



THE GRAPEVINE

A Publication of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah

May 2012

Iyar 5772

Congregational Meeting Marks the Beginning of New Growth, Direction

Marcy Epstein, Grapevine Editor

We have seen these meetings come and go: every year, per our by-laws, the Board meets the congregation one or more major topics related to the welfare of the AARH community. In the spirit of participation, we open up the floor to the great variety of opinions that has historically enlivened the Havurah. It is no mistake that our t-shirts read, "One Million Opinions and Growing."

What was wonderfully surprising to this hoarse onlooker at the congregational meeting-- held this morning at 9:30, April 29th at the JCC-- was a great confluence of opinion. The topic was rabbinical leadership, in the past a divisive idea. Well organized by the board, the meeting began with a communal prayer to honor the work of building and supporting community. Then board chair Debbie Zivan discussed how the current topic has long been on the minds of the membership, but was spurred by questions presented by our current rabbinical intern, Aura Ahuvia. Aura is planning ahead toward her ordination (smicha) in the next two years. While the Havurah's plans for rabbinical leadership

do not exactly depend on her path, Aura has an important place among us as both congregant and current leader, as well as rosh (head) of our beit sefer. The Board felt it was indeed time for us to honor Aura's question with the larger picture of what direction the Havurah will head in next.



Rena Basch (far left) shares thoughts about rabbinical candidacy with the membership. Photo: Marcy Epstein

The Board thus presented a range of possible paths, ways to organize rabbinical leadership in the coming years:

1. Becoming solely lay-led as a congregation;
2. Acquiring another rabbinical intern to serve part-time;
3. Acquiring a half-time rabbi; or
4. Acquiring a full-time rabbi.

Many members voiced their ideas, concerns, and values. We were concerned about preserving and encouraging lay participation in services and volunteerism, and we spoke also of needing leadership and services provided for us. We thought of our children, the core need of a *beit sefer*, the desires to keep our teenagers and adults immersed in Jewish community and learning. We noted our resourcefulness as a community, and our limits, given our commitment to economic and social diversity. We emphasized our distinctiveness as a community, our dedication to *tikkun olam* and social action, *mitzvot* and mutual compassion.

One wave upon the next, members offered how we felt the Havurah needs to move forward. We appear fluid in welcoming an appropriate leader into our midst, to augment what we can offer to each other and other Jewish families in Ann Arbor. Today we seemed not to lose our famed iconoclasy but rather to gain something not seen in several years of a complex process: a clear and vibrant desire to grow and to grow together, not to lose each other and not to lose what makes our community special, our “niche in the Ann Arbor community”.

By the end of two hours, it was clear that we wanted to meet again to discuss the details of this new direction. And it was also very clear to me, as editor of this newsletter and a former board member, that there are now

simply many, many things that our Havurah is doing well. I not only count this in our blessings. I also now must find a new slogan for our t-shirts.

Thank You for Your Meal-Delivery Support to Welcome Growing Families

Mike Ehmann, AARH Board—Mitzah Corp

One of the most appreciated community-building *mitzvot* that you can perform is to bring a delicious meal to a newly expanded family. Thank you to the many families who have already signed up and delivered home-cooked meals. The Spindler-Nelson and Goldberg families send their hearty thanks. Homemade meals are a great support at this joyous and exhausting time. Also, it is one of the best ways to welcome newer families to our community and get to know them -- by bringing them a meal.

New *Beit Sefer* parents Cara Spindler and Dave Nelson are nourishing and caring for two-month-old daughter Aziza. Big brother Otto is our newest kindergarten student, and some of you have met Dave on the volleyball court on Sundays. Cara returned to work as a teacher on April 16 and the family would appreciate meals until school ends in June.

Please sign up for meal delivery at the *ekklesion* website link below. There are no food restrictions. Prepare a meal or part of a meal for two parents and brother Otto, a five-year-old. For *Beit Sefer* families, you can have convenient delivery on Sundays

through May 13!

Sign up to deliver a meal

at: <http://www.ekkesion.com/meals3/meal.php?user=Nelson1>.

Another warm and joyous mazel tov goes out to Hav members Rachel and Michael Goldberg on the birth of their daughter! Michael writes, "Margo Florence Goldberg was born at 11:46 pm on 4/8/12. She and Rachel are doing great." Rachel and Michael convey their gratitude for the Hav's support and interest during their patient anticipation of the past few months. Rachel is on leave from teaching responsibilities in Plymouth. Michael teaches in Highland Park.

