



BETH ABRAHAM SYNAGOGUE

Bulletin

Dayton's Voice of Conservative Judaism

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Upcoming Events:

April 17th: Shabbat With a Beat

May 10th: Mother's Day Brunch

Susie Katz Honored at 2009 Donor Dinner

by David Fuschman

Two years ago, Beth Abraham honored its then living past Presidents at our Donor Dinner. Although Susie Katz did not hold the title of "past" President, it would be fair to say that there was a sense that she, too, should have shared the stage with our past leaders. This year's Donor Dinner will honor Susie for the six years she has tirelessly served our congregation as her final term comes to an end.

In our continuing quest to create not only a special night, but

also a fun night, the evening has been titled "A Black and White Gala." As the name implies, we are asking everyone who attends to dress in black and/or white. This does not mean Black Tie, but rather cocktail attire that reflects the theme. The room decorations will flash the same decor. There will be good food, good music for your listening and dancing pleasure, great fun and a wonderful honoree, as Beth Abraham holds the first Donor Dinner in our new home.

The Donor Dinner, co-chaired

by Mark and Claudia Feuer and David and Randi Fuchsman, will be held May 17th, 2009, beginning at 6:00 p.m. You will be receiving your invitations soon, which will contain other information about the evening.

Please join your fellow congregants in honoring Susie and reveling in all the wonderful things that have transpired in our congregation during her tenure as President.



In this Issue:

Cantor's Corner, Page 2

Treasurer's Report, Page 4

March Board of Director Minutes, Page 7

Shabbat with a Beat, Insert



Scholar-In-Residence Provides Uplifting Weekend

by Steven Fraim

If you search the world-wide web for "Rabbi Jack Riemer," you will find dozens of pages of other rabbis quoting his sermons and stories. At this year's Susan and David Joffe Scholar-in-Residence weekend, Beth Abraham not only got the original Jack Riemer telling his own stories, but a wonderful weekend of memories as well.

The weekend began with a wonderful "Shabbat with a Beat" service filled with Cantor Raizen's lovely music and fun. After dinner, Rabbi Riemer mixed stories of his time at Beth Abraham with insight on how our priorities transform over the years. His title of "The Greatest Mitzvah to Observe," may have been a wry way to introduce the idea of changing focus as we mature, but it applied just as well to the mix of old memories and fresh, future promise that he shared with every story.

His D'var Torah on Saturday was promised to be his reminiscences of Dayton, yet he wove in themes from the parshah with stories of Dayton in the 1960s and 1970s. After an

excellent Kiddush lunch, Rabbi Riemer's presentation was "David, Bathsheba, and Woody Allen." In fine rabbinic tradition, he showed four takes on the famous story, each focusing on the main character in different roles as villain or hero.

The Sunday morning presentation at the Men's Club breakfast was on the topic of ethical wills. Rabbi Riemer not only explained the use and drafting of ethical wills (as outlined in his book *So That Your Values Live On*) he gave an impassioned plea that it is our values, more than anything, that we need to pass on to coming generations. It was a wonderfully moving climax to a joyous and educational weekend.

One of things that made this weekend such a joy is the broad range of synagogue volunteers who got involved to help, guide, provide assistance, and share in this delight. Susan and David Joffe were extremely generous in sponsoring this new program for Beth Abraham through their gift to the Capital Campaign. Randi Rothman and Janice Krochmal put

in untold hours and effort to lead the committee that planned and executed the events. The committee included: Alan Chesen, Steve Fraim, Linda Horenstein, Ellen Leffak, Joan Marcus, Phyllis Rosen and Mary Rita Weissman. Cantor Jerry and Goldye Kopmar acted as Rabbi Riemer's hosts for the weekend, and could not have been more gracious in opening their home. Rabbi Barsky lent his expertise to planning the weekend and even doubled as "chauffeur" on Sunday. Both the Men's Club and the Shabbat with a Beat committee gladly made a special effort to make the weekend a success. Dennis worked extra hours doing everything from putting the publicity in the mail to re-setting the social hall between events. And, as always, Annette and Claudia gave the committee their full support. Dozens of congregants planned, wrote, drove, called, cooked, mashgiach'ed, cleaned, and made this work. And maybe most important were the hundreds of congregants and guests who turned up at the events

