reservations for supper and the meeting on www.orzarua.org or by calling the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, extension 39, by Wednesday, May 16.

ק"ק אור זרוע
Congregation
OrZarua
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*
DIANE OKRENT, *President*
HENRY GLANTERNIK, *Treasurer*
HARVEY M. BRENNER, FTA, *Executive Director*
ILANA BURGESS, *Youth Education Director*
CHARLES SPIELHOLZ, *Newsletter Editor*

OZ Committee Chairs

ADMINISTRATION	Sara Stone
AESTHETICS	Aaron Shelden
ART GALLERY	Bobbi Coller
BOOK DISCUSSION	Reed Schneider
BUILDING	Benjamin Marcus
CEMETERY	Aliza Kaplan Mort Schwartz
CRAFTS CLUB	Terry Edelstein
DEVELOPMENT	Andrew Plevin
HESED	Richard Stadin
HEVRA KADISHA	Vera Silver Gerry Solomon
ISRAEL	Aliza Kaplan
LIBRARY	Barry Feldman
MEMBERSHIP	Michael Schwartz
MINYAN	Sheldon Adler
PROGRAMMING	Karen Kaplan
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Aaron Shelden
PURIM SPIEL	Arthur Rosenbloom Bonnie Maslin Tibor Feldman Barbara Sassoon
SCHOOL	Betsy Dizengoff
TORAH/HAFTARAH	Henry Glanternik
WEBMASTER	Jay Palmer

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 Diane Okrent



Pesah, Z'man Heruteinu, the festival of our liberation, is over.

The dishes have been stored until next year, and we are back to eating hametz. How is it that pizza and pasta, bagels and bialys, have such significance in our lives?

Now, as we count the Omer, linking Pesah and Shavuot, we are reminded that our redemption from slavery was not complete until we were given the Torah at Mount Sinai. Shavuot is Hag Matan Torateinu, the festival of the giving of the Torah.

The sages made a distinction between the one-time *giving* of the Torah and our perpetual *receiving* of the Torah: We receive Torah every day. Shavuot, in addition to being an agricultural holiday, is dedicated to Torah study and Jewish education.

We will begin celebrating Shavuot on Saturday night, May 26, and continue through Monday, May 28. Yes, that is Memorial Day weekend. If you are in town, please join us!

Dedication to Torah study and to Jewish education are characteristic of the Jewish people and are enthusiastically embraced at Congregation Or Zarua. Our synagogue was founded on the principles of Torah, Worship, and Acts of Loving Kindness. First is Torah—learning for our children and our adults.

Or Zarua was barely a year old when we started to talk about a Hebrew School. The naysayers thought it was premature to do so, but we went ahead and opened our Hebrew School in 1991 with seven students. The Hebrew School was in rented space at a local private school until our current building was opened in 2002. While enrollment has waxed and waned over the years, we are as committed as ever to providing the highest quality Jewish education to our members' children from kindergarten through high school.

Our commitment to adult education

has always been strong, beginning with the founders of our Congregation, who were Talmud students of Rabbi Wechsler. Now, on any given evening, our building is filled with members studying Talmud, the weekly parashah, Jewish music, Torah reading, and Haftarah chanting.

On June 4, we will celebrate Rabbi Wechsler and his dedication to Or Zarua at a Gala Tribute at Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers. Proceeds from the Gala will go to The Rabbi Harlan J. Wechsler Education Initiative. The purpose of the Education Initiative is to perpetuate Rabbi Wechsler's dedication to Jewish education for the children and adults of Or Zarua. I hope you will join us at the Gala and in support of the Education Initiative.

The giving of the Torah, which we celebrate on Shavuot, occurs relatively early in the Humash (Exodus, Chapter 20). But, of course, the Humash continues through Moses' transfer of leadership to Joshua. It was Joshua who led B'nei Yisrael into The Promised Land. And the Jewish people have survived and thrived through trials and tribulations ever since.

Rabbi Wechsler, the founding rabbi of Congregation Or Zarua, has been our Moses—helping us create the religious and learning community we are today. Many of us cannot imagine Or Zarua without Rabbi Wechsler. However, with Rabbi Wechsler's retirement, the time has come for us to choose our next rabbi and continue to evolve and grow as a community. I have every confidence that, just as the Jewish people have thrived through the millennia since Moses, we, the members of Or Zarua, will not only survive but grow and thrive in the new era. I urge you to join in the celebration of who we are and help shape our future with our next rabbi.

Just as every graduation is called "commencement," we should think of this time in our history as a step into the future. Echoing the theme of the Gala, Hadeish Yameinu—Renew our Days, let us celebrate our past while we build our future!

B'Shalom!

Tikkun Leyl Shavuot

Saturday night, May 26

Erev Shavuot will begin at Or Zarua with Minhah/Ma'ariv services on Saturday, May 26, at 8:10 p.m. in the sanctuary. Following the service, there will be a study session with Rabbi Wechsler in the Or Zarua library beginning at 9:15 p.m.

The discussion will be based on S.Y. Agnon's *Atem Re-etem* (Present at Sinai), a rabbinical analysis of the revelation at Sinai. This book was the basis of the first

topic of study for Tikkun Leyl Shavuot at Or Zarua's founding in 1989. (See "Or Zarua's Oral History" on page 12).

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 at the bottom of this page.

