



# bulletin

CONGREGATION HABONIM  
a vibrant neighborhood synagogue

November 2009

Tishrei 5770

## **Congregation Habonim @ 70** **Kristallnacht Service**

Friday November 6th

7:30 pm

*Cantor Bruce Halev Presents:*

**“November 9th 1939”**

**“A new congregation comes together to pray for the first time in  
a new country and a rapidly changing world”**

Cantor Halev will speak on the very first days of the congregation in New York City and the night of the first service in the basement of Central Synagogue led by Habonim's founder, Rabbi Hugo Hahn, who had recently arrived from Essen, Germany. Liturgy and music will be the main focus, as well as the prayers that created a 1000 family synagogue spanning Manhattan, Washington Heights and Queens.

Melodies sung at that first service will be part of the evening and the High Holiday choir and organ will be used. We invite you to attend this meaningful milestone in the history of the congregation as we honor the heritage of our founders.

# You Are How You Eat

Rabbi Joshua Katzan

If one thing can be stated clearly about Judaism, it is that we take nothing for granted. Our entire religious and spiritual system is predicated on the notion of what is called “sanctification of the mundane.” By being commanded to be “Holy” (Leviticus 19), we are commanded to elevate our actions from un-thoughtful behavior, to thoughtful and intentional acts. In short, we, as Jews, are commanded to live conscious lives.

To live “consciously” means to live with a sense of awareness that the choices we make have consequences, and this can mean the difference between living a mundane existence (a life lived by accident) and a life of “holiness” or elevation (a life lived intentionally).

One of the most basic methods of living consciously in Judaism is the mitzvah of keeping kosher when we eat.

Eating is the most basic thing we do. To apply principles of consciousness to our eating is a most basic way to live a life of kedusha, a life of elevated holiness, and Judaism has a fascinating and elevating system of approaching eating.

I have often been asked about the meaning behind our system of “kashrut,” of the kosher laws. Why were they instituted? What was the reason for having it? Was it for health reasons? Are they arbitrary? Why should these laws matter to us today, especially since our methods of cooking food can essentially guarantee health and safety?

There is more than a bottom-line answer, but we must first start there. Judaism maintains the system of keeping kosher because that is what is written in the Torah. Full stop. Since these principles are laid out in commandment form (you shall eat this, or not eat that), the Torah’s statement is the bottom line. Reasoning as to why or why not to observe is already interpretation and secondary to the fact that, plainly put, a commandment is a commandment.

In short, the Torah institutes several simple designations of what is “clean for us to eat” and what is not. In the animal kingdom, we are permitted to eat any animal that has both a cloven hoof, and who chews its cud. This generally means cow, bison, lamb, and even venison. From the sea, anything that has both fins and scales are permitted, so almost all fish (catfish has only fins but no scales), are considered “clean to eat.” When it comes to fowl, it may not be a bird of prey in any form. This leaves us chicken, duck, and turkey. What is striking is that not a single animal that is kosher is a predator. I have always associated this with the tradition attempting to keep us cut-off from the energies of the predator. To eat a predator, we would have to act like one. Lions

must be hunted, but cows can be raised. We also are instructed not to eat their blood, which can be associated with separating ourselves from the notion of “lust” that comes from tasting blood. We eat moderately tempered animals in order to develop moderate human temperament.

The Rabbis, whose discussions and institution of the “oral tradition” and codification of Jewish Law, define the Judaism we all know and practice today. In the process of interpreting the Torah, they determined that in order to be fully “Kosher,” which means literally “fitting” or “OK to eat,” the Rabbis layered in several more dimensions of care and concern that extend our values into the practice of eating. They determined that in order for an animal to be “kosher,” it not only needs to be the right type (see above), but it also needs to be slaughtered correctly (painlessly by an expert), and needs to be checked for disease. If the animal is “torn” (literally “treif”) either externally or internally, it is not fitting for us to eat. It doesn’t make the animal evil, or disgusting, it simply renders the animal ineligible to be eaten by our spiritual standards.

Another famous addition that the Rabbis instituted on the basis of a hermeneutical interpretation of the Torah’s commandment to “not boil a kid in the milk of its mother,” that milk and meat must be kept separated, not only from being cooked and eaten together, but that utensils used to cook and serve meat or dairy should be kept separate as well. A favorite interpretation of mine is that whereas “milk” is the consummate symbol of life, and “meat” as food is taken from the body of a previously alive animal, then to combine the two can be seen as a painfully contradictory. The “kid” is a baby goat. To boil the baby in the milk of its mother is simply revolting. The Rabbis extend this concept into keeping all areas of dairy and meat separate in order to keep this basic principal of honoring life by keeping it separate from death.

Why should we maintain this system of limitation, especially when there are so many foods and recipes out there that can make us lick our chops just reading about them? Why can’t we eat everything? Why should we limit ourselves? Why should we keep kosher?

Because it is a practice in holy restraint. It forces us to realize that we are not all powerful, and it is a daily practice in conscious living.

By having limitations to basic categories of creatures we can eat, and even recipes we can use, we are forced on a very regular basis to be aware of what we are putting inside our mouths. It forces us to pay attention, and this transforms our eating from an

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otherwise rote behavior driven by hunger into a conscious act of spiritual practice.

To this end, we also are meant to say a blessing before and after we eat, bringing further to the forefront of our mind that we ought to have gratitude for the food we are about to partake of, and to realize it didn't just appear on our plate. Saying a blessing brings the spiritual notion forward that God, the Source of all creation, is our partner in being able to satisfy this desperately basic and necessary need: to eat and be nourished. Eating, then, becomes a practice in humbly and gratefully connecting with God.