Continued on page 2

The Cantor's Corner

Cantor Andrea Raizen

2

This year on the morning of *Erev Pesach*, Wednesday, April 8, the Jewish world will mark an event that occurs only once every 28 years. *Birkat HaHamah*, "the blessing of the sun," is a celebration that marks the return of the sun to its original place in the heavens at the precise time and day of its creation. On that morning, following morning prayers, we are to go outside and pronounce the blessing, "Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, the Maker of the work of Creation." Honestly, I was unaware of this event the last and only time it has occurred in my lifetime in 1981. And even for some of our congregation's senior members, I might venture to guess that many of you hadn't heard of it in 1953 or before that in 1925. But this year, more of the Jewish world has chosen to participate in acknowledging this occasion as it offers us the opportunity to stop and reflect on God's role and our role in creating and sustaining the universe. In this day and age of searching for clean and renewable sources of energy, what better time than *Birkat HaHamah* to focus on ways to harness the power and potential of the sun. For those of you interested in learning more about the details of *Birkat HaHamah*, I refer you to the website, www.ritualwell.org. Here you will find information regarding how our sages calculated this event and the liturgy that accompanies it. We will recite the blessing at Beth Abraham as part of our morning minyan on Wednesday, April 8. Minyan will begin at 6:40 am that day.

For some of us, 28 years seems an eternity, and for others it is the blink of an eye. In my family it represents a generation. My oldest niece was born in 1981 and is now imminently expecting her first child. Twenty eight years ago I was working as a dental hygienist and rethinking my life's goals. Within a year I left to spend a year studying in Israel which began my journey into Jewish education and eventually the cantorate. Just think where we have come technologically in the past 28 years. The internet existed, but not as we now know it. And how many of you even owned a computer? A new children's book, "The Sun's Special Blessing" by Sandy Wasserman was just published for the occasion of *Birkat HaHamah*. In it, she

tells the story of a third grade religious school class who is learning about this event from their teacher who, 28 years ago was a third grade student in that very school. His class had created and buried a time capsule on the synagogue grounds, filled with memorabilia, both Jewish and secular, to be opened in 2009 by the current third grade class. In the capsule they found a movie poster from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, a New York Times headline announcing the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, a brochure about a video game called 'Pac-Man', cassette tapes of music by Debbie Friedman, Jewish children's magazines, *Tom Thumb* and *The World Over*, a picture of John Lennon and a Rubik's Cube. The class members then proceeded to create a new time capsule, filling it with items that represent this new century. I read this book to our students at Beth Abraham, and they were intrigued by this idea of looking both to the past and the future. What if we had found a similar time capsule from the Beth Abraham students of 1981? It probably would have contained some of the same types of items from the book, but it might have contained a roster of the congregation's members, items from Rabbi Press and Cantor Kopmar and news of what was happening in the school and youth groups. Most likely there would have been recordings and publicity of the Children's Chorale as well. Finding such a time capsule might cause some people to sigh and reflect on "the good old days of Beth Abraham," while others might rejoice in the opportunity to celebrate this rare Jewish ritual of blessing the sun, and feel a sense of renewal and a chance to re-create our community.

I would love to know that many of you might acknowledge this awesome event this year. Whether you choose to join us at minyan that morning, or simply step outside in the early morning hours, look up in the sky, recite the blessing and imagine that the sun is in the very place that God set it on the fourth day of creation. Reflect on the past 28 years of your life and imagine the world in the year 2037. I pray that each of us dedicate ourselves to the betterment of our community and of the world and participate as true partners with God in this endeavor. I wish all of you a happy and kosher Pesach!

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Scholar In Residence...

Continued from page 1

over the weekend to hear our delightful speaker.

It was wonderful to see Rabbi Riemer, the great scholar, mixed with the erstwhile Beth Abraham Rabbi so well remembered. Perhaps the weekend can best be summed up by the unnamed individual who observed, "It is not often that you can hear somebody mention world renowned scholar, beloved returning leader and Hadassah groupie all in the same sentence." The weekend was a joy, and set a high mark for future Susan and David Joffe Scholar-in-Residence weekends to come.