In this Issue

- Gala: Remember Our Past, Plan Our Future1
- 23rd Annual Meeting1
- President's Message2
- Tikkun Leyl Shavuot.....3
- Adult Education Course3
- My First Trip to Israel4
- Israeli Night at Ronald McDonald House.....6
- Film Screening: *Departures*7
- Hesed Events and Programs.....7
- Book Discussions8
- Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha'atzmaut9
- Monthly Calendars.....10
- OZ's Oral History.....12
- AIPAC Conference12
- Talmud Class12
- Or Zarua Cemetery12
- Celebrate Israel Parade.....13
- Sponsorship Opportunities.....13
- The Art of Judaism13
- Learning to Read Torah at Or Zarua14
- Or Zarua Crafts Club14
- Rudi Wolff's "Our Colorful Bible"15
- Rabbi Wechsler on Sirius XM Radio15
- Or Zarua Minyan.....15
- Siddur Ceremony at Or Zarua16
- Family and Youth Activities.....16
- Hebrew School Calendar16
- Preparing for Pesah17
- Or Zarua Community18
- May/June Checklist20

ADULT EDUCATION COURSE CONTINUES

Sunday, May 6, 10:00 a.m.

The final session of Marc Ashley's annual adult education course, this year entitled "May the King Answer Us When We Call: The Nature of Jewish Prayer," will be held on Sunday, May 6, at 10:00 a.m. in Or Zarua's library. The course focuses on conceptions of the purpose and nature of Jewish prayer and on theological challenges attendant to our tefilah: Is it sensible to believe that God answers our prayers? What happens if we don't believe what we're praying? How much innovation can we introduce into our communal prayers?

Please attend the final class session, even if you have missed the prior sessions. Congregants (and their guests) are always welcome to join the discussion. No prior knowledge of any kind is required. Together we will grapple with pivotal ideas in classical and contemporary Jewish thought and explore an activity at the heart of our synagogue life.

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.

My Trip to Israel: A *First Timer's* Thoughts

by Harvey M. Brenner, FTA, Executive Director

I am 64 years old, and my wife, Faith, and I will be celebrating our 40th anniversary this December. Yet neither of us had been to Israel. As the parents of an only child, there were always excuses as to why we couldn't or shouldn't go (with or without our son). When the opportunity presented itself to join over 70 of my fellow synagogue executives for our annual NAASE Conference in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, we seized the opportunity. We decided to combine this business conference with touring "the place where it all began." I'm sorry we waited this long!

First, a bit about NAASE. The North American Association of Synagogue Executives is a peer organization of over 300 synagogue professionals from the Conservative/Masorti movement, operating in the U.S.A. under the auspices of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The functions of the group are 1) to raise the level of performance of the members through seminars, workshops, conferences, and shared information, and 2) to promote the membership and the benefits of trained professional managers to their respective synagogues and congregations.

Through my membership and participation, at both the local and the national levels, OZ has access to the collective wisdom of fellow executives. As I'm fond of saying to our staff, "We don't have to invent the wheel ourselves, we just need to find someone to show us how to use it." With just a few computer strokes, I can access over 40 years of archives and connect to peers to find answers to many of OZ's questions. Best practices are shared, and new ideas are disseminated.

The conference itself was amazing. While there were many first-timers as well as seasoned veterans, there was an excellent mix of content for all interests and experiential levels. Here's a brief overview of some of the highlights.

We began with breakfast with Yizhar Hess, CEO of Masorti, and learned about the differences in how secular, Masorti, and Orthodox communities are treated by the Israeli government. We received suggestions about how we, as Americans, can help pluralism flourish. Later that day, we davened Minhah/Ma'ariv with Emily Levy-

Shochet, chair of Masorti; learned about the Hod Vehador Masorti Kehillah in K'far Saba; and again discussed how Americans can help.

We toured Midreshet Iyun, where Rabbi Alberto Aviv told us of his community's struggles to have its own facility. Its problems mirrored those faced by people everywhere, including issues with the government, escalating construction costs, and innumerable delays.

We heard from Rabbi Andrew Sacks, who spoke of the daily fight to help correct government inequities with regard to Masorti. Some of us visited Independence Hall; I literally cried when, at the end of the presentation, we stood together and sang Hatikvah. What a moment! Then it was off to learn the secrets of Machon Ayalon (the underground munitions factory used during the War of Independence in 1948).

We saw an incredibly moving theater program performed by deaf and blind cast members of Na Lagaat Theater Company and, on another night, attended a performance by the Conservatory students of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance.

We visited an Ethiopian Absorption Center (Mevaseret Tzion), toured Israel's Supreme Court of Justice, and spent a phenomenal Shabbat in Jerusalem learning with Rabbi Tamar Elad-Applebaum, a female Masorti rabbi. We read Terumah, which describes the building of the Tabernacle. All of the materials were given voluntarily, except for the half-shekel required for the census and the half-shekel required of everyone to make the sockets for the Tabernacle's planks. In true egalitarian fashion, everyone gave equally. Contributions for 12 specific types of raw materials poured in so that Moses had to ask the people to stop—an Executive Director's dream! One of the commentaries from Rashi states that the people gave purely for the sake of God's name, not to be recognized by special honors or because of peer pressure (another dream).