Another significant reason for keeping kosher would be to actively connect with one's identity as a Jew. This is how Jews eat as a culture, and as a spiritual path. This serves to enhance our personal sense of identity, and as well connects us with other Jews who keep kosher. When we keep a kosher home, we open up to the community of kosher-keeping Jews, and do not at all isolate or limit people who do not keep kosher. We can welcome more members of the community in, and this can be a wonderfully enriching experience.

Kashrut can indeed be a challenge to the modern person. To the question, "Why shouldn't I be able to have anything I want?" we can hear Judaism respond, "Why should we be able to have whatever we want?" In other words, just because I have the power to take what I want, that does not give me license to do so. Is it necessarily moral to be able to take anything I can? Having healthy limits and boundaries are significant in our development into mature adults, and it is no different in our spiritual lives. Choosing to engage in a practice of restraint creates in ourselves the experience of living within a healthy boundary. It is healthy to contemplate the notion that perhaps we really shouldn't have everything, even if we have the power to take it. As my teacher Rabbi Levi Lauer once taught, if we can develop a practice of restraint in one area (in the area of eating), then we may be able to employ practiced restraint in other areas (moral and ethical behavior) as well.

All of this is stated with the forthright acknowledgement that there is nothing necessarily "immoral" in people eating pork, for example. It is simply not "permitted" to Jews because it only has cloven hoofs and does not chew its cud. It is not an evil animal, it just doesn't qualify for our system of diet.

As we go through life, we have the opportunity to explore different practices that create meaning in our life. Judaism is a religion rich in spiritual, ethical, and cultural meaning. The practice of keeping kosher is a fundamental way of enhancing our conscious living and tasting meaning in life every single day.

## A Month In Review...

*The life of a Habonim Nursery School child*

Cindy Grebow

Each year, October is the month when children in the Nursery School begin to settle in to the new school year. This year was no exception. As the days got shorter, school days in all of our classes got longer, and all of the programming planned for the year truly began to take shape. In addition to regular classroom activities, special classes began, including music with Avi, movement with Lindi or Emily, library with Joan, and cooking and science (for the Purple and Red rooms) with Joan and Kelli, respectively. Special in-school Shabbat celebrations with Rabbi Josh also began in October—every Friday for the remainder of the school year, he and Cantor Bruce will join with the children in four of our five classes to celebrate Shabbat with music, song, and dance in the Sanctuary.

Early in the school year, Nursery School classes dipped apples in honey for Rosh Hashanah, then continued their exploration of apples with apple tastings, baking with apples, making applesauce, and drawing apple still lifes, among many other activities. Some classes studied the core and seeds of the apples, while others graphed their apple preferences.

Sukkot was a special time of celebration in the Nursery School. The children watched the Sukkah take shape outside as their playspace magically became transformed by some of the paper chains and other decorations they made. Each class also made a unique

Sukkah in the classroom—ranging from small cardboard box-size to big-as-a-refrigerator size – and classes invited other classes to visit each other's Sukkot. Rabbi Josh spent time with each class in the Sukkah, as well as greeted Nursery School parents at the annual breakfast for nursery parents in the Sukkah with the Rabbi. The Nursery School children ate snack in their classroom Sukkah as well as the Synagogue Sukkah and enjoyed the annual pizza lunch in the Sukkah sponsored by the PTA.

Another annual event that takes place in October is curriculum night. Parents came to their children's classrooms for an evening discussion with the teachers and to learn about the many goals and areas of study planned for this school year. Our overarching goal is that all of our children become curious, engaged, relaxed learners who love to come to school.

Finally, admissions tours are well underway, and we are looking forward to yet another stimulating and informative parent panel for prospective parents in November. At all stages of the admissions process, our efforts are greatly enhanced through invaluable assistance from parent volunteers organized by the PTA. Our PTA is ably headed by Allison Epstein and Mindy Green, whose tireless efforts enrich the Nursery School community and provide opportunities for connection with the larger Synagogue community. The 2009/2010 school year is off to a great start!

### Volunteers and Donors

*2008-2009*

The following Habonim Volunteers were inadvertently not included in the annual book, for which we apologize:

**Dale Fruehauf**

**Barbara Jacobsberg**

**Larry Jacobsberg**

**Brad Roberts**

### Condolences

The Habonim community mourns the death of long-time members:

**Leonie Doernberg**

**Annemarie Maass**

### Mazal Tov

To Heather and Chad Widensky on the birth of their daughter, Charlotte, sister to Sydney.

To David and Robin Singer on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Hannah, sister of Emily.

To David and Tara Rosegarten, on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Madison, sister of Olivia.

## The Key Who Unlocked The Music:

### *A Tribute to Martha Hirsch*

Cantor Bruce Halev

As we approach the 70th anniversary of our congregation, I can think of no one (apart from Lotte Landes who helped build the congregation to what it was and now is) who has been more instrumental to our synagogue than Martha Hirsch. If we stand on the shoulders of our founders, I certainly feel that I stand on those of Martha and her husband, the late cantor Erwin Hirsch. After I had been engaged as the second cantor in the history of the Congregation in 1983, I spent many hours in the Hirschs' Lincoln Towers apartment, learning the music of the German synagogue tradition, something that was completely new to me. But it was during that time and the years that passed that we became really good friends. But who was the person who worked the magic behind the curtains during the services back then? I have heard so many stories, but her son David has filled in the gaps.

