

Yes, You Heard It Through



THE GRAPEVINE

A Publication of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah

October 2012

Tishrei-Cheshvan 5773

New Year & New Work: The Hav's Call to Name & Rabbinical Leadership

Debbie Zivan, Havurah Board

Rabbinic leadership and changing our name have been at the top of our communal agenda for the past six months. Through congregational meetings, email communications, and individual conversations, a wealth of information was gathered about these two topics. Our community is fortunate in that its members are deeply committed to our congregation. After taking all the community input into account, the Board voted unanimously to move forward with the following plan regarding rabbinic leadership and our name.

Part 1: Rabbinic Leadership

During the past six months, members have been asked to share their thoughts, insights and opinions about rabbinic leadership with each other and the Board of Directors. Meetings to which all members were invited were held on April 29, June 10, June 22, and July 12. In addition, members were encouraged to contact Board members to share their thoughts and

opinions. Our meetings served to both gather information about determining our path for rabbinic leadership and remind members why they choose AARH as their Jewish communal home.



Based on the feedback from our membership, your Board voted to establish a search committee tasked with hiring a half-time Rabbi who will be paid approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000 annually for a 2-year contract. Typical rabbinic/leadership roles are outlined in the table below. Based on feedback from our members, roles were prioritized to create a half-time job description. The majority of roles not assigned to our rabbi will be managed by paid staff, volunteers and independent contractors.

As current member dues do not currently support this range of compensation, we plan to use savings to account for some of the difference between our income and rabbinic compensation. At the same time, we will pursue moderate growth and ask members to consider increasing their annual contribution with the goal of making the half-time position sustainable over the long term. The Board and sub-committees in conjunction with the Rabbi will pursue various avenues for growth and all members are encouraged to take an active role in both member development and member recruitment. The long-term viability of paid, ordained rabbinic leadership will be a product of our collective commitment to this shared vision.

The search committee will take full advantage of placement services offered by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. In accordance with our by-laws, eligible applicants will not be restricted to Rabbis ordained by the Reconstructionist College.

The search committee, appointed by the Board, will be formed by January 2013. The intent of the Board is to represent the range of demographics in our Havurah, to the extent possible, and to ensure that the committee has access to current best hiring practices. To that end, the Board will be reaching out to members to request their service.

The Havurah's annual meeting will be held on November 11th from 9:45am to 11:15am at the JCC. Between now and November 1, the Board is soliciting questions, comments and concerns about the rabbinic leadership plan. The Board will field and discuss feedback. If needed, the Board will fine tune the plan and issue a final version at the annual meeting.

Part 2: Decision to change our name to The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation

In March, via email and The Grapevine, the board asked for comments regarding its plan to change our name to the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation. The name change would reflect the growing reality that we possess many attributes of a more formal organization while reducing confusion to the broader community. The board sought comment over a six-week period from March 1 – April 15 and took comments into account before making its final decision.

The Board received many comments about changing our name – the great majority of comments endorsed the change and matched the thoughts expressed by the board in seeking this change. As a result, the Board has voted unanimously to change the name. Board members are now researching the details concerning the name change that we plan to make final by the end of 2012.

Conclusion

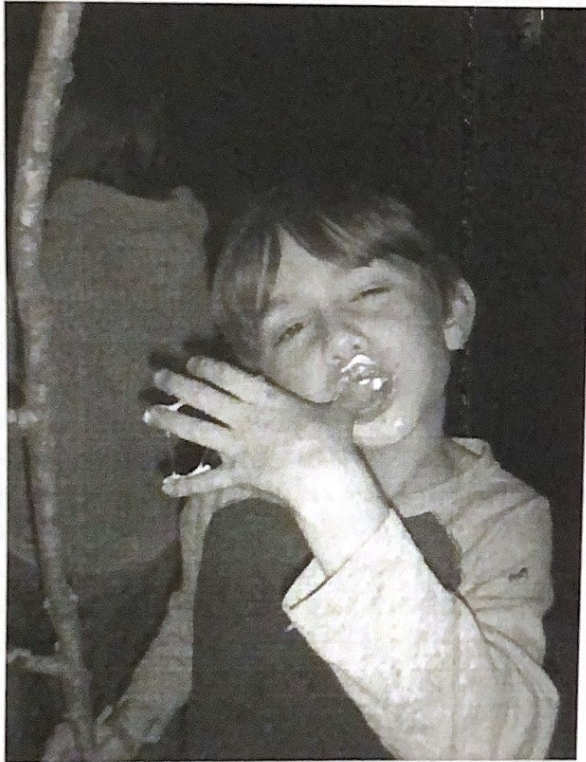
The spirit of the Havurah shined brightly during the process of determining our future leadership and name. Your Board members look forward to hearing from you during the open comment period and celebrating with you at our annual meeting as we formalize our plans for the future!

Thanks from the Board of Directors:
Debbie Zivan, Chair/Programming
Jeffrey Basch, Treasurer/Finance
Karin Ahbel-Rappe, Secretary/Education
Carol Lessure, Marketing/Outreach
Sarai Brachman Shoup, Membership/Outreach
Mike Ehmann, Mitzvot/Social Action
Josh Samuel, Communications/Inreach
Pam Shore, Ritual

Sukkot/Fall Retreat Comes Alive Again at Emrich Center

Mike Ehmann, Board Member/ Retreat Organizer

One of our favorite community getaways is our annual Sukkot/Fall Retreat, when we take off a weekend to share ritual and prayers, arts and games, close and good times. This year we continue the tradition, with lots of free time and opportunities to explore our artistic expression and the great outdoors.



