

HaKol

The Voice



A Publication of Congregation B'nai Tikvah

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RABBI'S MESSAGE

The Shabbat Sermon of the Seattle Birdwoman

One day last summer, while vacationing in Seattle, my family and I took a Shabbat afternoon stroll through a small park built over a freeway near our hotel. In a plaza at the center of the park, we chanced upon a remarkable scene: A woman surrounded on all sides by what seemed like hundreds of birds.

As we stood watching, she removed the cap on a quart jar full of seeds and tipped it out on the ground. Holding the open container beside her, she moved her electric wheelchair forward and back. She smiled as the trail of food left in her wake was eagerly gobbled up by her feathered friends.

Next she took the lid off a large can of mixed nuts and tossed some to a family of squirrels and a pair of chipmunks who appeared out of the bushes beside her. Each successive toss was a little

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Chanukah will be a little different this year. Yes, there will be a party and games and food! But...this year we, in conjunction with Jewish Federation and other area synagogues, will celebrate Chanukah with our Jewish neighbors who are NOT affiliated with a synagogue.

Federation will be publicizing the event, which takes place on Sunday, December 12th. However, please invite your Jewish friends to attend who are not affiliated.

This event is the start of a year-long effort, an effort which will hopefully continue into the future, to bring Jews back to the synagogue and Jewish family life. We have several committees and events planned that could use volunteers. Please call Rabbi Warmflash at the office if you wish to help.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is calling its outreach effort "Jewish Continuity". One, of the many

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... a note about our
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Our goal is to provide fine photography and pleasant memories of your very special day. We plan your photography sessions as to allow you, as well as your family and guests to enjoy the affair. Pre - wedding ceremony photographs are scheduled to allow a complete but relaxed session.

Bar / Bat Mitzvah portraits are also planned in a similar manner keeping all religious aspects in mind.

Please call us to discuss your photographic needs today.

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Rabbi's Message (cont.)

shorter until, before long, she had the animals literally eating out of her hand.

After a while, she turned to my children and asked if they would like to help her feed the animals. She gave each of them a few nuts and instructed them to hold out their open palms and wait for the animals to approach. "The important thing" she said, "is to be patient, and remain very still."

The Talmudic rabbis teach that on the sabbath we may be privileged to experience a glimpse of the messianic era, a time when we will be restored to the garden and all God's creatures will once again live in perfect harmony. That day, in the company of a remarkable woman and surrounded by God's creations, I understood exactly what they meant.

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President's Message (continued)

things, that they believe will help provide our youth with an opportunity for serious exploration of Jewish identity and nurtures their involvement in adult Jewish life are participation in the youth groups--Kadima and U.S.Y. Likewise, we at Congregation B'nai Tikvah are committed to our youth and want their "exploration" to be meaningful, wonderful and long-lasting. Please call Joel Gerbman (937-5114) or Mark Cohen (821-5917) if you wish to assist OUR youth program. Speaking of which, our U.S.Y.'ers hosted a fabulous New Jersey region "Leadership Training Institute" convention during the weekend of October 22nd-24th. There were more than 140 attendees. Yashar Koach to all who planned, helped and/or opened their homes temporarily to New Jersey's U.S.Y.'ers and potential leaders of the Conservative Movement.

Outreach, Jewish Continuity, "survival of the Jewish people"--whatever the phrase or label, is ALL of OUR jobs. Even if you can't serve on a committee, you can: 1) Light candles on Shabbat. 2) Share and participate in a "Shabbat dinner" with your family and others. 3) Attend Shabbat services as a family. 4) Attend synagogue events; and last, but not least, 5) Help make-up a minyon, during our daily services.

I look forward to seeing you on Shabbat and at Chanukah Park on the 12th of December.

Happy Chanukah!
Dr. Jack Mailman

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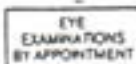
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RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NOTES

Shalom everyone. I hope all of you are keeping warm at this time of year. We have much going on around the Religious School to help us all keep busy and warm.

The Gimel Class was our first in leading Friday night services. They did a lovely job. Yashar Koach to all of the students who led the various prayer.