Martha was born in Frankfort, Germany in 1918 and became interested in music at an early age. Though it was difficult for her to both help her family at home and study the piano, she persevered and eventually studied with the head organist of the synagogue in Frankfurt (Herr Worzburger). Eventually she got a job playing the organ in Wiesbaden - but this was of course interrupted by the ever growing Nazi dangers. When Martha was 21, her parents put her on a train to Holland from where she hoped to continue her journey to America. Little did she know that it would be the last time she would see them. The train ride was in itself quite dangerous, as there were many SS officers on board. She was frightened, but pretended not to understand German, and was able to complete her journey.

Eventually, she boarded a ship to America, largely due to the help of her uncle and aunt here who arranged for all the necessary papers. Once she arrived, Martha was unable to work as a musician, but worked in numerous professions. She worked as a nanny, worked in the garment industry sewing (she admits that she often sewed crooked seams, but the owner liked her and didn't complain) and in a factory, making facial creams.

Her first musical position was at Central Synagogue, where she filled in for the regular organist on the weekly radio broadcasts on Sunday mornings. The conductor there was not very friendly and didn't seem to want her there at first, but she soon proved to be very valuable and was welcomed. It was there that she first became involved with Congregation Habonim, as the new congregation conducted Friday evening services in a basement room at Central Synagogue every other week. Central Synagogue hoped that these newcomers would eventually join their congregation but these recent immigrants did not like the Reform service as they were used to all the prayers in Hebrew, and they used a traditional siddur.

Martha eventually started playing the organ on a regular basis for Congregation Habonim. Aside from Central Synagogue and other locations, services were later held in The True Sisters Building on the Upper West Side. Her life took a memorable turn when the Congregation held auditions to hire a new Cantor. As Martha relates the story, there were 3 cantors from Berlin who came to audition. As she tells it, "Even though they came from Berlin, they were terrible! They sang off pitch." Then a young man named Erwin Hirsch was called to audition. Martha relates that this did not begin well either, as they had the following heated conversation:

**Martha:** *"What do you want to sing?"*

**Erwin:** *"Anything you can play"*

**Martha:** *"Do you know the Kiddush from Lewandowski?"*

**Erwin:** *"Of course I know it"*

**Martha:** *"Which key?"*

**Erwin:** *"Any key you can play it in!"*

Despite this rough beginning, the audition was successful, and a new team was born! Martha and Erwin married and spent the next 43 years leading the Congregation in prayer and song until their retirement in 1983.

I was fortunate in that she played in numerous concerts for me and often helped me refine my German in the Schubert lieder that I loved singing. Going to their home was always interesting. On top of the piano was a picture of her with her parents taken before the war and I was always aware of the losses she suffered and the tenacity and strong will that helped her through those dark times. When I was singing through the synagogue music, Erwin would be in the living room and was always very polite and never made any comments about my interpretation or singing. Martha did as she had heard this music in Germany and had studied with coaches who conducted synagogue choirs.

This year, as in the past, whenever I sing certain prayers I think of them. Would they think I was singing too loud, or too fast? Martha has just turned 91 and is in touch with many of our members who know her. She is another one of our remarkable founders, some who are still with us, and who we are fortunate enough to know. They are the true builders who affirm the name of our congregation.

## News From The Sisterhood...

Join us for one of our popular book club discussions; the next meeting of the book club will be on Wednesday, December 2nd at 7:30 pm at Habonim. At that time, we'll discuss Septembers of Shiraz by Dalia Sofer. For further information, contact Amy Kargauer at 212.787.1516 or karwalkers@gmail.com.

We have embarked on a very exciting project – we are publishing a new Sisterhood cookbook in honor of Habonim's 70th Anniversary. This is a big project and we need help with it. We are looking for volunteers who will collect recipes from congregants and friends of our community. We also need cooks who are willing to test the recipes that we have gathered. Along with the cooks, we could use volunteers who will help us with the editorial aspects of the project, including designing the book covers, dividers, page layout, recipe style and format etc. We also need people who will help us with creative ideas for raising funds through the cookbook. If you want to be involved in something that's really fun, join our enthusiastic committee. For more information, contact Janet Schwartz at 212.873.1086 or avischwa@aol.com or Mary Sanders at 917.861.0688 or maryhsanders@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for information about our Mishloach Manot project ... we'll be kicking the project off right after Hannukah!

Once a year, we join forces with the other sisterhoods in the Metropolitan Area for a fund raising dinner to benefit Torah Fund. On this occasion, each sisterhood chooses a woman from their organization to honor. This year, we are delighted to recognize Marianne Falkenstein as our Habonim honoree. The Torah Fund Dinner will be held on Thursday, November 5th at the Sutton Place Synagogue. If you are interested in attending, please contact Mary Sanders at 917.861.0688 or maryhsanders@gmail.com.

Torah Fund is an annual fund raising campaign that we participate in along with all of the other sisterhoods worldwide who are members of Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Through this campaign, Women's League raises over \$2 million every year for the benefit of the Jewish Theological Seminary here in New York, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles, the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and Seminario Rabbinico in Buenos Aires. These 4 institutions are the primary training centers for rabbis, cantors, educators, administrators and lay leaders within the Conservative Movement. By supporting this campaign, we are helping to ensure the future of our Movement.