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From Seed to Flower

3

Rabbi Bernard Barsky

I think I admitted to you last spring that I have turned out to be an unsuccessful gardener so far. I haven't figured out things like the PH of the soil,



or how much fertilizer to put down, or even whether certain ambivalent patches of the garden should be considered sunny or shady. I've come to expect that the bulbs planted by the previous owner will come up beautifully, but it's always a surprise to see that anything I planted returns for another year to struggle

against my ignorance and neglect. So far this spring the only thing I've had time to do

is rake up last autumn's leaves, which have covered the back yard garden and patio all winter, as if those were no part of my dominion or responsibility. Now I have reclaimed them as mine.

And of course - yet still amazingly - under that cover of leaves the first shoots of my plantings are pushing up out of the earth. I know this is not a miracle, and yet it seems so to me every spring - or if not a miracle then a wonderful and surprising gift. As a young man I once learned a certain meditation exercise - intended to develop a visionary grasp of spiritual life and growth, and which I still try to practice occasionally - of concentrating attention on the phenomenon of a seed, which has the life force of the plant, flower and new seed folded up and concentrated tightly within it. Potency and act, promise and fulfillment, seed to flower.

In the language of biology we refer to the plant's DNA, but I still like to think of the theosophist Rudolf Steiner's "vegetable spirit" or of what the poet Dylan Thomas called "the force that through the green fuse drives the flower" - and as long as I'm not doing science, it doesn't matter what I call it. What that green force or vegetable spirit accomplishes is to take up the nutrients

and lifeless minerals around it and shape them fleetingly into the form of living plant and flower, then repack itself in a new seed, concealing and protecting its energy for yet another new birth, in another spring.

At the Passover seder we give a nod to the new growth of spring as we dip our sprig of parsley. But I doubt our ancient sages were thinking about spring at all. Scholars who have worked to reconstruct the seder's historical development point to the custom at Greco-Roman banquets of serving vegetable appetizers before a meal, rather than to any thoughts of the spring season. Yet we also know that the earliest Passover observance in the agricultural world of ancient Canaan

"The freedom from Mitzrayim does not mean emancipation from slavery or forced labor, but from a fettered and confined spirit unable to comprehend a God of imagination and inventiveness, a God who takes our animal nature merely as the proving ground for the risky experiment of freedom and the birth of moral action."

was superimposed on even more ancient spring rituals concerned with agricultural fertility. And therein we see something that is uniquely and importantly "Jewish" about the Israelite shift in focus, from sanctifying the fecundity of spring to celebrating the holiness of freedom.

The fertility rituals of the archaic world, with their strong sexual elements, bound human culture to the ever-repeating cycle of nature. Change and growth in such a world occur only within the eternal recurrence of the same. It is not the immorality of such practice which is troubling so much as its backwardness. The ancient Israelites, it has been said, invented history by stepping out of the returning circle of life onto a straight-arrow path moving forward toward human goals that are higher than nature, or new to nature. Generosity, righteousness, justice and mercy are not the aims of nature but the goals of human freedom.

The freedom we celebrate in the Pesach observance is the force that drives our green fuse. Like the DNA packed tight within the seed, our freedom gives us the shaping power to imagine and form the given world at hand. While the seed's vegetable spirit does it always the same, bringing forth

each spring the identical plant and flower, the free human spirit is endlessly inventive, and in that is the image of God. Freedom is nothing unless it is used for risk - for wisely and with humility risking the new.

So it is not just political freedom we celebrate at Passover, but freedom as the divine force in us to choose and shape, the force which makes us human beings. That is why we continually remind ourselves that *Mitzrayim*, the Hebrew name for Egypt, means a narrow and confining place. The redemption from *Mitzrayim* does not mean emancipation from slavery or forced labor, but from a fettered and confined spirit unable to comprehend a God of imagination and inventiveness, a God

who takes our animal nature merely as the proving ground for the risky experiment of

freedom and the birth of moral action.

The Passover seder presents the freedom of our human condition over and over, holding up one facet after another for our attention - reclining casually at the table; questioning and searching for answers; free-wheeling discussions about the meaning of things; the frank acknowledgement of our difficult diversity (wise, wicked, foolish and simple); our attention to the poor and the hungry; the conviction that none are free until all are free; and our admission that whatever we are now, we are not yet what we are meant to be, ever moving forward (slaves still, but free next year, in Jerusalem).