Sign up to prepare and deliver a vegetarian meal that may include dairy.

Sign up at this ekkesion website link

<http://tinyurl.com/7sagsp8>.

Bal Tashit (Do Not Destroy): Reviving a Tradition of Land Custodianship

Mike Ehmann, Board Member—Mitzvah Corp

Please join us on Sunday, June 3, from 1:00 to 5:00 pm, to participate in the Havurah Mitzvah Day. We will clean up ball fields, flowerbeds, parking lots and grills at three city parks. Our combined work on June 3 contributes to the large volunteer efforts that sustain parks, wetlands and green areas each year.

Already our Havurah membership has explored what it means to take care of the

land that provides us shelter. On Sunday April 22, the Hav's Wells-Belman family, Amy, Dale, Livia-- with friend Isabelle and Mike Ehmann-- helped other other volunteers and residents of Camp Take Notice/Tent City. Camp Take Notice is a homeless encampment is located on Ann Arbor's west side, on a stretch of the M-14 highway just past the Zeeb Road. Our teams also cleaned up an area along Wagner Road. Together we collected almost 70 bags of discarded plastic, paper, tire treads, and metal debris. It was a great experience to work and interact with CampTake Notice residents, who have taken great initiative in creating and caring for their need for shelter, as well as in being responsible to the surrounding community.

For those not familiar with it, Camp Take Notice/Tent City is a democratically governed member organization wherein individuals who are temporarily or chronically homeless can share resources (e.g., food & water) and information (e.g., about health, employment, showers etc.). For extensive and interesting details of this creative community's story please visit <http://www.tentcitymichigan.org/>.

Our Mitzvah Day gives us an opportunity to repair the world together and is also an opportunity for fresh air, shared effort and fun! Our help is very appreciated by the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation volunteer coordinators, as well as the wildlife and our neighbors and friends who use these parks.

At West Park, we'll clean out the band shell, back stage and stage areas, park grills; pickup trash throughout the park and trails; and perform some ball field maintenance. Almendinger Park needs us to help clean the park shelter, clean out park grills, pick up parking lot trash and provide some

ball field maintenance. Buhr Park and Cobblestone Farm need volunteers to help weed flowerbeds at Buhr Park, clean out the park grills, pick up parking lot and park trash and some more ball field maintenance.

Please choose a park in which to work with others on Sunday June 3 by adding yourself and your family to the sign-up webpage at <http://tinyurl.com/6qa6p4d>. Names are automatically saved and you can edit and change at any time. The Parks and Recreation Department will supply all needed materials. The three parks are listed below along with specific tasks. The parks and tasks are also listed on the sign-up webpage.

At this point, we have adequate staffing for West Park, but we especially need families at Almendinger and Buhr Parks. Each park needs 8 to 14 people. Again the link for signing-up is <http://tinyurl.com/6qa6p4d>.

Havurah Community Seder Questions the Source in Torah and Rabbinical Texts

Marcy Epstein, Grapevine Editor

Kudos to everyone who came and made this year's Second Seder so memorable! Harry Fried and Allison Stupka ably continued the tradition of retelling Exodus through text and deed, as well as the provision of Martha's delicious recipe for matzah lasagna and the Newell-Saltzman favorite, matzah s'mores. Don't believe me? The pictures tell it as well as Hillel....



...if Harry and Allison had just led us in blessings, yoga, and prayer, dayenu!

...If Paul had just punctuated the story with his violin and not also performed the role of the frogs, dayenu!



...And if the kids (here's Sondi, Julianna, and Jacob) hadn't brightened the conversation with knowledge and ideas, dayenu! Next year in the JCC gym!



Daniel Saltzman, *.... at Your Service*

Marcy Epstein, Grapevine Editor

To our happiness, Daniel Saltzman has safely returned from Afghanistan to a base in Alaska. Since Daniel and the Editor are friends on Facebook, I've tailored a new feature for the Grapevine called "At your Service". This month, I asked Daniel to perform the service of sharing his favorite Jewish joke, sharing his favorite Jewish food, and telling us his favorite Passover story from the Army. Send me the next "service" you'd like Daniel to perform, and keep our young-blood warm with Havurah affection!