Upcoming events for December include an Alef Class naming ceremony on December 10th, at our regular Friday night service. The children have been studying the meaning of their names, why they were given that name and if they were named after anyone. It's always a lovely program and we look forward to sharing the evening with parents, siblings, and other relatives of the Alef Class students.

We are also having a group called "Good Clean Fun" perform a Chanukah Play for grades Kindergarten through Dalet. The performance will take place on Sunday morning, December 5th at 10:00 am. Therefore, our early session students will come to school from 9:00 am to 11:00 am and our late session students will attend from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. You will notice that each grade will be in school for an additional half hour. We would like to invite any children, grades kindergarten through fifth grade, who are Synagogue members but do not, for one reason or another, attend our Religious School, to join us in the Sanctuary for this performance.

Remember, Sunday, December 5th at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary: Good Clean Fun performs "The Story of Chanukah."

Chag Samaach! Have a lovely & miraculous Chanukah!

Shalom, L'Hitraot,

Vickie Amron

NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

Our back-to-school night was well attended. Our guest speaker was the coordinator of Health Education for Middlesex County Health Department, Teri Manes, who spoke about Poison Prevention. The parents met with their child's teacher who explained the nursery program. The parents were encouraged to do an art project for their children during their class time.

The highlight of December is always Chanukah when the pace of activity reaches its peak. The smell of potato latkes frying in oil permeated the air. Bonabini, the clown, entertained them and a gourmet lunch of peanut butter & jelly sandwiches were served. The children participated in a grab bag exchange and also received a dreidel and a small gift from the school. The story of brave Judah Maccabee and the miracle of the oil was told several times, and songs about Chanukah were sung. Gifts and cards were made by the children for their parents.

We will begin our nursery school registration for the 1993-94 school year soon. If interested, please make sure

Nursery School News (continued)

that we have your name on our list to receive an application in time. The nursery school office number is 297-0295.

OUT-OF-THE MOUTHS OF BABES:

When the children came out of the sukkah for the first time, Dara exclaimed, "This sukkah is cool!" ... When the teacher asked the class who was the first man on earth, Eric answered "Christopher Columbus!" ... The children observed how the frozen challah had risen overnight. When they were asked what is in the challah to make it rise, Lauren replied, "garlic!"

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Social Action Committee met for the first time this Fall on November 11th. Despite our late start, the group came up with many exciting plans.

First, we would like to thank Steve and Renee Levin for organizing the **CROP Walk**, which our synagogue participates in each October. This year, as in the past, our synagogue raised more funds than any other participating organization.

Marty Engel (297-3198) is again organizing the **Annual Blood Drive** in January. He is looking for volunteers to help.

Bev Nozick (246-1434) will be organizing the Congregation B'nai Tikvah **Pushka Can Program**. She will be looking

for people to make calls to congregants to see if they need to have someone pick-up their pushka can. This group will also decide on the distribution of the funds. Please give Bev a call!

Wendy and Ira Heisler (329-8228) are organizing **College Student Contacts**. They are trying to set-up networks for students who are away at college, as well as for congregants to invite Jewish students from local colleges to share a meal or holiday with us.

Judy Margolin (329-3420) is organizing a committee to work with **adolescents** in our congregation in developing **socially aware projects**. One of which, might be an on-going fund raising project to provide scholarships for high school students who want to spend a summer in Israel.

Sherry Wishnow (247-7208) will be organizing a group of people to **visit the sick** in the community, both hospitalized and at home. Please contact her for more details.

We have a new project in need of a leader. The project is called **Hand in Hand**. We hope to hook-up kids and adults with the elderly, sick, or people who just need a "helping hand" in some way. Please call Irene Rhodes (297-9482) if you are interested in this worthy program.

Paul Lehrer (297-9482) will be organizing our **Speakers Forum**. We would like to invite speakers on both Jewish and non-Jewish issues to speak at the synagogue. If you have any



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Social Action (continued)

ideas, please call Paul.

We will be calling congregants who turned down the corner "social action" on the cards handed out during the High Holiday service. We hope we have given you a well-rounded selection of social action projects which will compel your participation.

Our next meeting is Thursday December 9th, at 8:00 PM, at the synagogue. Please join us!