I look over my tender garden, see the tips of new sprouts, amazed at the unpacking seed shooting upwards into an elaborate and beautiful form. It isn't freedom, but it's a good symbol of freedom, being released from containment in the seed. Many psalms speak of God "setting free those who are bound". I understand that I am one of those who are bound, like a seed; and all that is wound up in my brain, in my heart, and in my spirit, God has set free - if I will it.

Hag kasher v'sameach. May you celebrate a joyous and kosher Passover festival.

Treasurer's Report

Lee Schear



When Too Much Was Still Not Enough

"Too much is never enough." That seemed to become the accepted mantra of the "oughties" – the first decade of our



new millennium, specifically from about 2000 to 2007. We had it all and we wanted more. We lived in artificial security and then reality demanded we pay our social bills. Suddenly

that catch phrase became "OK - enough is enough" or maybe even "*enough already*"! Time shifted to a point in which we just didn't want to go backwards anymore; a time in which a re-alignment of our expectations was in order.

That brings us back – from outside in – to the continuously curious evolution of synagogue finances. And that's always what I intend to speak to in these rambling columns. Let's speak, first, about this column; then make sense of financial matters.

In the early days after we created the new Beth Abraham Bulletin, I thought it was "enough" to simply write about congregational economics in this space. You know, budgets and funds flow and other flashy things. Then, it wasn't enough anymore. I wanted to *do* more – to say more. . . So I threw in a growing pastiche of observations (some on wry – some not), mystical philosophy (some gone awry...) and the constant chaos of numbers pushing themselves around a page. As with the Gematria, where numbers take on far greater meaning, I wanted our synagogue numbers (and even our synagogue itself) to mean more, to stand for something grander.

OK, so my monthly treasury "notes" didn't spend all that well all the time with *everyone*, and there came a time to tone it down. I toned it off completely for a few issues as real life interceded, but I have found new toner and new numbers to discuss and new paradigms in which to give the whole discussion ephemera of grandeur.

The new discussion is still based upon the old discussion of what is enough. "Not enough" accurately characterizes synagogue revenues everywhere in 2008-2009. Donations are down, bingo funding has practically

disappeared and – frustratingly – costs continue to rise oblivious to the other side of the equation. Salaries and health care and occupancy expenses march forward in determined lockstep, giddily unaware of the flailing economy, receding endowment numbers, and our attempts at congregational prudence.

Synagogue staffing costs *only* go up as we hire and reward and improve. Yet, dues and donations and fundraising streamed over a cliff in these past twelve months, like so many lemmings.

It's easy to point out last year's biggest problem: bingo revenues

It's easy to conclude the best solution: donate more!

What's the sum total of the bad economic news? We are running an operational deficit for the first time in five years. Our foundation/endowment was down 20% after having never really gone down in years before. Bingo/fundraising is off-the-charts down. And for each of those categories, 2009 didn't start off promising either.

But, upon reflection, there's good economic news, too; news that offsets some of the financial pain. We just went through four years of surpluses. We have added overall to the foundation. When we collect the balance of the campaign pledges, the coffers will swell a bit. Our endowment reserve lost less than the general market AND – 2009 will ultimately pass and we will grow stronger again. It has to. *We* have to!

How do we know what we will need in the overall? I look to more soulful sources for that, rather than just sources-and-uses and credits and debits. I look to the mystical traditions and try to overlay our financial dilemmas over top of them to find a better way forward.

The concept of "bittul" explains some of our animal tendencies that get oversized over time. Literally, bittul means "nullification" or "self-abnegation." But in the broader and more profound sense, it says that you have to empty yourself a bit in order to make room to receive something new. If you are so full of yourself, where can anything else (friendship, love, new experiences, or even God) then fit in?

Bittul is based upon humility. You want more of something? You have to make room. You want to learn? Get rid of the old tired ideas you've been hanging on to. If you are already filled full, can anything new then be fulfilling? (My

pun, not the rabbis...)

We were full at BAU. Beautiful new building, no debt, no mortgage, new energy, burgeoning cash flow, and a participating congregation. Maybe the only thing that we found missing was the "bittul."

As we all take a slight step backward in this new economy and environment in which we find ourselves, we can prepare for the next surge forward. Let's get rid of those things, ideas and stories that kept us from recognizing our potential. The "too much" is gone for now. Let's appreciate what we have. Let's settle in for "enough."

Dayenu.