Daniel's Favorite Jewish Joke:

A Jewish boy went to New York for a holiday. After a few weeks he called his mother on the phone and said, "I have great news, mother, I have met a beautiful girl and I am getting married!"

"Oy vey," his mother exclaimed, "I hope she's Jewish. What's her name?"

"Goldberg!" the boy told her.

"That's a wonderful Jewish name," his mother smiled, "What's her first name?"

"Whoopi!" replied the boy.

Daniel's Favorite Jewish Food:

Everything matzah - while not strictly kosher for pesach, this matzah has a delicious blend of flavors that makes it great for snacking on either alone or with peanut butter.

Daniel's Favorite Passover Treat:

An army UCP-patterned kippa: when I was in Basic Training at Fort Benning, it was a poorly kept secret that the Jewish religious services featured food brought by the local Jewish community. So while Jewish soldiers DID go to the service, the majority were hungry non-Jews. However, we did have a Rabbi, who was more than happy to chat with congregants. One day he gave me one of the kippot they used for services, in a UCP pattern that matched my uniform. When I eventually moved to Fort Wainwright, I had a leader who couldn't stand anyone in his unit not

looking the same. So I made sure regularly to wear my Army-pattern kippa, which was a protected item, to annoy him since he couldn't legally make me take it off.



Still not sick of matzah. May be sick of UCP patterns.

Israeli Independence Day Celebration

Audrey Newell, AARH Member

Do you love to create art? Help others create art? Recycle? Schmooze? The theme of this year's event is "Jerusalem". The Havurah will have our traditional large table with lots of chairs under our tent. We'll display photos of the beautiful Chagall windows. We've rescued boxes of old, unused transparencies and gathered piles of markers. Children and adults can create stained glass windows and suncatchers and even frame them in rescued transparency frames. They will look really nice on your windows at home.

Come to the JCC on Sunday May 20th, from 1-4 pm. Come to create, to schmooze, to volunteer for a pleasant hour or two, or all of the above. Please call or email Audrey or Greg Saltzman if you can help. 971-7596 or newell@umich.edu

Reflections on Iyar

Grace Fredkin, Havurah Columnist

"Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring/The Winter Garment of Repentance fling." (Omar Khayyam) Now is "the high-tide of the year,/Whether we look, or whether we listen,/We hear life murmur, or see it glisten." (James Russell Lowell)

On the other hand, "the days between Passover and Shavuot [the month of Iyar, 4/23-24 to 5/21 this year and the beginning of Sivan, 5/21-22 to 6/20this year] are considered a time of mourning." (Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs) Last year (in the 5/11 Grapevine) I detailed the many tragic events leading to this being a time of mourning, from the martyrdom of Rabbi Akiva and his students through the three Crusades (1096-1192) and the last great deportation to the gas chambers, that of the Hungarian Jews.

The holiday of Lag B'Omer, 18 Iyar (May 9-10 this year; day 33 of the omer), halfway through the omer period, lightens things up a bit, allowing for 24 hours of (prescribed) joy. The manna that sustained us in the desert supposedly first appeared on 18 Iyar; from the description in Exodus 16:13-15 and 16:31, it somehow makes sense that a being (God) who had never inhabited a material body would come up with something like that to supply humans with appetizing sustenance.

Even though *zakhor* (remember) is a key Jewish imperative, enough is enough, and so this year I will just talk about Miriam, and about Yom Yerushalayim.

Miriam's well supposedly first appeared during Iyar (Ritualwell.org) --"a rolling rock that accompanied the Jewish people on their wanderings, [it] provided fresh water in the desert, not only for the people, but also for their cattle and sheep, [and] also made the desert bloom with green pastures and beautifully scented flowers." (chabad.org) Parashat Khukat (Numbers/Bamidbar 19:1-21:35) recounts the

death of Miriam and the simultaneous disappearance of the water (Numbers/Bamidbar 20:1-11). Rabbi Bradley Artson comments that "Rashi (11th Century, France) noticed the juxtaposition of Miriam's death and the shortage of water, and assumed that there must be a connection between the two. 'From this we learn that all forty years, they had a well because of the merit of Miriam.'"

Rabbi Artson continues: "While medallions and press releases accompany the splashier achievements of some men, many women [like Miriam] quietly provide wells of nurturing and support without public attention or commendation. Only when they are no longer able to serve are their services noticed, and then only because they are missed. Why didn't anyone notice Miriam's well while she was still alive?"