A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+A+
COLLEGE INFORMATION NIGHT
AT B'NAI TIKVAH
Sponsored by the Youth Dept.
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On Monday December 20th, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM, Congregation B'nai Tikvah will be conducting/hosting, free of charge, a college information seminar open to all high school students and their parents. (Congregants from synagogues in Highland Park, East Brunswick, and Somerset have also been invited.)

Two guest speakers have been invited. **Dave Mason**, a congregant and professional college consultant, will be discussing the following topics: criteria for choosing a college; maintaining a Jewish life on campus; criteria for acceptance to the college of your choice; and cost/financial aid information. **Rob Cohen**, President of Princeton Review (a S.A.T. Exam preparation course) will discuss how the exam has changed in recent years; what degree of

importance the colleges place on the exam; and the steps needed to prepare and do well on the exam.

"Hand-outs" will be given to all attendees as well as the opportunity to ask questions to the guest speakers. Light refreshments will be served. Please contact Joel Gerbman (937-5114) or Mark Cohen (821-5917) for further information.

FIFTY PLUS GROUP UPDATE

All who went to Washington, D.C. to visit the U.S. Holocaust Museum--a trip planned by Sy Kramer, had a very meaningful and moving experience. Thanks Sy!

A few tickets are still available for "Hello Muddah, Hell Faddah"--Allen Sherman's play, at the Forum Theatre on Wednesday and Sunday at 2:30 PM on December 15th and 19th respectively. Call Ann at 297-3575 if you are interested.

And, for the first time, on Tuesday December 28th, at NOON, we will have our New Year's Party with Entertainment Plus. Reservations are a must.

On Tuesday January 25th, at 1:00 PM, Sergeant Schott Hoover of the South Brunswick Police Department will address our group on "Senior self-protection at home, when shopping, and in the car". He is an excellent speaker and has a solid background on the subject. He last addressed our group on "automobile driving" and was extremely well-received. So, mark your

Fifty Plus (continued)

calendar and plan to be at our next meeting.

1994 will include many trips and theatre parties. Come to our meetings and be well-informed of future events. Make your reservations today (your check confirms your reservation) so you will not be told "sorry, the bus is full" or "the theatre tickets have been sold out"! Last minute tickets are not always available, especially for those requesting special seating (aisle seat) arrangements.

Please call Ann Cherson for additional information (297-3575), but NOT ON Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday) or Jewish holidays. I like enjoying them with my family. Thanks!

Who me? Sponsor a Kiddish?

Yes! Anyone can help to sponsor an Oneg Shabbat on Friday night or Kiddish on Saturday morning for any reason! The usual reasons are: family birthdays, wedding anniversaries, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs.

But there are many other occasions you could celebrate with our congregation -- the anniversary of your wedding engagement, when you first met your spouse, a new job, your long awaited retirement, your child's first step, your children finally left, they moved back in(!), your first

aliyah, moving to a new home, a clean house or just because you want to!

There are many occasions to share -- and remembrances we would want to share with you.

Think of all the possibilities and call!

For information on price and scheduling call Deborah Spigner, 545-8457.

NEWS FROM RAPAPORT HOUSE (United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)

The METNY Region's Committee on Marriage Within the Faith, is sponsoring a conference, "Marriage Within the Faith: Being Jewish is Doing Jewish-- Programs for Encouraging Jewish Survival," on Sunday, December 19, 1993, at Temple Beth Shalom, Roslyn Heights, from 2 to 5:15 pm. Highlights include workshops led by noted speakers such as Rabbi Jack Moline, E. Temma Kingsley, Rabbi Alan Silverstein and Rabbi Shelly Melzer; a multi-media center and a listing of age appropriate programs. For information call 212-533-7800, extension 2154.

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SISTERHOOD CONNECTION

HAPPY HANUKKAH!

We at Sisterhood wish all our readers a Happy Hanukkah. To help enjoy the celebrations, here is a favorite latke recipe:

4 lrge. potatoes (about 1½ lbs), peeled; 1 med. onion; 1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley (optional); 1 lrge. egg; 1 tsp salt; ½ tsp white pepper; ½ tsp baking powder; 2 tbsp all purpose flour; ½ cup cooking oil

Grate potatoes and onion. Transfer to colander and squeeze to press out liquid. Combine with parsley, egg, salt, pepper, flour and baking powder. Heat oil in heavy skillet. For each pancake, drop about 2 tbsp of mixture into pan. Flatten with back of spoon. Fry over medium heat about 4-5 min. on each side.