Dayenu is a good thought for Pesach and beyond. Bittul is what we should reflect upon when too much is not enough. Let's think of our successes and build from there. For that – we have plenty...

Bat Mitzvah

Melissa Lee Frydman

Angela and Joel Frydman are proud to announce that their daughter, Melissa Lee, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah, Saturday, April 25, 2009, at Beth Abraham Synagogue. Melissa is the great-granddaughter of Carmen Appel and the



late Bert Appel of Dayton; she is the granddaughter of Renate Frydman and the late Charles Frydman of Dayton, and of the late Connie and Carl Fasano of Farmingdale, New York. Melissa is a seventh-grader at Oakwood Junior High School and attends the Beth Abraham Religious School.

Melissa plays tennis, golf, and soccer with an Oakwood United Premier Soccer team; she enjoys acting, singing, and dancing and is a member of the Jewish Federation's Children's Theatre Workshop. She also loves to spend time with her two older brothers, Dan and David. Melissa is committed to helping those in need and is the youngest member of the Beth Abraham Social Action Committee. As part of her Bat Mitzvah project, Melissa will continue in her efforts to provide toys and aid to Ethiopian children who have made aliyah to Israel.

The Beth Abraham Congregation is invited to attend the Bat Mitzvah and the kiddish luncheon following services.

Katz Tales

Susie Katz, Beth Abraham President

I know, I know. It's not December 31st. I just have to look outside to know that. There are robins in my backyard, for heaven's sake. And, for the purposes of



this publication, I also know that it isn't Rosh Hashanah, either....I would know if that were the case by the frenetic activity that would be going on in the synagogue office. But it *is* an end of the year of a different sort at Beth Abraham. We are coming to the end of our fiscal year which occurs each and

every May 31st. It's the time when we close our books and begin to look forward to our next financial year. Our Board of Directors assesses our budget spread sheets, and we are able to see all of the receivables that we are going to receive and we see all of the expenses that we have incurred. And when our eyes move down to the bottom of the columns on our spreadsheets we hope to see no parentheses (for those of you who are graduates of the Susie Katz School of Financial Acumen – parentheses are *not* good – same as “in the red”). And, so, I regret to report to you that our year-end budget numbers are looking like someone spilled a jar of beet juice enhanced horseradish all over them! Uch!

So, what happened? First let me explain how we got to the projected budget numbers that we worked against all year long. Our Budget Committee met last April (as it does every April) to put together the financial projections of just what it would cost to run every single aspect of our congregation as well as what we could expect as income to the synagogue. Clearly not an easy task and also certainly not an exact science. Historically, our Budget Committee has made a study of the year just past, made value judgments about the year to come and developed a projected budget accordingly. Interestingly, for next year we are attempting for the first time in our synagogue's very long history, to come up with more exact cost numbers by asking our different committees to do a “real” assessment of what they expect to spend over the next year. Now that we've been in it for a full year, what *are* the full

costs of running our new building? What *does* it cost to run our Religious School? How much *does* it cost us to provide a Kiddush lunch for our congregation every Shabbat? What *is* the value of the shortfall when we plan a program and try to boost attendance by keeping the ticket costs low even though we aren't covering our costs? Of course these are all expenses that we *want* to incur, but we have to assess the real costs.

And the offset, or income sources, are actually very specific, too. First, we have our synagogue membership dues. We all receive those bills in June and July and the payment is to be received by the end of December. That number is very easy to assess. We know who our members are, we know what their dues categories are and we calculate a value for the expected income and assume that everyone will take care of their dues responsibility. It becomes clear why we need folks to pay their dues on time so that we can count on that income to cover our expenses at the beginning of our fiscal year when our coffers are virtually expended from the previous year. Next, we have our Yom Kippur Appeal. This is not quite as predictable a figure as our dues, but our congregants actually do work hard to maintain an established level of giving and even of increasing giving when the ability is there. Unfortunately, these two regular and somewhat reliable sources of income together comprise just over one third of the funds necessary to run our synagogue. And for better or worse and for a very long time, we have come to depend on fund raising – made up mostly of our income from our bingo game, for the remainder, or two thirds of our revenues. But until someone thinks of a better way – we are going to continue to look to this unreliable and out of our control source for a good portion of our income. There is a last category of potential income, charitable gifts, but this is something that can never be counted on, is always a surprise and can never be included in any sort of annual budgeting for the synagogue. And that is it. Money out money in. Money in money out. And when this fragile equation gets buffeted by an unstable economy, we get in trouble. This year, our Bingo revenues are substantially off their predictions and making up the shortfall continues to be a serious challenge – thus, the beet juice!