We had breakfast with Jerusalem's mayor, Nir Barakat, and heard about the growth of pluralism that he has heralded



Experiencing the sights, sounds, and tastes of Israel among the shoppers in a shuk.

HARVEY BRENNER AND FRIENDS

in Jerusalem. A visit to an IDF army base followed; we had the opportunity to experience the perilous truce/cease-fire and how quickly conditions can become dangerous. In between, we experienced all of the sights, sounds, and tastes of Israel, including a visit to a shuk, where we fought our way through shoppers in search of wine, bread, meats, vegetables, and, of course, pastries, plus my favorite, halvah.

There were opportunities to daven with The Women of the Wall. I believe those who did felt personally elevated to be given the opportunity to participate in Rosh Hodesh in such a meaningful and spiritual way. The Women of the Wall gained from this shared spiritual experience, and our collective kavanah was elevated (both male and female alike).

Following the conference, my wife and I visited many of the “must see” sights that the conference didn’t include: Masada, the Dead Sea, Acco and Rosh Hanikra, Nazareth and the Galilee, points north of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and so much more. We even learned that my wife’s great-great-grandfather, a founder of Petah Tikvah, was the town’s first shohet (ritual slaughterer). We reunited with some of her



Faith and Harvey Brenner at the Ba’hai Gardens above Jerusalem.

cousins who made Aliyah over 30 years ago; they prepared a family tree for us and shared stories and anecdotes.

We feasted on all that Israel had to offer, but still barely scratched the surface. Our taste buds have been tantalized, and we can’t wait for the opportunity to

return to Eretz Yisrael, visit more sights, and experience more of what this amazing country has to offer.

May our homeland thrive, and may each of us have the opportunity to return to it for nourishment and sustenance for all time.



Davening with The Women of the Wall during Rosh Hodesh at the Kotel.

Israeli Night at Ronald McDonald House

by Lynda Wertheim

With a backdrop of a mural created by the children of the OZ Hebrew School depicting symbols of Tu B'Shevat and greetings, and "Dancing Danny Pollack," Israeli Night at the Ronald McDonald House was a great success. The tenth annual celebration, held on February 22, was supported by new and veteran volunteers, who put up posters of Israel, decorated the room with balloons, greeted guests, and served falafel to the residents at the House. This

year, Rabbinic Intern Joe Schwartz introduced the guests to the holiday of Tu B'Shevat and discussed the renewal of life and growth as spring approached Israel. Joe's explanation included an interactive discussion with the children about the types of changes people observe in the springtime and encouraged the audience to consider this time of year as a period of rebirth and growth.

Israeli music, chosen by Joe Schwartz, serenaded the guests as they munched on falafel, pita, and an assort-

ment of pinwheel sandwiches. Following a tradition set many years ago, guests were treated to a variety of desserts brought by the volunteers, including home-baked cookies from Mina Greenstein and Crumbs cupcakes, generously donated by Jason Bauer, the owner of Crumbs Bakery. This year, Fairway Market, our new neighbor on East 86th Street, donated the water and juice boxes that were served to guests. Mark Bradley, manager of Community Affairs at Fairway, was

continued on page 7



STEPHANIE ROSENBLUM



Top row, from left: Two murals created by OZ children. Lesley Palmer and guests of RMDH admiring a mural. **Second row:** Shanon Levine, Allen Mayer, Mina Greenstein, Ella Douglas-Durham, Joe Schwartz, Andrew Rubin, and Lynda Wertheim preparing food. **Third row:** Allen Mayer, Helene Wolfe, Rebecca Rubin, Cecilia Mayer, and Joe Schwartz setting the tables. Danny Pollack entertaining guests.

Ronald McDonald House

continued from page 6

instrumental in arranging the donation.

Danny Pollack, our recidivist Israeli dancer and entertainer, once again mesmerized the audience and engaged the children and their parents in Israeli folk dancing. Danny's enthusiasm for his art form and for the children was evident throughout the evening.

Staff at the Ronald McDonald House, headed by Darlene Lord, were appreciative of our efforts and commented that our event is the most elaborate of any that are presented by the community.

A special addition this year was the donation of a variety of games and toys from the Hanukkah Toy Drive and duplicate birthday gifts donated by Rafi Katz and his family.

Special thanks to Congregant Stephanie Failla, who has organized the event for many years. Although Stephanie could not participate this year because of family commitments, she provided an excellent outline of responsibilities and was a significant "behind the scenes" player in making the event successful. Additional thanks to Deborah Wenger and Harvey Brenner for their help in preparing the notices and flyers for the event, and to Ilana Burgess for supervising the students who created the mural.

Volunteers for the event included Phyllis Brochstein, Mina Greenstein, Allen Mayer, Sharon Morris, Helene Wolfe, Toby Wertheim, Lesley Palmer, Miriam Wallerstein, Shanon Levine, Stephanie Rosenbloom, Alex Cavanaugh, Rebecca Rubin, Andrew Rubin, and Ella Douglas-Durham.

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.