Dear Mom:

The Sisterhood Year is flying by. With a successful Paid-Up Membership Dinner, Lox Box, and Giftshop Showcase behind us, I now have time for a little reflection. Basically I have a new respect and admiration for all my predecessors. I never realized how much a position like this can impact your life. To Lisa, Meryl, Sandi, Ann, Barbara, and all the others, I say thank you now with much deeper understanding and appreciation for your hard work, dedication, and sacrifices.

Love,
Jill

WANTED: YOUR FAVORITE RECIPES

Sisterhood plans to publish a brand new cookbook. We are gathering new and exciting kosher, low fat,

delicious recipes and need yours. If you have a great, tried and true, favorite recipe, we would love it. Send it to Lynn Biderman c/o Giftshop at the synagogue office.

SEND A LEAGRAM to a special friend to let them know you're thinking of them! Call Hilda Kaufman at 422-0687.

TOVA'S SCRIP

(Bobbi Binder 247-2797)

Sisterhood now offers scrip for purchases at Tova's in Hightstown. The program is similar to the synagogue's (every purchase you make with scrip gives money to Sisterhood) It is a great way to support Sisterhood while purchasing high quality kosher meat and other food products.

Everyone who attended Paid-Up Membership knows how wonderful it was. The food was delicious, and the entertainment great. Thanks to Joyce Gerbman and her membership committee for a terrific job.

Our thanks to all congregants who ordered lox boxes. We hope you enjoyed brunching in. Thank you for your support!

Watch for our flyer on January's meeting.

Ellen Gold was on a 65th St. crosstown bus when she heard two young boys, about 12, in serious discussion. She particularly liked this line: "I'm working on becoming an atheist, but my mother says I still have to have a bar mitzvah."

Reprinted from *The New York Times*.

Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, Inc.

475 Riverside Dr. Suite 244 New York, NY 10115 (212) 749-8100 Fax (212) 316-4271
12228 Venice Blvd. Suite 483 Los Angeles, CA 90066 (310) 836-7574 Fax (310) 839-7273

October 20, 1993

Mr. Mark Roller
9 Quince Place
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

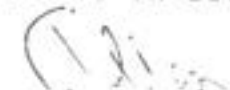
Dear Mr. Roller:

On behalf of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs I would like to welcome you into our brotherhood. The Men's Club of B'nai Tikvah North Brunswick, New Jersey's application was received by Regional President Norman Kurtz and presented to the FJMC Executive Committee on October 12, 1993.

I have enclosed with this letter copies of our most recent "Torchlight" newspaper for you to distribute to your membership. The next issue of Torchlight will be mailed to your members' homes. Also enclosed with this mailing are membership cards and a copy of our 1993 Men's Club Sabbath program.

Your club charter has been ordered and Norman Kurtz will arrange to present it to your club at a future meeting. I look forward to a long healthy relationship as we help one another strengthen Jewish family life.

Yours in Brotherhood,


Allen Wm. Brown

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ABOUT US

ISRAEL -- The Rabbinate is the issuer of the kosher licenses in Israel, and the process is usually very cut and dried, relying on the list of ingredients, method of preparation, supervision, etc. However, recently one all-purpose cleanser was refused such approval, for its name was "Almighty." Yes, the manufacturer changed the name of the product. Do bear in mind, however, that not all religious terms are taboo, such as the liquor called (appropriately?) "Hallelujah."

MILITARY NON-SECRETS -- The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) distributes a weekly publication, and from time to time reveals statistics from their computer files. We can now inform you that 28,669 of last year's soldiers were surnamed Cohen, with Levy a close second. First names? Mostly Moshe, followed by Yosef. And the average male soldier is now 2 1/2 inches taller than twenty years ago.

MYSTERIOUS NOMENCLATURE -- Our spies tell us a fair in Maine this summer featured booths, one of which was adorned with a sign Tora Palm and Card Reading. Puzzle: should this sign have said Psalm Reading? And, if these were really Torah cards, could they be read on Shabbat, when card playing is forbidden?