Every year, there is a special theme for the Torah Fund campaign. This year's theme is Le'avdah ul-shamrah – To Plant and Preserve. In keeping with this theme, much of the

Women's League programming this year will focus on our responsibility to care for our environment – both the physical and the metaphysical. As partners in the ongoing process of Creation, we are commanded by God to protect the physical environment that is our worldly home. We are also by extension called upon to safeguard and maintain the tradition that our ancestors have upheld for centuries and to strengthen for future generations the institutions and communities established to transmit our heritage.

Sisterhood is especially pleased to recognize Marianne Falkenstein this year because through her efforts Sisterhood itself was maintained and strengthened for the benefit of a new generation of members. Marianne has served as a vital link between the generations and through her welcoming spirit, she has encouraged a new cohort of women to assume the leadership of an organization that has contributed much to Habonim. We will be very pleased to applaud her as she receives the Le'avdah ul-shamrah award.

For further information about Sisterhood, contact Sisterhood Co-Presidents Amy Kargauer at 212.787.1516 or karwalkers@gmail.com and Fran DeLott at 212.362.9807 or Fbdelott@aol.com.

### **Sisterhood of Congregation Habonim will honor Marianne Falkenstein**

### **Join Us!**

for the MetroNorth Region  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

### **Metropolitan Area Torah Fund Dinner**

**Thursday, November 5, 2009**  
Sutton Place Synagogue  
225 East 51st Street  
(between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)  
New York City  
6:00 pm

For information, contact Mary Sanders  
at 917.861.0688 or maryhsanders@gmail.com

# State Of The Synagogue Speech

*Yom Kippur 2009*

Saul Sanders

**S**hana Tova! My name is Saul Sanders and I am the President of Congregation Habonim. I would like to welcome all of you – new members, those of you joining us for the holidays, longer-term members, and guests. We welcome you today and throughout the year.

It is my honor to speak with you for a few minutes about the past year at our synagogue and about the coming year. The year just ended has been an exciting time for our entire community. We welcomed two new members of our clergy/professional staff – Rabbi Joshua Katzan as our spiritual leader and Rabbi Laurie Phillips as our Director of the Religious School. I am happy to say that both of them have successfully adapted – both to NY and to Habonim.

Over the last year, Rabbi Katzan has truly become part of our community. I hope that all of you have found the time to speak with him. In addition to being a source of learning and comfort, he spent the first part of the year listening and observing to better understand us (and entertaining us at Purim with a Jimi Hendrix style Hatikvah). Since then, he has been a dynamic force for change helping us to reinvigorate our religious observances and, in conjunction with Rabbi LP (as Rabbi Laurie Phillips prefers to be known), pressing for major changes in how we educate our children and ourselves. If you haven't found time to meet with him one on one, I encourage you to; however, be forewarned you probably will come away with a reading list of books he highly recommends.

Rabbi LP also completed her first year with us. The Religious School has been growing and this year has a record enrolment of 135 students. We have revamped our RS curriculum, instituted a teen program with 21 students enrolled and created a new family program (hopefully many of you attended our family services with your children on the 2nd day of Rosh Hashanah) including monthly family Shabbat services. Our Gan program for students just beyond NS is now at 24 students. Recently, we expanded Rabbi LP's role to include programming and adult education and we expect to see many changes there over the coming year. To aid her in these expanded responsibilities, we added the new position of Assistant Director of Education and hired Rebecca Elkus. Rebecca had worked for us part time while she was a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary and last June she received her Masters Degree in Jewish Education. With her dedication and energy, she is a great addition to the RS. Although she hasn't trumpeted it, you should be aware that Rabbi LP will be married in October. Mazal Tov.

No discussion at Habonim would be complete without talking about our Nursery School. We enter the school year with a record number of 75 students; in fact we are at capacity. The NS has been a driving force of this community since its founding 13

years ago. One third of our membership and much of the current leadership comes from the NS. All year long, there will be many events to celebrate the Bar Mitzvah Year of our NS. Some new NS programs this past year include musical Shabbat where Rabbi Josh celebrates with our children on Friday mornings and a new science program for our pre-K classes funded by the success of Casino Night, the NS major annual fundraiser) last year.

Education is not just for children. Have you participated in Adult Education at Habonim? We offer a lot of choices. A second Me'ah group (which means 100 as in hours of study), involving an intensive 2 year study program has just formed. Or you can study Talmud at lunch time or learn at our wonderful Queens education series. We have many wonderful teachers including Rabbis Katzan, LP and Warshauer as well as Cantor Halev. Speaking of Cantor Halev, many of you were at the gala and at the concert held last November to celebrate his 25 years with Habonim. He has truly been an inspiring force for so many of us through the years and we look forward to having him with us for many more.

## **What else is happening in the coming year?**

*Let me mention just 2 things:*

- It's Habonim's 70th Anniversary and that means a big celebration. Join us on Saturday November 14th as we honor Diane & Jay Goldsmith, Reggie & Peter Mayer, Jillian & Larry Neubauer and 4 generations of the Wertheimer family at the Puck Building. Call the office, go online to Habonim.net or pick up a flyer outside for more information. Please support this event with your presence and by buying a journal ad.
- Increased use of email and the internet for communications. This reduces costs and increases the timeliness and frequency with which we can communicate with you.

What will not be happening for the next few years is a move to another location. The changed economy destroyed the opportunity for a new home, which is a major disappointment to me.