FILM SCREENING: DEPARTURES

A Different Cultural Perspective on Preparing the Dead

Sponsored by the Hevra Kadisha

Tuesday, May 8, 6:30 p.m., Or Zarua social hall

When a person dies, what do we do with the body? In Judaism, we wash it, purify it, dress it in white garments, and then bury it. Those activities—washing, purifying, dressing, and burying—are the work of the Hevra Kadisha. To understand their symbolic importance, we shall show a motion picture from a radically different culture, *Departures*, a Japanese film that won the 2009 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. In this film, we will witness the impact of preparing the dead on the preparer, something that every member of the Hevra Kadisha understands, and we shall see that the meaning of life is, itself, revealed in the way we prepare the dead. Finally, members of the Hevra Kadisha will contrast our experience with the Japanese experience seen in the film.

Light refreshments will be served. There is no admission charge, but your contribution to the Hevra Kadisha will be appreciated. Please inform the Or Zarua office if you are planning to attend no later than noon, Monday, May 7.

Hesed Events and Programs

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

Salvation Deliverance Church

- "Pre-owned" adult and children's clothing, toys, dolls, games, and related items can be put to good use by the many transitional homeless residents in the South Bronx, including single, jobless mothers and their children, as well as unemployed men. OZ partners with Salvation Deliverance Church, whose members are housekeepers caring for their own local needy.

Home Visit Volunteers

- Volunteer to visit and cheer ill or home-bound Or Zarua Congregants.

Monday Night Pizza at NCS

- Or Zarua Congregants serve pizza, salad, soda, and good cheer to men and women with a range of mental health and addiction issues at the Neighborhood Coalition Shelter's East 81st Street Residence each Monday from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Please consider making a \$180 contribution to the Hesed Fund to cover OZ's weekly food costs.

Ronald McDonald House

- 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 have no local support system of friends or relatives. The chaplain at Ronald McDonald House alerts us when OZ may be of service to families who may require kosher meals, synagogue services, and other assistance.

Chemotherapy Caps

- Attractive knitted caps in all sizes for children from babies to teenagers residing at Ronald McDonald House while undergoing chemotherapy are welcome donations.

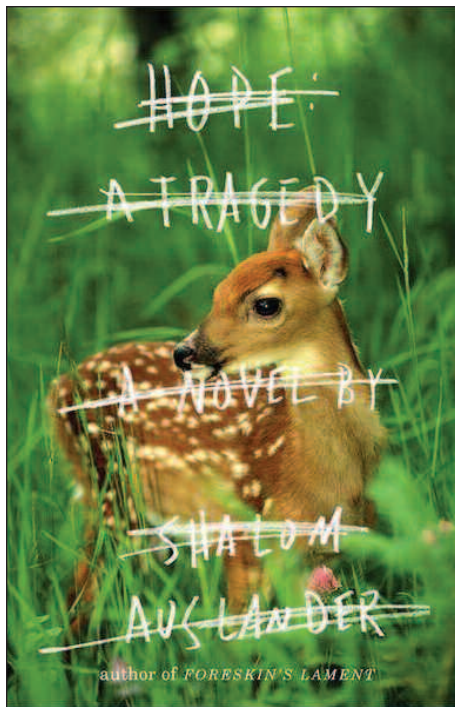
Butterfly Garden

- "Green thumbs" are needed from spring through fall to help care for Ronald McDonald House's 7th Floor Terrace Butterfly Garden.

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

Or Zarua Book Discussions

Hope: A Tragedy by Shalom Auslander, Sunday, June 3



Please join us for our next Or Zarua book discussion on Sunday, June 3, at 7:30 p.m. in Or Zarua's library. We will discuss Shalom Auslander's controversial new novel, *Hope: A Tragedy*.

Seeking somewhere “unburdened by the past, unencumbered by history,” Solomon Kugel relocates his family from New York City to an old farmhouse upstate. But Kugel’s sickly child, troubled wife, and mother (who suffers from a concentration camp experience she never had, keeps her bags packed “just in case,” and wakes up screaming each morning) are unlikely candidates for rural happiness. Kugel’s analyst, Dr. Jove, shoots down his every upbeat thought. The doctor says optimism is a delusion and no chicken ever has a good reason for crossing a road. “Give up,” says a sign on the doctor’s office wall. “You’ll live longer.”

When Kugel climbs into his attic to find the source of tapping sounds that he hopes are nothing worse than mice, he finds, as Janet Maslin wrote in *The New York Times*: “The tapping is from a typewriter. And the typist, a stooped, foul-mouthed old lady who does not suffer fools gladly, is the single person about whom Jewish writers most avidly fantasize: Anne Frank. Other fiction writers have gotten this fresh with Anne Frank. But they don’t get much funnier.”

Steve Stern in *The New York Times* praises Auslander: “A virtuoso humorist, and a brave one: beware Shalom Auslander; he will make you laugh until your heart breaks.”

On Sunday evening, October 28, our first book discussion of the fall, we will discuss the classic novel of the Yiddish writer I.J. Singer (brother of I.B. Singer), *The Brothers Ashkenazi*. 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 Deborah Wenger in the synagogue office at dwenger@orzarua.org.

LIFE EVENTS at Congregation Or Zarua

A community such as ours shares good times and bad with its members. When something good happens in your family—birth, graduation, engagement, or marriage—let us share your joy. When something bad happens—illness, hospitalization, or a death in your family—let us share your burden.

Sometimes people are reluctant to communicate these issues on their own. If you know of a member who is coping with illness or loss, please contact the OZ office at 212-452-2310, extension 12 or 14, so that Rabbi Wechsler can be informed.