INDIA -- Diplomatic ties now being established with Israel, some promising results have been noted. This past Passover, for example, when a kosher Passover seder was held at an Indian hotel, with kosher

chickens flown in from a New York kosher restaurant, the kitchen made kosher, and two rabbis brought in from Brooklyn to conduct the Seder.

BUT...THERE'S ALWAYS A "BUT" -- However, the Indian government recently kiboshed a planned October visit to New Delhi and Bombay by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, because they insisted that the "Jerusalem" be dropped from the name, and the orchestra be called the "Israel Broadcasting Orchestra," probably as a sop to Muslim interests. Their request was refused of course, and the performances were canceled.

HAIFA -- Renovating their home in nearby Ramat Yishai, a couple discovered a priceless ancient Byzantine mosaic in their back yard. By law, all antiquities in Israel are owned by the Antiquities Authority, so the Authority was dutifully notified of the find. A team was sent to inspect the findings, they ordered the couple to cover it up to preserve it, and then tendered a bill for expenses of \$25,000. Bet you all thought this kind of thing happened only in America!

MEICHAL -- Dates have been known since recorded history, and are perfect for a special nosh for Chanukah. This recipe calls for 12 ounces of the pitted fruit. First heat 1/2 cup of sugar with 1 cup of water, simmer until syrupy. Combine 1/4 lb. ground almonds or other nuts and 1/2 tsp. of lemon juice, add 2 or 3 tbs. of the hot syrup. Then, add enough confectioners' sugar to bind the mixture to a paste,

About Us (continued)

and stuff the dates. Heat the rest of the syrup to a simmer, and cook several dates at a time without stirring, until well-covered with the syrup. Remove with slotted spoon onto a lightly greased plate to dry. Place in candy papers, if desired, and enjoy! Oh yes, this is a fat-free item, but do not, we repeat, do not, count the calories!

L'hitroat,

Mili Rosloff

WHY DO WE HAVE CHILDREN?

After years of trying, a father finally succeeded in getting his daughter to comprehend the love he felt for her. She had just given birth, and the baby became her center. "Now," the woman's father said, "you'll understand how much I love you."

Often, children come first. Savings, friendships and leisure time -- everything -- revolves around the child. Why do we happily sacrifice our pleasures, our money, sometimes even our lives? Why do we have children?

There are the usual explanations: we procreate to perpetuate the species, out of duty, for moral beliefs, to reassure ourselves, out of passion. But the focus is the child himself. We make babies because we need them; we need them because they need us. The bond that makes us children to our parents and parents to our children is indestructible.

We have children to honor our parents -- a debt that can never be paid, only transferred. "You are not only my son," Maimonides, a 12th-century Jewish philosopher, once told his child, "You are also my father's grandson."

-- Albert Memmi in Le Monde,
Paris

DO YOU HAVE A THOUGHT TO SHARE?

Thank you to Aaron Rosloff for contributing the above piece for all of us to enjoy (and ponder). If you have some favorite story or an article you come across which others may enjoy, please leave it in the HaKol box in the Synagogue office and we'll be happy to print it in this publication. Indicate the author and if the article is from a magazine or book, so that we can give appropriate credit to its author.

THE JERRY YAROS MEMORIAL VIDEO LIBRARY IS GROWING!

There have been two additions to the video library which all are welcome to borrow.

Ann Rosenzweig in memory of her parents Moses and Edith Falthzik, contributed a copy of Europa, Europa.

Additionally, Rabbi Warmflash has appeared on television in a discussion format, in which he defines various aspects of Judaism. This particular program was taped for our library and is entitled Life Cycle -- Rabbi Warmflash.



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Ken & Rochelle Wistreich on the birth of their son, Brian Mark.

Marc & Jody Lieberman in honor of the birth of their daughter, Taylor Jayde.

Karyn & Michael Odriscoll in honor of the birth of their daughter, Eileen.

CONDOLENCES TO:

Barbara Leebaw on the loss of her father, Milton Frankel.

Isaac Grodzinski on the loss of his father, Shmuel Meyer Grodzinski.

Alan Kane on the loss of his grandmother, Marion Cohen.

Phil Rhodes, on the loss of his mother, Mildred Rhodes.

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Hattie Loewen in memory of Herbert Loewen.