Whenever I travel and visit other synagogues I have the opportunity to reflect on the uniqueness of Habonim. We were founded in 1939, one year after Kristallnacht, by refugees from Germany many of whom are still members. Our older members bring with them the living memory of one of the worst calamities the world has ever seen – but if you meet them, that is not what you would notice. It is their sense of community and commitment to Judaism. Many of them still come to our monthly Queens services to pray and learn with their community of 70 years. Using them as role models, we try to be a warm welcoming community for all who come through our doors.

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Being part of a community means being there for others in need. The national economic crisis has impacted many of us. Some of us have lost income or our sense of security, and need the understanding of the synagogue. Rabbi Katzan and Cantor Halev are available for those who need help or simply someone to talk to. So too, Yolanda Potasinski, our Executive Director, is available if you have concerns of any kind. At holiday time and throughout the year we have the responsibility to support each other.

I can speak about the value of community from personal experience. This year was a very difficult time for my family and me. In March, I lost my father. The support from so many of you, whether bringing food, helping to ensure a Shiva minyan or just being there was so important. It helped me to appreciate what we have here at Habonim so much more. Thank you to all of you.

As you know, our community relies on members who donate time and money to make it the warm caring place we all know. Over ¼ of our members donated their time this year and their names are listed in the booklets on the table outside the sanctuary. If you haven't previously volunteered, please consider doing so; we have opportunities for every interest – education, finance, prayer, programming, food, social action, Israel, and so on. I'll just highlight a few programs to give you an idea.

Our Israel Committee is involved with a charity called Tikvot or "hope". It helps victims of terror in Israel adjust to their new situations. This year we were visited by one of the children we have been helping. Asael lost one of his legs and his mother and 3 brothers in a terror bombing. Since then he has become a champion swimmer. Hearing this 15 year old speak to us one Shabbat was truly inspiring and shows how resilient the human spirit is.

We have lay led services 2 times a month. Once a month on Friday eves Rachel Hilker and Tony Robins lead an adult Kabbalat Shabbat service after the earlier Tot Shabbat led by our clergy. In addition, on the first Sunday of each month at 9:30 am we have lay led Sunday minyans. Come join us for both.

Sisterhood has been a major force at Habonim for years. This year, they established an adult education fund that sponsored a series of classes by Rabbi Warshauer. In addition, at Purim time, in observance of the mitzvah of Mishloach Manot (the sending

of gifts) most of you received a Shaloch Manot bag filled with goodies. I have it on good authority that the program will be repeated again this year. Sign up early (and often) so your friends get a Shaloch Manot bag from you.

This should give you some idea of the range of volunteer activities at Habonim. I urge you to participate in them.

Volunteers are not the only resource Habonim needs, of course. All of you know that contributions are important to keep our community vibrant. Also in the book along with the volunteers is a list of our donors. Thank you to everyone who gave. Last year, Habonim felt the impact of the economy and we will continue to do so this fiscal year. On Rosh Hashanah, the Rabbi spoke about how even in such difficult economic times, we must remain mindful of our obligation for charitable giving, to the extent we are able. Many of you have been approached to join Bonim Builders which supports the synagogue with a pledge of \$1800 or more above dues. If you can join, that would be terrific; however donations of any amount are needed. Please support us in any way you can to help us stay solvent.

Let me close with some well deserved thank yous. These services do not happen without a tremendous amount of work. This year with its 3 locations (Habonim, Ethical Culture and MLK HS) was even more difficult than normal. Everyone sees and congratulates the clergy (and please do so). However, the efforts of Matvey and Yolanda and their staffs are also crucially important to making our services run smoothly. When you see them, please join me in thanking them for their efforts.

Also thanks to all of the ushers, members of the Ritual Committee, those who davened or read Torah and Haftorah as well as the staff of our NS & RS and others who participated in children's and family programming and who worked so hard to ensure a positive experience for all of us.

One last thing - whether or not you know the people next to you, let us welcome each other with a 'Shana Tova.' Like the shaking of the lulav next week, it is nice to connect with the people in all directions around us when we pray. Shana Tova, and G'mar Chatima Tova. I hope and pray that this year will be a good year – for peace in Israel and throughout the world and for health and happiness for all of us. Have an easy fast.

*Habonim at 70*  
Generation to Generation  
מדור לדור

**Gala Dinner Dance**  
**Saturday, November 14, 2009**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 10**

## Jews Who Wine And Dine

### *Lox and Bagels and Co; Do You Want Onions, Tomatoes, or Art with that?*

Glenna Lee

The other day I walked into a brick wall. Almost. I had entered the Cholov Israel Kosher bagels and more store, Bagels and Co. on Amsterdam Avenue and 79th street. I went in for one of their amazing fruit and cheese blintze and an egg challah roll the size of a football for my daughter, but I came out with a lot more.

Ronnie, one of the owners of Bagels and Co. had transformed the large brick wall across from the counter into an art gallery. Art and bagels. He's co-owned this store for six years and one day had been fed up with the plain brick wall; he needed to do something with it. What he chose was a feast for the eyes for his customers: a rotating art gallery, where people can look at, enjoy, even purchase artwork right off the wall. Currently you can find an exhibit by Andrea Strongwater called The Lost Synagogues of Europe. Andrea has recreated dozens of synagogues that no longer exist throughout Europe. After studying what they would have looked like, she painted a picture in her mind and then on the easel. Her paintings, hanging high in the air, popping out from the brick wall, almost look like the angelic remains of their former structures. I was even able to find the Synagogue in Bialystok that my great-grandmother's family would have attended.