TORAH READERS NEEDED

If you are able to read Torah or Haftarah and would like to do so on a Shabbat, please contact Henry Glanternik at hjgmoose@aol.com. Alternatively, you may sign up online at www.orzarua.org by choosing “Read Torah” under the “Prayer” drop-down menu.

VISIT WWW.ORZARUA.ORG

Explore Or Zarua's past, present, and future



Have you missed an Or Zarua lecture, class, or discussion? Would you like to hear a presentation a second time? Or Zarua's website, www.orzarua.org, contains recordings of many of the presentations given by guest speakers and teachers at the synagogue.

Natan Sharansky's discussion of “Israel, the Arab Spring, and World Jewry” on November 10, 2011, has been posted.

By clicking on the drop-down menu titled “Learning” and choosing “Adult Study,” followed by “Recorded Talks,” you can also access lectures by Professors Ruth R. Wisse, David Roskies, and James Kugel, and Rabbis David Silber and Harlan Wechsler. You can even listen to the Or Zarua Klezmer Band.

There are many other resources on the Or Zarua website—upcoming events, service schedules, current art gallery shows, minyan sign-up, and much more. So take a moment to explore www.orzarua.org and see what has been, is currently, and will be happening at OZ!

From Destruction to Life; From the Holocaust to Israel

Or Zarua remembers the Holocaust and celebrates the independence of Israel

On Wednesday night, April 18, Or Zarua commemorated Yom Hashoah v'ha G'vurah by remembering the victims of the Holocaust with a service, candlelighting, and music. Or Zarua teens and their families were active participants. The destruction done to our communities in Europe will not be forgotten.

Then on Thursday, April 26, Or Zarua's Hebrew School celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day. Students learned how Israel builds communities with a democratic government; a strong economy; education for its people; and aggressive programs in science, technology, art, and literature.

Or Zarua observed Yom Hashoah (*right and far right*) with a cantata of music and readings. Both youth and adult members of the Congregation participated in the Holocaust Memorial Service.

Yom Ha'atzmaut (*below and far right*): Or Zarua Hebrew School celebrated Israel's 64th birthday with topical activities and study, and ended the day with a delicious cake.





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

May 2012 • Iyar/Sivan 5772

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 • 9 Iyar 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Context: Graduate Seminar 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	2 • 10 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	3 • 11 7:15 am Minyan	4 • 12 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:37 pm Candlelighting	5 • 13 9:00 am Shaharit Acharei Mot/Kedoshim Bar Mitzvah of Joshua Hershkovitz
6 • 14 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:00 am Ashley Adult Education Course	7 • 15 7:15 am Minyan	8 • 16 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm <i>Departures</i> , film screening sponsored by Hevra Kadisha	9 • 17 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	10 • 18 Lag B'Omer 7:15 am Minyan Adult Bat Mitzvah of Allyn Maultasch	11 • 19 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:44 pm Candlelighting	12 • 20 9:00 am Shaharit Emor Bar Mitzvah of Alec Spector
13 • 21 Mother's Day 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	14 • 22 7:15 am Minyan	15 • 23 7:15 am Minyan	16 • 24 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class	17 • 25 7:15 am Minyan	18 • 26 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:51 pm Candlelighting	19 • 27 9:00 am Shaharit Behar/Behukotai Bat Mitzvah of Chloe Sahn
20 • 28 Yom Yerushalayim 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:15 am Crafts Club	21 • 29 7:15 am Minyan 7:00 pm Supper 8:15 pm Annual Meeting	22 • 1 Sivan Rosh Hodesh Sivan 7:00 am Minyan	23 • 2 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Talmud Class <i>(final session)</i> <i>Last Day of Hebrew School</i>	24 • 3 7:15 am Minyan	25 • 4 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:57 pm Candlelighting	26 • 5 Erev Shavuot 9:00 am Shaharit Bamidbar 8:10 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv 9:02 pm Candlelighting 9:15 pm Tikkun Leyl Shavuot
27 • 6 Shavuot: First Day 9:00 am Shaharit 8:10 pm Minhah/Ma'ariv 9:06 pm Candlelighting	28 • 7 Shavuot: Second Day Memorial Day 8:45 am Shaharit Yizkor <i>Office closed</i>	29 • 8 7:15 am Minyan	30 • 9 7:15 am Minyan	31 • 10 7:15 am Minyan		

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 • 11 Sivan 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:03 pm Candlelighting	2 • 12 9:00 am Shaharit Naso
3 • 13 8:45 am Sunday Minyan Celebrate Israel Parade (time to be announced) 7:30 pm Book Discussion	4 • 14 7:00 am Minyan 6:00 pm Gala in Honor of Rabbi Wechsler at Pier Sixty	5 • 15 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	6 • 16 7:15 am Minyan	7 • 17 7:15 am Minyan	8 • 18 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:08 pm Candlelighting	9 • 19 9:00 am Shaharit Beha'alotekha Bar Mitzvah of Ephraim Kozodoy
10 • 20 8:45 am Sunday Minyan 10:15 am Crafts Club	11 • 21 7:15 am Minyan	12 • 22 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	13 • 23 7:15 am Minyan	14 • 24 7:15 am Minyan 6:30 pm JTS Garden Party	15 • 25 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:11 pm Candlelighting	16 • 26 9:00 am Shaharit Shelah Bat Mitzvah of Nadia Sisley
17 • 27 Father's Day 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	18 • 28 7:15 am Minyan	19 • 29 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	20 • 30 Rosh Hodesh Tammuz I 7:00 am Minyan	21 • 1 Tammuz Rosh Hodesh Tammuz II 7:00 am Minyan	22 • 2 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:13 pm Candlelighting	23 • 3 9:00 am Shaharit Korah
24 • 4 8:45 am Sunday Minyan	25 • 5 7:15 am Minyan	26 • 6 7:15 am Minyan 8:00 pm Parashat HaShavua Class: Schwartz	27 • 7 7:15 am Minyan	28 • 8 7:15 am Minyan	29 • 9 7:15 am Minyan 6:45 pm Minhah/Kabbalat Shabbat 8:13 pm Candlelighting	30 • 10 9:00 am Shaharit Hukat