Rose Julius in memory of Simon, Ida, Bertram & Irving Julius.

Marlene, Kenneth, Lauren & Jared Salzinger in memory of Abraham Gershbein.

Martin & Deborah Spigner in memory of Raymond Kane.

Aaron & Linda Jay in memory of Sheldon Jay.

**JERRY YAROS MEMORIAL
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Abby & Ben Krevsky & Family in memory of Rebecca Binder's first birthday.

Ann Rosenzweig in memory of Moses and Edith Falthzik.

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Steven Luria

Dr. Arthur Perry in memory of Mila Treiser, mother of Murray Treiser.

Sophie Gorcey.

CANTOR'S SPECIAL FUND

Stephen, Bette & Jordanna Koffler in memory of Regina Koffler.

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

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Isaac Grodzinski.

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**CHILDCARE
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at B'nai Tikvah**

TIME: 10:00 - 12:00 noon

AGES: 1 - 4 years

AIM: Free play in a safe nursery environment.

B'nai Tikvah will provide nursery space and a mid morning snack.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Change diapers or take children to toilet. Please check child during service.
2. Help with childcare when necessary. We're looking for a 5 to 1 ratio or less of children to adults.
3. Assist in clean up. (Toys away, food return to kitchen)

Donations for the care of our children on Shabbat will be gladly accepted. Please call the synagogue office.

L.T.I. WRAP-UP

Dear Congregants:

I'd like to thank everyone for all of their hard work and donations which helped to make USY's October Leadership Training Institute very successful. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to thank all of you in person, so I'd like to do it publicly. Thank you to the following individuals and families:

The following families helped by housing USYers:

Adaret	Albert	Asnis
Bach	Biderman	Binder
Blumberg	Brams	Bromley
Cohen (Larry & Dorothy)	Daner	Danto
Feiner	Gerbman	Goldberg
Greenberg (Bill & Ellie)	Heit	Kane
Karp	Kivor	Koffler
Krantz	Kutliroff	Margolin
Mason	Millinger	Rogove
Roller	Rosen (Ed & Phyllis)	Rosenzweig (Sam & Ann)
Saks	Spigner	Talmud
Tinkel	Trooskin	Warmflash
Weg	Weiss (Lois & Robert)	

The following people donated items for our welcome kits:

Mr. Goldstein	Dr. Mailman	Mr. Mason
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The following people donated their time over the weekend to help serve meals to the USYers:

Steve Albert	Marc Binder	Laura Bromley
Larry Cohen	Mark Cohen	Joel Gerbman
Bill & Ellie Greenberg	Ilene Karp	Dave Mason
Irwin & Michelle Millinger		Martin & Deborah Spigner

Finally, the following people helped in coordinating the weekend:

Mark Cohen	Joel Gerbman	Dov Goldberg
Wendy Sleppin	Rabbi Warmflash	

I hope I didn't forget anyone.

USYours,

Barry Safeer,
USY Advisor

ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE

The eighth annual B'nai Tikvah blood donor drive will take place on Sunday, January 9, 1994 -- from 11am to 3pm -- at the Synagogue. With TV to continue feeding your football frenzy while you donate. Spend a little of your Sunday being part of this most important mitzvah. We've set a goal of fifty pints and we hope all of you will make the effort to come down and **Give the Gift of Life!** Donating blood is easy and practically painless. Everything used are one-time disposable materials.

There is no chance of any contamination. It will take less than an hour of your day. If you'd like to assist in making our drive a success, we can use some workers for registration and refreshments. Please call Marty Engel at 297-3198 to volunteer -- or if you need any further information.

Martin Engel, Chairman
South Brunswick Community Blood Bank

SOLOMON SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

DECEMBER 21, 1993
9:30 AM

The Solomon Schechter Day School will be holding an open house for pre-K through 8th grade. The open house will include an introduction to the school by the Director and visits to classes. The next Open House will be held on January 11, 1994.

For further information, please contact Deborah Miller, Director at (908) 238-7971.

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Jews By Choice Get Together and Find Common Challenges

An informal "get together" of Jews By Choice from the community was held at my home on November 7. I knew weeks beforehand that it was going to be a successful gathering -- Jews who have gone through conversion have lots to talk about. The evening was far too short to satisfy everyone's need to meet, talk and learn.