Why does Ronnie do this? How many bagel stores make it their mission to feed your belly and your eyes? Ronnie is a man who values tradition, but loves to introduce something new. He has a kosher bagel store, but he changes it into a gallery opening serving wine and hors d'oeuvres when the new rotating works of art go up, last week he had live music playing in the back. Why does he do it? It keeps things interesting.

You can see it in Ronnie's food too. As Ronnie told me, pointing to a young woman next to us, "if her mom cooked it like this, then her grandma cooked it like that too, and that's what she'll want to eat here." But that doesn't stop Ronnie and his chef from adding some new items to their repertoire...

Yesterday, the Mashgiach pronounced something in the kitchen "Not Kosher!" Ronnie, not used to hearing that uttered at his store, got very upset and said, "What's not kosher?!" The Mashgiach pointed to some muffins being whipped up by the chef. He said, "Those muffins, there's apple and ginger in them!" Ronnie replied, "apples are kosher, ginger's kosher, what's not kosher about them?" At which point the Mashgiach said, "no one's going to like that! Apple and ginger shouldn't go together!" The Mashgiach's view point represents some of the more traditional clientele that frequent Bagels and Co., but Ronnie does his research – he keeps adding some new dishes and tests out their popularity.

Next time you go in, maybe you'll find yourself with a jumbo-sized lox and bagels sandwich, maybe you'll be more of an apple-ginger muffin type, regardless of who you are, you'll find something appealing at Bagels and Co. - whether on your table or on the wall.

**Tempted to try Bagels and Co.? Tell them you've read this article in the Habonim Bulletin and receive this month's special discount: A jumbo sized lox and bagels sandwich with a coffee for \$7.50 (a 25% discount)**

**Interested in displaying your art work on his wall? Contact Ronnie: 212-496-9400.**

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## Kiddush Lunches

### *More Than Just A Happy Meal*

Elaine Witkoff

Anybody who has attended Shabbat Services at Congregation Habonim, and has stayed for the Kiddush lunch, cannot help but be impressed with the sense of community and, more importantly, the continuation of the uplifting feeling of the Shabbat experience. All are made to feel welcome, whether members or non-members; regular attendees or sporadic participants; community members, guests or strangers. This practice of "breaking bread" connotes sharing, openness and a sense of welcome; these are attributes of our patriarch, Abraham, that we, as Habonimers, seek to emulate.

Having said that, the reality is that the Shabbat Kiddush lunch is one of many expenses Habonim bears during these financially challenging times. We are calling this to your attention in the

hope that those of you who have attended and have enjoyed our Kiddush lunches, or even those of you who have not, but know how meaningful they are to our community, would consider making a contribution of some sort to continue this practice. Whether it is underwriting a Kiddush lunch on your own, or with a group of friends, or making a general donation earmarked for the Kiddush lunches, whatever you can do will not only be appreciated, but will help us to continue this very happy and meaningful Habonim tradition.

**To make a donation, please see our website at [www.habonim.net](http://www.habonim.net) or, for further information, please contact Neil Goldstein at 212-603-0486 or 212-582-7969.**

***Hope to see you on Shabbat!***

## Grilling The Rabbi

### *Donating, a Jewish "Yes!" Donating Organs, Is It More Complex?*

Glenna Lee

Over the summer, I did what most people dread, I stood on line at the DMV to renew my driver's license. While there, I was given a choice: Do I check off the box that says I would like to donate my organs? This is not the philosophical, life-altering (or post-life altering) question that you plan on contemplating while at a DMV and it's not the type of question that can be answered immediately either (maybe that's why they give you two hours to wait on line...), or so I thought.

Turns out, it is a no-brainer to donate your organs, Jewishly speaking. After studying this with Rabbi Katzan, I learned that Jews across the board, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and more all believe that it is the right thing to donate one's organs. Why is it such an easy decision? It all falls under the mitzvah, pikuach nefesh, or, the saving of a life. Even though we are instructed not to tamper with our body (no piercings, tattoos, etc), even though we are supposed to have our body cleansed by the Chevre Kedishe, that they are supposed to read psalms to us and be with us from the moment we pass to the moment we are buried (all according to the mitzvah of kavod lamet, or honoring of the dead), donating our organs is more important. Simple as that.

But wait. There are a few questions. What about donating your eyes, does that qualify under saving a life? Rabbi Katzan said it does. After all, eyes provide sight, which is surely an important sense that keeps us out of danger. Then he raised another issue: Is it pikuach nefesh if the organs are being donated to scientific research and not to another human being? Rabbi Katzan confirmed his own question: If scientific research can lead to saving others' lives in the future, then it still holds true. Last twist: What happens when, according to the prescient story in Ezekiel, there will be a raising of the dead, will someone missing his organs be disqualified from resurrection? "Utter nonsense," our Rabbi shared with me.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, one of the great poskim of the 20th century, who set the standard for all contentious matters, stated that "according to the law, there is no obligation to donate, but there certainly is a mitzvah to do so."

Why do fewer American Jews, proportionally, donate organs than Israeli Jews? Rabbi Katzan shared with me that, while in the US one has to make a check on their license in order to donate, in Israel, one has to make a check on their license to not donate. So perhaps we do not donate because it involves taking an extra step?

Next time you're at the DMV, as you slowly walk to the front of the line, maybe you'll take that extra step and check off the organ-donation box.