*Come, fill the Cup, and in the
Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of
Repentance fling.
--Omar Khayyam*

Miriam's Cup is a new ritual object that is placed on the seder table beside the Cup of Elijah and is filled with water, serving as a symbol of Miriam's Well. Even though we celebrated Passover a month ago, it's still not too late for this; Pesach sheni (cf. 5/11 Grapevine) is on 14 Iyar (5/6 this year). Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Reunification Day, 28 Iyar/May 19-20 this year), like Yom Hazikaron (Israel Defense Forces Memorial Day, 3 Iyar/April 24-25 this year) and Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day, 4 Iyar/April 25-26 this year), is probably better observed in thoughtful compassion than in loud martial displays.

It's a time to remember, *zakhar*, the Other Middle East narrative. On the one hand: "By the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War Jerusalem was left divided between Israel and Jordan. The Old City and East Jerusalem continued to be occupied

by Jordan.... This state of affairs changed in 1967 as a result of the Six-Day War...On June 7, 1967 (28 Iyar 5727), Israel captured the Old City of Jerusalem. On May 12, 1968, the government proclaimed a new holiday—Jerusalem Day—to be celebrated on the 28th of Iyar." (Wikipedia)

But on the other hand: "Leslie Susser (in *The Jerusalem Report*, Feb. 28, 2000) points out that the current boundaries were drawn after the Six-Day War. Responsibility for drawing those lines fell to Central Command Chief Rehavan Ze'evi. The line he drew 'took in not only the five square kilometers of Arab East Jerusalem — but also 65 square kilometers of surrounding open country and villages, most of which never had any municipal link to Jerusalem. Overnight they became part of Israel's eternal and indivisible capital.' [Allan Brownfield, in *The Washington Report On Middle East Affairs*, May 2000] " ("The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict") With apologies for such a simplistic account of the seemingly irredeemable, complex incompatibility of the two narratives.]

Iyar may may be felt from history or from this poem by John Godfrey Saxe, on the story of the blind men and the elephant, in conclusion:
So oft in theologic [or political] wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has been or seen.



Caleb and Eli Shoup play soccer recently with new friends in Nicaragua, where they dropped off soccer equipment as Eli's bar mitzva project.

Mitzvah Corp Offers Friendship, Support

Mike Ehmman, Board Liaison

The Mitzvah Corp arranges help for families and individuals experiencing life-cycle and emergency needs.

Helping other community members in times of need is an important communal value. Mitzvot bring rewards to everyone involved. So please don't shy away from contacting the Mitzvah Corp for support or for joining the Corp in these Mitzvot. Contact us at the email addresses or phone numbers below.

For families experiencing emergency or illness related needs, Mitzvah Corp can help by arranging meal delivery as part of a caravan, visiting, conversation, rides to services, baby-sitting, shiva arrangement, burial services or assisting with other needs.

The Mitzvah Corp also helps with positive life events such as providing meals to families with new babies and helping with commitment or conversion ceremonies.

Another wonderful option is available for our community. Healing Chant Choir members Anita Rubin-Meiller, Barbara Boyk-Rust, Idelle Hammond-Sass and Lori Lichtman provide healing chant on request for those recovering from illness or surgery. To arrange Healing Chant, please contact Barbara at Barbara.boykrust@sbcglobal.net. Please contact a Corp member if you, or a family that you know, has need for this help and support.



*When recovering from illness, surgery or personal loss, it can be helpful and supportive to feel held in the healing space created by sacred chant. **Anita Rubin-Meiller, Barbara Boyk Rust, Idelle Hammond-Sass and Lori Lichtman** have visited home, hospital and bedside to offer sacred chant to individuals and families for some years. Contact Barbara at Barbara.boykrust@sbcglobal.net or Anita at anita1018@sbcglobal.net to get more information or arrange for a visit.*

Mitzvah Corp Committee Members:

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Paul Resnick (resnick.paul@gmail.com, 734 644-4037) and
Karen Cooper (kcooper02@comcast.net 734 761-1895).

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

“Notes from the Board” returns next month. Here is a reprint of a letter regarding how Havurah members may donate to our community. Note there’s another new form in the Grapevine!