Most of the ten who met were meeting each other for the first time. It took little time to "break the ice", as everyone was ready and eager to explain how and why they had come to convert to Judaism. (Not to mention that my coffee turned out pretty good also. Divine intervention perhaps?) Some of the stories were similar -- conversion prior to marriage, conversion prior to having children, conversion after searching for a better way. Yet everyone's story struck me as a unique history, with brave players, determined to be true to their commitment to Judaism. Pride radiated. I'm very moved by the experience. There was so much hopeful energy in my living room that night!

I personally felt a immediate bond to the individuals who came to my home. It was so great to hear others express feeling awkward after conversion. I sensed that others found comfort in the realization that they were not alone in more complicated challenges.

What challenges do Jews By Choice face in our community? I think Jews By Choice personally feel that they have to "work" at being and feeling like Jews while it seems to come naturally to those born Jewish (or Jews Without Choice). Several have relatives who have been less than supportive during and after conversion, adding difficulty to their lives. Others find their Jewish spouses are minimally interested in practicing Judaism, creating a void in the life of the Jew By Choice who has studied and earnestly accepted the Jewish religion. Some Jews By Choice do not feel accepted seriously by other Jews -- and by other non-Jews -- having heard comments like "Well, you're not *really* Jewish, you converted just to get married." Not having a familial traditions to turn to, introducing Jewish ritual can feel unnatural and doesn't *feel* traditional. Women who have converted feel a strong obligation to introduce and continue rituals in the home, but sometimes feel uncomfortable in this role.

The group will be meeting again on Sunday, December 5 to continue its discussions. I feel we've only begun to tap into our energy for supporting, listening to and learning from each other. (I'll let you know how the coffee turns out.) I spoke with a few people who couldn't meet in November, but had an interest in this kind of discussion. Please call me, because you are most welcome. Dorothy Cohen 821-4376.

CONGREGATION B'NAI TIKVAH

Rabbi Andrew Warmflash
Cantor Dov Goldberg

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HaKol -- The Voice

Editors: Gigi and Mark Cohen
(908) 821-5917

Advertising: Gale Dillman
(908) 821-7392

To submit articles:

** Submissions for any Hakol must be in the Synagogue office by the first of the previous month. For instance, the January deadline for HaKol will be December 1, and the February deadline is January 1.

** We welcome all written contributions. Any submissions which the editors find inappropriate, will be turned over to the Rabbi and/or President for final approval.

** Suggestions for improving this monthly bulletin are also welcome.

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DAILY MINYON SCHEDULE

Friday (Shabbat)	8:00 pm
Saturday (Shabbat)	9:30 am
Sunday Mornings	9:15 am
<u>(bring your tefillin, learners welcome!)</u>	
Sunday-Thursday	7:30 pm
Thursday Mornings	7:00 am

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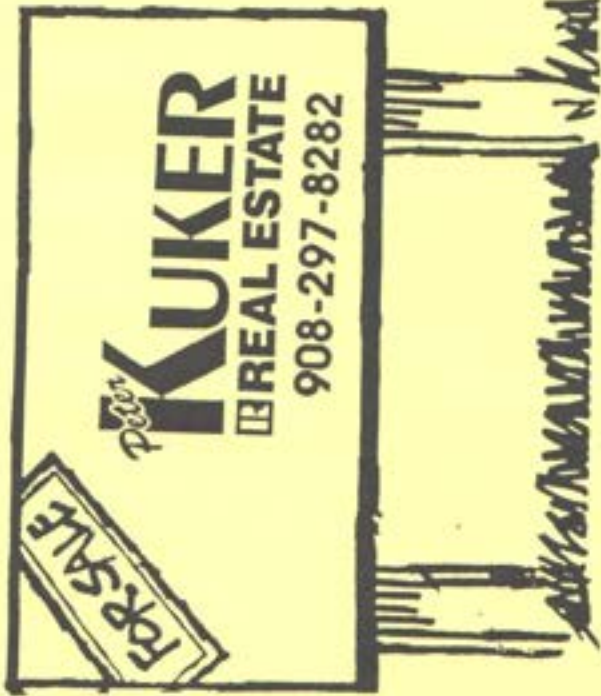
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