And then we have the Capital

Campaign. Even though this campaign had nothing to do with our annual budget/income, and even though the campaign exceeded its goal, it has a direct effect on our annual budgets and it won't really “feel” like we exceeded our goal until all the pledges are in hand. Let me try to explain. Our Capital Campaign was a five year campaign which means that we may not have all the pledges collected until 2012. That's okay. We knew that was a possibility. We made the decision to spread out the campaign in order to give everyone the opportunity to make a maximum gift. Not a bad idea, right? However, the builders, architects, suppliers, consultants, etc. had the strange expectation that they should get paid for services rendered – well, like right away! So, you get the picture, yes? We have paid out 100% of our expenses when we are only 40% of the way through the collection of our pledges. The good news is that many (actually most) of our largest contributors have chosen to prepay their total gifts, understanding the financial reality of the situation. The bad news is that there are too many of us who are actually behind on even the first installments of our pledges. This, coupled with the unfortunate downturn in our bingo is creating an untenable situation where we actually have to borrow to pay expenses and that, of course, creates the unfortunate situation of interest costs, none of which is a good thing.

So, here's the point of all of this. We need you! We need you to make certain that you have paid your 2008-09 dues. We need you to make certain that you have sent in your 5768 Yom Kippur Appeal pledge and if you forgot to make a pledge – go ahead and make one and send it in. And (pretend like you can hear a drum roll right here because this is really, really important) make absolutely certain that you have sent in no less than the first two installments of your Capital Campaign pledge. And, if you have the wherewithal to send in the entirety of your pledge, well, that would be so wonderful! It would make such a difference in our ability to maneuver these difficult times. If you aren't sure where you stand, call the office. Annette and Claudia would be so happy to help you. Please, folks. You can be a real hero here. Thanks for what you can do to get us where we need to be.



Library News-Off the Shelf

Allan Spetter

Allow me to begin this month by acknowledging the contribution by Louise Tinchler of a variety of important books, along with issues of the journal of the American Jewish Archives from 1971 to 2006, which have been added to the synagogue library collection. The books and the journal have been part of the home library of her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Myer G. Horowitz of Cincinnati.

Among the additions to the synagogue library collection is a fascinating study by Peter Gay, My German Question: Growing Up in Nazi Berlin. Gay, born Peter Frohlich (happy in German, Americanized to gay), has been described as the nation's "pre-eminent cultural historian." He has produced so many classic studies in cultural and intellectual history—on the Enlightenment, Freud, Voltaire and the Weimar Republic, for instance—that one reviewer said Gay's best known work changes with each decade.

Gay insists repeatedly that this book is a memoir, not an autobiography. The book concentrates on a brief six-year period, 1933 to 1939, from the time Hitler came to power in Germany to the time Gay's family finally joined the ranks of the fortunate few allowed to leave Germany. It is apparent that Gay had a very difficult time describing his experience. As he puts it, writing this book proved a "far more disturbing assignment" than he had expected.

Born in Berlin in June, 1923 Gay, who is about to turn 86, grew up in a typical middle class German Jewish family of that era. He says that his family had to move to a more modest apartment during the early years of the Great Depression of the 1930s, but the family still had a live-in servant. The family could afford to move to a much nicer apartment by 1936, one indication that many German Jews believed their lives might go on as usual, even under Hitler.

About 500,000 Jews lived in Germany in 1933, perhaps one per cent of the total population of Germany. Gay says that about 150,000 Jews lived in Berlin, or some 30 per cent of the total Jewish population of Germany. He emphasizes that Berlin, one of the most sophisticated cities in the world, resisted Nazi influence for as long as possible. Perhaps the Jews of Berlin felt relatively immune based on the atmosphere in the city, and perhaps

they took comfort in the size of the Jewish community.

The story of Gay's family proved, however, that no Jew who remained in Germany after 1933 could feel safe. Ironically, Gay's parents had almost nothing to do with Judaism. Gay emphasizes furthermore that he did not "look Jewish." While about half of Germany's Jews would leave as long as the opportunity to do so existed, Gay's family along with the remaining half of German Jews continued to believe they could survive in an increasingly hostile world.