Dear Havurah Members,

As of the January 1, 2012, the local Jewish Federation is administering a Flexible Giving Option (FGO). The FGO was created in response to a demand from local individuals who were not willing to make contributions to some of the local Federation's funding recipients. The local Federation also saw this as an opportunity to take full administration responsibility for donations being made via the Hav's Progressive Jewish Giving Fund (PJGF). In response to the Federation's offer and with the approval of Hav members who initiated the PJGF, donations to all PJGF recipients can now be made via the FGO.

The FGO includes options for donating to ALL organizations that were supported by the PJGF. PJGF founders were instrumental in ensuring that the intent of the PJGF was maintained in creating the FGO.

The Federation's campaign requests that pledges be made by April 30th with payments due by December

31st. If you would like to take advantage of the FGO, please use the attached form to send in your pledge and/or donation (preferably by the end of this month). Alternatively, you may contact David Shtulman (david@jewishannarbor.org) or Avram Kluger (avram@jewishannarbor.org) directly to make your pledge - the phone number for the Federation is (734) 677-0100.

Thank you,
Debbie Zivan
Chair, AARH Board of Directors

Board Liaisons:

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Pam Shore—Ritual/ B'nei mitzvot
Mike Ehmann --Mitzvah Corps/Social Action
Carol Lessure—Publicity/Outreach

Seedlings, Simchas, & Sorrows

*Mazel tov to our newest Havurah child, **Margo Florence Goldberg**, born this April to **Rachel and Michael Goldberg**.*

*Kudos to **Jeff Goldberg** for help in designing new ads for the Hav and the new Flexing Giving Option form.*

*Mazel tov to **Jacob Scheyer** and his family on the occasion of his upcoming bar mitzvah on May 26.*

*Kudos to **Harry Fried** and **Allison Stupka** for leading this year's Second Seder. A special thank you to **Joel and Sally Goldberg** for the amazing variety of wines to fill our many cups.*

***Marcy Epstein** sends kisses (heh heh) to the **Mitzvah Corp** for their care during her mono.*

*Toda raba to **Jennifer Cohen** for hosting the bagel brunch for the April 29th congregational meeting.*

*Condolences to **Deb Kraus** and **Molly Kraus-Steinmetz** on the passing of father and grandfather on April. Baruch dayan emet.*

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2012 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN Flexible Giving Option

2012 Gift \$

The Annual Campaign ensures that Ann Arbor is a flourishing Jewish community of excellence providing inspired Jewish choices and opportunities.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please allocate my donation via the Flexible Giving Option in the following manner:

_____ % to support Local needs in Ann Arbor
(via the apportionments of the Jewish Federation*)

_____ % to support Non-Local needs
(via the apportionments of the Jewish Federation*)

_____ % to National and International Jewish communities
via AJWS, JDC and Mazon***

_____ % to Israel via New Israel Fund**

Does your employer have a matching gifts program?

I will be recommending a grant to the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor from my Donor Advised Fund. This support should not be considered a pledge.

I would be interested in discussing a bequest or planned giving. Please contact me.

* See http://www.jewishannarbor.org/local_includes/downloads/54008.pdf for 2011-2012 Federation allocations

** See <http://www.nif.org/issue-areas/grantees> for list of grantees

*** **American Jewish World Service (AJWS):**
http://ajws.org/who_we_are/publications/

Total = 100%

Payment Options:

___ Bill me ___ Credit Card Payments(s)

___ Check enclosed payable to "Jewish Federation." In the memo line, write "Flexible Giving Option"

For payment by credit card: ___ pay in full ___ quarterly payments ___ monthly payments

___ If paying by credit card I would like to add 3% (or \$ _____) to help defray the credit card fees.

Type of card: ___ Visa ___ Master Card ___ American Express

Name of Cardholder _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

In consideration of the subscription of others and the obligations to be incurred based on pledges received, I (we) hereby promise to pay the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

Signature _____

Return this form to: Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, 2939 Birch Hollow Dr, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. Any questions and to learn more about our local Jewish Federation – who we are, organizations supported and mission on behalf of our community-- please contact Avram Kluger, Campaign Director at (734) 677-0100 or avram@jewishannarbor.org.

Joint Distribution Committee (JDC): <http://jdc.org/jdc-media-center/publications/fact-sheets.aspx>

Mazon: <http://mazon.org/about/what-we-fund/grantees-information/>
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