Or Zarua's Oral History

Shavuot 5749, and Cheesecake at 1384 Lexington Avenue

The first Shavuot at Or Zarua was celebrated in the backyard of the original office in the brownstone at 1384 Lexington Avenue, across from the 92nd Street Y.

According to Rabbi Wechsler, for one of the first holidays observed by the community after its founding in January 1989, the original members planned a celebration highlighted by the traditional custom of eating dairy. The cheesecake was provided by a member of the Congregation with connections to one of the finest kosher cheesecake bakeries in New York, and the festivities were not deterred by the arrival of summer rain.

In order to participate in the tradition of Torah study on Shavuot, the cheesecake celebration was paired with a reading of Israeli scholar S.Y. Agnon's *Atem Re-etem* (Present at Sinai), a rabbinical analysis of the revelation at Sinai. At that time,

Rabbi Wechsler shared his own translation of the work and led the Congregation in study. Eventually this tradition evolved into the panel discussion that Or Zarua has sponsored on Erev Shavuot.

This year, our discussion for Tikkun Leyl Shavuot will return to S.Y. Agnon's analysis, which has since been published in English, but is currently out of print. (Please see page 3 for information on Tikkun Leyl Shavuot).

Were you one of the original Congregants eating cheesecake at 1384 Lexington Avenue? Do you have other memories or questions about Or Zarua's early days to share?

The work of Or Zarua's Oral History Committee continues. Please contact Caroline Golden or Gerry Solomon with memories and artifacts of our early days and please send questions to Meredith Katz, mekatz@jtsa.edu.

TALMUD CLASS

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

This year we are studying Tractate Sanhedrin, which deals with the laws of capital punishment, composition of the courts, and judicial procedures.

Classes are held most Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. in the OZ library.

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 10 miles away from the George Washington Bridge. Beth El Cemetery is 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



A view of the Or Zarua cemetery section.

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.

At the AIPAC Conference

Washington, DC, March 3-6, 2012



Rabbi Harlan Wechsler and Naomi Friedland-Wechsler greet Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (second from left) at the 2012 AIPAC Conference.

Celebrate Israel Parade

Sunday, June 3, 2012



ARON SHELDEN

Join with fellow Congregants in the Celebrate Israel Day Parade on Sunday, June 3. Last year's participants from OZ (above) had a grand time showing their support for Israel. The theme for this year's parade is "Israel Branches Out." Step-off time and other details will be forthcoming. We hope to see you there!

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

May 21

ANNUAL MEETING, \$2,000

May 26

SHAVUOT PANEL, \$1,000

For additional information, please contact the synagogue office at 212-452-2310, ext. 14.

WELCOMING GUESTS AT OZ

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.

The Art of Judaism

Annual JTS Party in the Garden, Thursday, June 14, 6:30 p.m

Members of Congregation Or Zarua are invited to JTS's Annual Party in the Garden on Thursday, June 14. This year's theme is "The Art of Judaism." Speakers include:

Dr. Eliezer Diamond

Jewish Choreography: The Role of Movement in Prayer and Observance

Dr. Stephen Garfinkel

The Art (and Science) of Torah

Rabbi David Hoffman

Judaism and the Art of Eating

Dr. Amy Kalmanofsky

The Art and Soul of Torah

Sharon Liberman Mintz

The Artistic Traditions of Decorated Esther Scrolls

Rabbi Abigail Treu

The Art of Aging Gracefully

As in the past, there will be cocktails and a lovely buffet dinner in the JTS Garden with music by the OZ Klezmer Band, followed by ten-minute sessions with each of the six distinguished JTS professors. The evening will end with dessert and closing remarks by Chancellor Arnold Eisen.

In addition to Or Zarua, participating synagogues include Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Park Avenue Synagogue, Sutton Place Synagogue, Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Center, Forest Hills Jewish Center, Shelter Rock Jewish Center, and Temple Beth Shalom.

The cost to attend is \$180 per person, and you will need photo ID to be admitted to the JTS campus. Invitations with additional information will be arriving by mail.

Learning to Read Torah at Or Zarua

Newest students to layne Rosh Hodesh in June

Mark Somerstein

For some time now, teaching people to read the Torah has been performance-based. You learn to read in general, yes, but upon “graduation” you must read a specific piece of Torah. For the past several classes, those pieces have been the reading for the eighth day of Pesah. I thought that was ideal: The individual aliyot are short, and the same reading doubles for the second day of Shavuot. Two for the price of one—what could be better?