The steadily increasing number of anti-Jewish regulations included a strict quota of four per cent on the number of Jews who could be admitted to the best junior-senior high schools, or gymnasiums, in Berlin. Gay, however, would be exempt from the quota because his father had been wounded fighting for Germany in World War I. Thus, even though German Jews would have their citizenship revoked in 1935, Gay's family may have thought of themselves as "privileged" Jews who would never be harmed.

As the world began to close in, Gay says he found refuge as any teenage boy might in jazz on the radio, banned by the Nazis as "Negro"-Jewish music, sports, especially football (soccer), and stamp collecting. He managed to attend the Berlin Olympics of 1936 and may have been misled as the Nazis toned down the anti-Jewish rhetoric in an attempt to disguise the real situation of the Jews in Germany. As a matter of fact, Gay says he believed by 1937 that there might be improvement in the treatment of the Jews, but his family began to make plans to leave, not a minute too soon.

Step by step, Gay's family and all remaining German Jews would be forced to face reality in 1938. Germany took over Austria in March, and news of the brutal treatment of Austria's Jews made German Jews realize that time might be running out. Gay would be dismissed from school in April, and his father would be forced to give up his business in July. Then came Kristallnacht in November. Typically, Gay's family would have to wait to enter the United States, but they sailed for Cuba in May, 1939.

Gay refers again and again to those who question why the Jews did not leave

Germany as soon as Hitler came to power in 1933. He tries to explain, but he can't provide an adequate answer. Furthermore, he admits that he still wrestles with his feelings about Germany. When Germany agreed in 1952 to pay reparations to Israel and to individuals, Gay's attitude began to soften. And there is this: the book is dedicated to Emil Busse, a "righteous gentile" who did everything he could to help Gay's family get out of Germany.

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 937-454-0554

Beth Abraham Synagogue Board of Directors Meeting March 25, 2009

The Board of Directors met on March 26 and the following people were present: Rabbi Barsky, Cantor Raizen, Alan Chesen, Mark Feingold, Mark Feuer, Penney Fraim, Mike Freed, Annette Fredenburgh, Joel Frydman, David Fuchsman, Susie Katz, Janice Krochmal, Ellen Leffak, Cheryl Levine, Ira Levine, Norman Lewis, Scott Liberman, Bernie O'Koon, Marlene Pinsky, Bernie Rabinowitz, Bonnie Rice, Connie Roberts, Shep Rosen, Ralph Williams

Susie Katz called the meeting to order. David Fuchsman presented the financial report. Because Bingo proceeds have been so low, there is a short fall in the budget. It was decided that an article will be written for the bulletin encouraging people who are behind in their capital campaign pledge donations to try and get caught up.

David passed out the agenda for the upcoming Board retreat on April 19th. The main focus of the retreat will be to look at program priorities and budgeting for these priorities put together by the planning committee. Chuck Wolfe will facilitate the meeting. There will also be discussion about an approach to change the governance policies and a review of the By-Laws. The meeting is expected to last from 9:30 – 3:00.

Susie told the board Brackett Builders will be doing a final walk through of the building the first week of April. It is approaching a year from the date of completion and we are coming to the end of the contract period.

Mark Feuer presented the report from the Nominating Committee and the slate was approved by the board. It will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on May 13, 2009.

Bonnie Rice talked about the Covenant House Corp – a group doing one-on-one visits to residents of Covenant House. Brian O'Koon is looking for men and women to join him at a Thursday night poker night, which is a very popular way to visit with the residents. The Social Action committee is looking into all the ramification and cost of recycling. The Go Green bags will be delivered by April 22nd.

Bernie O'Koon shared the outcome of the meetings taking place to redefine the Sisterhood at Beth Abraham. The group put together the following mission statement: "Beth Abraham Sisterhood is a multi-generational organization of women dedicated to family, synagogue and community. By practicing acts of Tzedakah and tikkun olam, and through religious, educational and social endeavors, we work to fulfill G-d's commandments and to nourish our souls. Beth Abraham Sisterhood works within our congregation to ensure the strength and future of Conservative Judaism.