## Countdown To The Big Day ...

Join us as we celebrate Habonim's 70th Anniversary on Saturday, November 14th at 7:00 pm with a Gala Diner Dance at The Puck Building, 295 Lafayette Street (at the corner of Lafayette and Houston Streets). We'll enjoy delicious food, festive music, dancing and each other! On this special occasion, we are very pleased to be honoring:

**Diane and Jay Goldsmith**

**Reggie and Peter Mayer**

**Jillian and Larry Neubauer**

**and four generations of the Wertheimer Family**

A wonderful commemorative journal is being prepared for distribution at the Gala. Journal Co-Chairs Neil Goldstein and Elaine Witkoff and their committee have been hard at work crafting this special memento for Habonim's 70th Anniversary.

Gala Co-Chairs Vicki Botel and Mary Sanders guarantee that a great time will be had by all who attend!

**For further information, contact Adina Rifkin at:**

**212.787.5347 x10 – arifkin@habonim.net – www.habonim.net**



## **YOUTH SCOOP... FROM REBECCA**

**Rebecca Elkus**

Assistant Director of Education/  
Youth & Family Programming

Laughter, good times and OGRES were shared at the FIRST Saturday evening Tz'irim (teen) lounge, held on September, 26, 2009. SHREK,

THE MUSICAL, was enjoyed by all participants. Following the show everyone enjoyed a late-night outing to COLDSTONE.

**The next Tz'irim event is scheduled for Saturday, November 14, 2009 at Habonim. Join us for a MOVIE NIGHT and CITY SCAVENGER HUNT!**

**For more information and to participate, please contact Rebecca at [relkus@habonim.net](mailto:relkus@habonim.net) or 212-787-5347x14.**

## Religious School Rap

Rabbi Laurie Phillips

The Religious School program is in full swing. We have 137 amazing participants enrolled ranging in age from 5 to 15 along with a fantastic group of dynamic, passionate and creative staff!

Participants have been spending their time exploring the different fall holidays – the themes and rituals associated with each one. It has also been exciting to hear their thoughts and ideas about God, ritual and community during t'fila.

We pray the words in the siddur (prayer book) and also come up with our own prayers.

Here are some thoughts that were shared while davening (praying)

Birkot Hashachar (the morning blessings):

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam  
Blessed One, You are Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe...

“...thank you God for my family.”

“...thank you God for friends.”

“...thank you God for my health.”

“...thank you God for cheesecake.”

“...thank you God for my DS.”

(I didn't even know what that was J)

“...thank you God for my school.”

“...thank you God for soccer.”

“...thank you God for my siblings.”

“...thank you God for Rabbi LP.”

(They are so very sweet!)

Thank you for sharing your amazing children with me. Thank you God for all of you!

Come and join us for t'fila on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30-6:00pm and on Tuesday from 5:40-6:00pm.

Remember: 5 minutes a day 5 days a week is all it takes to strengthen Hebrew reading skills!

I look forward to seeing everyone at  
**PARENT NIGHT NOVEMBER 12TH – 7:00-9:00-PM.**  
COME AND SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILD/  
REN'S EDUCATORS EXPLORING THE “HOW” OF  
OUR AMAZING PROGRAM!!!

**B'chavod (with respect and gratitude),**  
Rabbi LP

## Congregation Habonim Acquires Automated External Defibrillator

*Plans Training for Staff and Opens Training up to Congregants*

We are pleased to announce that your temple has acquired an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). These units are the standard of care for sudden cardiac arrest and provide a life-saving shock to a person whose heart is in ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardia. This unit was donated in part by Core Medical Systems, which is owned by one of our members. Core Medical is also going to train temple staff in CPR/AED use and is opening this valuable course to members of the congregation. The cost for the training (it will take about 5 hours) will be \$85 and may be made as a contribution to the temple in that amount.

Items covered in the course include: identifying sudden cardiac arrest, heart attack, choking and stroke victims; the proper protocols in handling the medical events such as CPR and use of an AED, the Heimlich maneuver and more.

Why take this course? A Core student at a local JCC saved his daughter's life when she was choking on a small toy last year; a Core student from a local church saved the life of a woman on the PATH with CPR; and members of a well-know West Side delicatessen and appetizer store responded with an AED to a sudden cardiac arrest outside the store just 3 weeks after completing the Core Medical course. You too can be prepared! Learn the proper techniques and protocols to save the life of a loved one, friend or office worker.

## AED/CPR TRAINING

**THURSDAY  
NOVEMBER 19th, 2009  
Noon-4pm**

**Reserve your place  
in the class now  
as space is limited**

**\$85 per person  
payable to habonim**

**Please contact  
Yolanda Potasinski  
at (212) 787-5347 ex. 11  
ypotasinski@habonim.net**

## Spotlight Of The Month

### *Celebrating the Bar Mitzvah year of the Nursery School at Congregation Habonim and a Tribute to its founder, Louise Bergman*

Glenna Lee

When Louise Bergman first graduated from Bank Street with a master's degree in early childhood education, she dreamed of one day opening a school. Over two decades later, her dream came true, when she helped to establish Congregation Habonim's Nursery School in 1996. However, it is her long-standing journey with Habonim that makes her story particularly special.

While Louise grew up in the German-Jewish neighborhood of Washington Heights, her husband, Andrew, was raised in Queens' German Jewish community. Her parents-in-law, Ruth and Rudy Bergman, were the first couple to be married at Congregation Habonim, by Rabbi Hahn, in 1939. Her husband's bar-mitzvah was held at the Queen's branch of Congregation Habonim. However, it was not until the late 1980s that Louise's relationship with Congregation Habonim became personal.