The current group of learners have found an answer. Rather than something read twice a year, how about a reading that returns twelve times? Yes, the current project is the reading for Rosh Hodesh. The aliyot are also relatively short, and there is a twelvefold return on the original investment, sometimes thirteen. The students have taught their teacher well.

Phyllis Solomon

When I was growing up, I never imagined that women could, or would, read Torah. Certainly not me. It was inconceivable.

How the Jewish world has changed.

As a young girl, I saw little of my father. He was overseas, fighting in World War II, and died not long after the war’s end, when I was eight years old. The dominant male figure in my household was my Zayde, of blessed memory, a loving but stern traditional Orthodox Jew and the widowed father of four girls (my mother the next-to-youngest). Although he loved all of us, Zayde certainly couldn’t envision a serious or significant role for us in religious study or worship. My father was a Kohen, but even that did not raise my religious standing with Zayde.



CHARLIE SPELHOIZ

Mark Somerstein (left) with OZ’s newest Torah readers, Gerry and Phyllis Solomon.

Since our family was not well off, there was no money—and no impetus—for me to go to Hebrew school. Studying Hebrew, learning to daven—let alone learning to layne—was not available to me; it was nothing I could aspire to achieve. Even as an adult, as I joined women in our rightful place on the bimah, reading Torah still was not something that made its way onto my “to-do list.” That is, until I met Rabbi Wechsler.

I first learned to love and take hold of Torah from Rabbi Wechsler. Being exposed to and learning the commentaries and interpretations was fascinating. But more important, Rabbi Wechsler made me realize that learning about Torah is not enough: To be fully engaged I had to experience Torah. To me, the way to do that was to layne.

This was not an easy task, especially with no Hebrew school background. But

again, Rabbi Wechsler to the rescue. He found the perfect teacher for me—Mark Somerstein. First, as a tutor for my adult Bat Mitzvah several years ago, and now as our Torah reading instructor, Mark offers the perfect blend of motivation and encouragement. He is the best tutor for someone like me, rich in enthusiasm and desire, but still striving in linguistic skills and experience. He is patient and understanding, with a wonderful sense of humor.

Mark has come up with what I think is a perfect time for me and my husband Gerry to experience our newly learned skill at laying: Rosh Hodesh. This year, in June, it happens to coincide with our wedding anniversary. As Mark points out to Gerry and me, learning that Torah portion will give us many times each year to layne. What a good deal! Todah rabah, Mark. Todah rabah, Rabbi Wechsler.

OR ZARUA CRAFTS CLUB The next meetings of the Or Zarua Crafts Club will be held on Sundays, May 20 and June 10, at 10:15 a.m. in the OZ library. Remember, no experience is necessary to join the Crafts Club, and older children and nonmembers are also welcome to attend.

Rudi Wolff's "Our Colorful Bible"

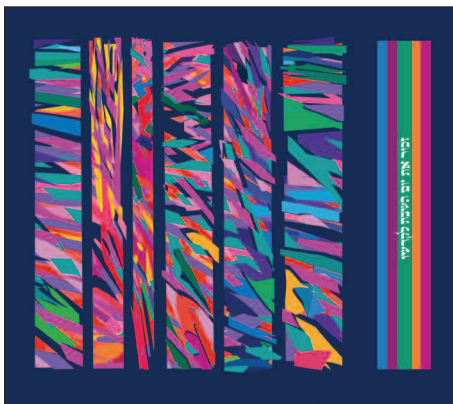
Now showing in the Or Zarua Gallery

The 22 prints that make up Rudi Wolff's "Our Colorful Bible" continue to be on display in the OZ Gallery, attracting a variety of admirers. In two series of serigraph prints, the talented Rudi Wolff uses vivid colors and abstract forms to suggest the force of the Ten Commandments as well as anecdotes from each of the 12 parshiyot of the Book of Genesis.

Together with banners designed with Or Zarua's initials, the prints create a striking and celebratory effect.

In addition to the images, Rudi provides his personal commentary on each label, giving viewers insight into the subject and provoking the viewer to consider different aspects of our Bible.

Or Zarua is one of the few congregations to sustain an ongoing program of art exhibitions conceived and researched by our members. Everyone is invited to join the OZ Gallery Committee. If you are interested, please contact Bobbi Coller through the Or Zarua office at 212-452-2310.



Observe the Sabbath Day

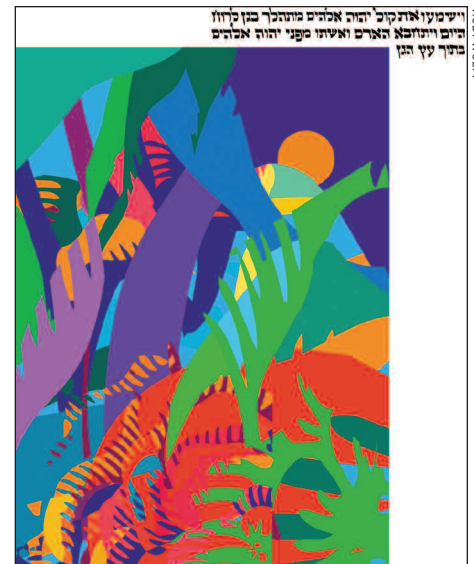


Thou Shalt Not Murder



כי זה שנתים הרעב בקרב הארץ ועוד חמשי שנים אשר אין זרשי וקציר

Vayigash: Famine has been in the land



And Adam and Eve Heard the Voice of God in The Garden of Eden

RABBI WECHSLER TEACHES ON SIRIUS XM RADIO

Sundays at 3:00 a.m., 5:00 a.m., and 7:00 a.m.