Ira Levine asked the Board to sign up for the March 29th Deli Dinner and Movie. He announced the Mother's Day Brunch this year will be on May 10, 2009.

Susie Katz adjourned the meeting.

Join
us!

Men's Club News

On Sunday, May 10th, the Beth Abraham Men's Club will be sponsoring a Sunday Brunch in honor of Mother's Day. The brunch will feature lox & bagels, and a blintz soufflé. Entertainment is being arranged for the program, which will begin at 10:00 a.m. at Beth Abraham. Reservations are needed and can be made by contacting Beth Abraham at 293-9520 by May 7th.

The following people won raffle prizes at the Men's Club Deli Dinner raffle drawing:

Angela Frydman won a \$25.00 gift card from Mendelson's, Thelma Bassel won a \$50.00 gift card from Speedway, and Philip Kaplan won the \$300.00 gift card from Morris Home Furniture.

The Men's Club is looking for a treasurer. Anyone interested, please contact Irwin Dumtschin at 271-5307. Also we are looking for new board members. Anyone interested, please contact Ira Levine at 248-5200.

Surprise!

Chaya Vidal

**You have been caught by the
Mitzvah Squad doing mitzvot!**

Is there no end to your talents? Writer, director producer, lyricist, coach... these are among the many skills that you bring to our Purim festivities, as only you can do. The synagogue rang with laughter as the Cantor sang your lyrics to "I Feel Zaftig" and "There's a Nosh for Us." You even got the Hon. Walter H. Rice, Dr. Judy Schwartzman and our Sandy Zipperstein to sing before a live, partly 'schnockered,' audience. The time and energy it must take to bring your original productions to fruition can barely be imagined; but as the beneficiaries of those efforts, we thank you! And not only us, but also the residents of Covenant House. You suggested that your cast go on the road for an encore performance of West Side Megillah for them. What a great idea to add this mitzvah to our Purim traditions.

For all of your hard work, your ingenuity and your demonstrated devotion to bringing joy and laughter to our synagogue life, we wish to thank you. Mazel Tov to you, this month's Mitzvah Hero!

If anyone knows of others within our Beth Abraham community who quietly and routinely perform mitzvot, please contact our Mitzvah Squad by calling Bonnie Beaman Rice (409-2880) or Helen Abramovitz (223-2891), your Social Action Co-Chairs.



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Address Service Requested

Rabbi	Bernard Barsky
Cantor	Andrea S. Raizen
President	Susie Katz
1 st Vice -President	David Fuchsman
2 nd Vice-President	Ralph Williams
Honorary Vice-President	Joel Frydman
Treasurer	Lee Schear
Secretary	Connie Roberts
Men's Club President	Ira Levine
Chevra Kadisha President	Ted Cooper
Rabbi Emeritus	Samuel B. Press D.D.
Cantor Emeritus	Jerome B. Kopmar

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Times for Shabbat and Yom Tov Candle Lighting & Services

Friday, April 3		Friday, April 17		Friday, May 1	
Kabbalat Shabbat	5:30 p.m.	Shabbat with a Beat	6:15 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat	5:30 p.m.
Candle Lighting	7:44 p.m.	Candle Lighting	7:58 p.m.	Candle Lighting	8:12 p.m.
Saturday, April 4		Saturday, April 18		Saturday, May 2	
Shacharit	9:00 a.m.	Shacharit	9:00 a.m.	Shacharit	9:00 a.m.
Havdalah	8:48 p.m.	Havdalah	9:02 p.m.	Havdalah	9:16 p.m.
Friday, April 10		Friday, April 24			
Kabbalat Shabbat	5:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat	5:30 p.m.		
Candle Lighting	7:51 p.m.	Candle Lighting	8:05 p.m.		
Saturday, April 11		Saturday, April 25			
Shacharit	9:00 a.m.	Shacharit	9:00 a.m.		
Havdalah	8:55 p.m.	Havdalah	9:09 p.m.		

FREE RIDES TO SHABBAT SERVICES AND EVENTS

If you need transportation to any Beth Abraham Shabbat service or Shabbat event, please call the office (293-9520) or Diane Williams at home (885-7135) at least a few days before the service or event and the synagogue will help you find a ride. If you would like to volunteer to be a driver either on a regular basis or for a particular event, please contact the office at 293-9520. This is a project of the Beth Abraham Social Action Committee.