As her eldest son, Jake, began approaching the age of Bar Mitzvah, his parents gave him a choice: go to Hebrew School and become a Bar-Mitzvah or take a trip to Germany, Prague and Israel. Jake chose the first option and was enrolled in Congregation Habonim's Religious School. On the day of Jake's Bar-Mitzvah, the recently retired Rabbi Cohen (son-in-law of Rabbi Hahn), came back to assist Rabbi Rosenbaum and Cantor Halev with his Bar-Mitzvah, adding another link to the chain of the Bergman Family's long-standing history with Congregation Habonim.

It was during this period that Louise became acquainted with the Congregation and with Rabbi Rosenbaum. During the early 1990s, the Congregation began its communal-reflection. With an awareness that the congregation's membership consisted of mostly its founding generation, the staff wanted to attract new members to the community. Because of Louise's dedication to Habonim, her master's degree from Bank Street and her training as a psychotherapist, Rabbi Rosenbaum asked her to establish and direct the nursery school. There were many challenges along the way, but Louise and supportive staff members like Cantor Halev pushed forward.

One challenge was finding and creating classroom space. According to Louise, "Cantor Halev asked Herman Boehm and his two sisters to put down the seed money for the whole process with the understanding that the school's name will be dedicated to his parents." To this day, one can find a plaque outside of the nursery school classrooms that dedicates the School to Else and Max Boehm. Many members gave \$18,000 donations, even if they didn't have youngsters in the Congregation, because they believed in the importance of Habonim's growing and attracting the new generations. The elder members also gave of their time; the original Nursery School committee had many original founding women on it, such as Clara Zeitlan, after whom the scholarship fund at the Nursery School is named.

Louise and the committee began working on the school in 1993 and doors were opened in the fall of 1996. The goal of the school, according to Louise was to make the school:

"Philosophy, educationally sound and developmentally appropriate. We wanted to prepare the children for on-going schools, to make Habonim a place where they could comfortably and in a fun way learn about their Jewish identity and to educate children to be socially conscious and good human beings so what happened in Germany could not happen again. It was and is important to us that people be aware of other people's feelings; our goal is to raise empathic, compassionate human beings and self confident and curious learners."

Over the past thirteen years, the school has grown enormously, at least double the size. Materially speaking, it is far more endowed and enriched. We are proud of the reputation it has developed and its membership in ISAAGNY. Louise Bergman has stayed on and is the psychological consultant for the school children. We wish the Nursery School and Cindy Grebow, our wonderful director of the Nursery School, a hearty Mazal Tov on reaching this point and many more successful years to come!

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## Are You A Bystander?

### *Lessons Learned From Kristallnacht*

Sara Lise Raff

On November 9th we will commemorate the tragedy of Kristallnacht. As I did my research for this article, I was saddened by reading more and more accounts of police officers, fire fighters and neighbors that turned their backs on the Jewish community that night. These

officials that were familiar with the community, sent orphan children to run through the streets in fear, senselessly beat and killed Jewish storeowners and watched and even cheered as one synagogue burned after the other.

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While we hope our children never experience the horrors of a Kristallnacht in their lifetime, the experience of being bullied draws some deep parallels. When an individual or a group is bullied there seems to be a dynamic that is often played out. Obviously, there is a bully, the bullied and in some cases there is a bystander. I believe that any child is capable of playing any of the mentioned roles depending on the circumstances, particularly when there is an imbalance of power and the bully, the bullied or both, lacks self-esteem.

There are many approaches to dealing with a bully and children and parents have to find an approach that works for their unique situation. It can be a very simple solution such as getting a withdrawn children into an extra curricular activity to raise self-confidence or teaching your child to ignore or stand up to the bully. It can also become extremely complex and involve the school administration and counseling. All bullying experts generally accept that it is important for every child to have at least one good friend. Having a friend that they can count on at the same school can decrease the chances of being singled out. Bullies tend to pick on someone that is all alone.

What about the bystander? Or bystanders? Maybe they are friends with the bullied. Maybe they are friends with the bully but are too afraid to speak up. What if they are not involved with either party but have just come to watch just because they are curious? I often think if had I lived at the time of Kristallnacht and I were not a Jew, would I have been strong enough to stand up to my community leaders that night? Would I have been wise enough to sneak children out of the ghetto and hide them in my church? Would I have stood up to the

police and firefighters? The answers do not come easily. The question begs of me, what would I do now? What have I learned from the heroes of the Holocaust? Those brave, and in many cases, ordinary people that risked their lives to save Jewish people that were truly hated. What drove them to stick their necks out? As I think about my daily interactions, I am noticing many situations where I have played the bystander and I'm wondering just how much my children do this as well.

I know what I hope to instill in my children is that they should read a situation. Is it the type of situation that they can use their words to put a stop to someone else's suffering? Or do they need to rally a group? Or do they need to get help? I learned in a bullying workshop that getting help is not tattling. Tattling is used to get someone in trouble, telling is used to get someone out of trouble. Do they need to be clever and outsmart or outwit the bully in order to save another and protect themselves? Choosing the right action plan can greatly affect the outcome.

While approaches seem to be as unique as the situations themselves we must teach our children to be thinkers and solution makers. As well, that the role of bystander can carry much power. Sharing the stories that came out of Kristallnacht can teach our children that ordinary people can do both awful and courageous things. I know that I will no longer spend days like Yom HaShoah and the anniversary of Kristallnacht to remember and teach my children only about the injustice that was done to the Jews but to honor the bystanders that stood up, made a plan, and took action.