Rabbi Wechsler can be heard on SiriusXM Stars Channel three times each Sunday. Subscribers to SiriusXM Satellite Radio can access the program, "Rabbi Wechsler Teaches," on Channel 107. Nonsubscribers can obtain a free, three-day trial at www.siriusxm.com.

OR ZARUA MINYAN Contact Sheldon Adler at sheldon.adler@skadden.com or choose "Daily Minyan" under the "Prayer" menu on www.orzarua.org to sign up for a day or two each month.

Siddur Ceremony at OZ

A special event at Shabbat services, March 10

LIANA BURGESS



Or Zarua's third-grade students received his or her first Siddur during Shabbat Hayeled, the Children's Shabbat, on March 10. Each child also gave a short presentation describing their view of being Jewish.

Family and Youth Activities

May 2012

Sunday, May 20 • 10:15 a.m.
CRAFTS CLUB

Monday, May 21 • 7:00 and 8:15 p.m.
SUPPER AND ANNUAL MEETING
RSVP by Wednesday, May 16.
See page 1 for details.

Saturday, May 26 • 10:30 a.m.
JUNIOR CONGREGATION
For 2nd grade and older. Service led by students, teachers, and parents.

Saturday, May 26 • 9:15 p.m.
TIKKUN LEYL SHAVUOT
Following Minhah/Ma'ariv at 8:10 p.m.
and a Shavuot study session led by Rabbi

Wechsler at 9:15 p.m., a feast of ice cream sundaes and cheesecake will be served. See page 3 for details.

June 2012

Sunday, June 3 • TBA
CELEBRATE ISRAEL PARADE
Step-off time and location will be announced. See page 13 for details.

Monday, June 4 • 6 p.m.
GALA TRIBUTE
Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers
See page 1 for details.

Sunday, June 10 • 10:15 a.m.
CRAFTS CLUB

HEBREW SCHOOL CALENDAR

May 2012

- Wed 2** Classes in session
- Mon 7** Classes in session
- Wed 9** Classes in session
- Mon 14** Classes in session;
B'nai Jeshurun
- Wed 16** Classes in session
- Mon 21** Classes in session
- Wed 23** Last day of school

Preparing for Pesah

Hebrew School students clean up hametz and participate in a model seder



LANA BURGESS

Or Zarua's Hebrew School students prepared for Pesah by cleaning up all hametz in the synagogue classrooms and then destroying it. During this process, the students learned the prayers and halakhah associated with preparing for Pesah.



LANA BURGESS

Or Zarua Hebrew School students and their families learned the details of Pesah preparations by participating in the annual model Seder.



CONGREGATION OR ZARUA

127 East 82nd Street
New York, NY 10028-0807

May/June Checklist

- *Departures*, a Japanese film on preparing the dead, will be screened by the Hevra Kadisha on Tuesday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m. in the Or Zarua social hall (page 7).
- The 23rd Annual Meeting of Congregation Or Zarua will take place on Monday, May 21. Supper is at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting will convene at 8:15 p.m. To help with planning, RSVP for supper and the meeting by Wednesday, May 16 (page 1).
- Tikkun Leyl Shavuot discussion on S.Y. Agnon's *Atem Re-etem* (Present at Sinai), a rabbinical analysis of the revelation at Sinai, with Rabbi Wechsler, Saturday, May 26, 9:15 p.m., followed by ice cream sundaes and cheesecake. Remember that Minhah/Ma'ariv for Shavuot begin at 8:10 p.m. (page 3).
- Celebrate Israel Parade, Sunday, June 3. Step-off time and location to be announced (page 13).
- Gala Tribute to honor Rabbi Wechsler and our Board presidents, and to build OZ's future by establishing The Harlan J. Wechsler Education Initiative, Monday, June 4, 6–10 p.m., Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers (page 1).
- OZ Book Discussion features Shalom Auslander's *Hope: A Tragedy* on Sunday, June 3, 7:30 p.m. (page 8).
- The JTS Party in the Garden will be held on Thursday, June 14, 6:30 p.m. (page 13).
- The Crafts Club will meet on Sundays, May 20 and June 10, at 10:15 a.m. in the OZ Library.
- The last meeting of Marc Ashley's class, "May the King Answer Us When We Call: The Nature of Jewish Prayer," will be May 6 at 10:00 a.m., in the Or Zarua library (page 3).
- Talmud Class with Rabbi Wechsler is Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. in the library. The last class will be held on May 23.
- Sign up for at least one of the many Hesed activities listed on page 7.
- Rudi Wolff's "Our Colorful Bible" is currently on display in the OZ Gallery in the social hall (page 15).
- Please sign up for the morning minyan.
- Listen to "Rabbi Wechsler Teaches" on Sirius XM Radio (page 15).
- Call the Or Zarua office (212-452-2310) if you have questions about or wish to sponsor any OZ program or event.

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. All copy for the July/August 2012 issue should be received by Monday, June 4.