Autumn ecstasy found at a bonfire. Photo: Carol Lessure

As usual, make sure to bring clothes for all weather, sufficient bedding, bug spray and salve, and your favorite games. The retreat takes place on October 12-14, 2012, at the Emrich Retreat Center, 7380 Teahen Rd., Brighton, MI 48116. Directions and Map for

Emrich Center may be found at this link: <http://mapq.st/piicbZ>

Our schedule runs as follows:

Friday Oct 12

5 pm Arrival
6 pm singing
7 pm dinner
8 pm Birkat Hamazon songs and games

Saturday Oct 13

7:30 to 9:00 am Breakfast By Audrey
After breakfast to noon Drop-In Water Color Workshop:
Your Personal Bookmark Susan Sheiner
10 am Shabbat Service led by Deb
10 to 11:45 am Children's Activities and Child Care 1
Noon Lunch
1:00 – 3:00 Children's Activities and Child Care 2
1:15 – 2:45 Dance For Health and Harmony with Lori Lichtman
3:00 – 4:30 Art Explorations for Spiritual Centering
Using the Open Studio Process, with Idelle Hammond-Sass
4:30 Hikes to Lake, Socializing, Games, Merriment, Sher Dancing
6:00 Dinner
7:15 Bonfire and S'mores
8:45 Havdallah
9:00 Music and Dance by Dan, Drake and the Band

Sunday Oct 14

7:30 to 9:00 am Breakfast By Audrey
9:00 Yoga with Eileen Dzik
10:00 Beit Sefer and Community Celebration
Noon Lunch
1:30 clean up by all
2:15 Farewell

When you're not engaging in conversation or taking place in an activity, the farm is yours to explore. At this time of year, Emrich is putting to bed its gardens to feed the hungry, pear trees are finishing their season, and walking paths are clear and visible through Pinckney Recreation Area. So come out and join the Havurah bring in this graceful season.

There are charges for the retreat. Please make checks out to AARH PO Box 7451, Ann Arbor, MI 48107. Questions about the Retreat should go to Mike Ehmann (mtehhmann@comcast.net). Questions about registration go to Jen at (mamacohen@comcast.net).

Va-Yelech – A Shabbat Shuvah Drash of a Path

Evelyn Neuhaus, Havurah Member

In VaYelech, Moses continues to prepare the Israelites for his death and for Joshua's leadership. He reminds them that God will not forsake them, and that the Divine will always be with them. Moses directs the Israelites to read Torah, to remember the words that can guide them. Moses is directed by God to compose a poem, Ha'Azinu, the next parsha, which will help his people remember the covenant with the Divine. God says that this poem will be in the people's mouths and the mouths of their offspring. The implication is that this poem, always present, will help the people to return to God.

VeYelech delivers the perfect teaching for Shabbat Shuvah, Shabbat of Return. You will get complacent and forget your roots, and you will turn away from the path that the Divine has directed. God predicts that the Israelites will prosper in the Promised Land and as a result will stray from God's teachings. But Moses tells the people that God will not forsake them.

If God predicts that his people will surely stray, this is good news for us. Apparently this is how we have been created, straying is in our human nature.

Mistakes and sins are to be expected. But we can accept our transgressions, seek forgiveness and return to the path, without punishing

ourselves for our missteps. We have the opportunity during these Days of Awe to consider our lives, identify where we have strayed, and simply turn back to the path. But in doing so, we can accept our nature and not punish ourselves for the mistakes we have made.

*... we can accept our nature and
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mistakes we have made.*

To help with this process, the Divine directs Moses to write down a poem and teach it to the Israelites. The Israelites are directed to hold it in their memories and in their mouths for a reminder of the covenant they have with God.

Both the poem and the commandment to study and remember Torah serve as a mindfulness practice, to remind the Israelites and to remind us of our place in the earth and the firmament and to stay present in this place. These serve to remind us of our own holiness, that we are made in the image of God. They can bring us back to our center and help us perceive the spaciousness of our lives. And if we keep in mind that it is in our nature to forget our roots and turn away from the path, as the Divine has suggested, then we will not be sidetracked by the pain of guilt and shame.

**Please mark your calendars
for our congregation's annual
meeting, November 11, 9:45-
11:15 a.m. See you then!**

Follow Us on Facebook!

Carole Lessure, Board Member

That's right – the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah has a Facebook page and is looking for more fans.

You can "Like" the page at facebook.com/AnnArborRecon and then invite fellow members (and potential new ones) to join the page as well.

You can also opt in to receive:

Reminder postings on your home page about upcoming gatherings;

Events added to your Facebook calendar

Interesting reposts from other congregations, the Reconstructionist Rabbinic College, and fellow congregants;

Photos, comments and other informational postings from fellow members.

So check out our online social network soon, send us your ideas, and let Hav threads begin.

Jewish Musical Traditions. (Re)Visited: Two Upcoming Community Events

Carol Lessure, Board Member

Two events coming to JCC may be of particular interest to Havurah members:

Jack Zaeintz will talk about the "Silver Age of Jewish Music, and Why We are Missing It." Right now, Jewish music is exploding. Bands

and labels and venues are multiplying. A revolution is happening but we're scattered across a big nation with no common media to connect us.... except the Internet. Will it be enough? Jack Zaeintz, an Ann Arbor area research scientist who blogs about contemporary Jewish Music, will introduce you to some of the most amazing new Jewish music that you've never heard. The talk takes place Monday, Oct. 15 from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm at the JCC.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute is hosting a JCC series on the American Musical Theater by **Barbara Mackey**. Dr Mackey is exploring Yiddish theater and prominent Jewish composers and lyricists for Broadway in her series. There are two more sessions on Friday, October 5 and Friday, October 12 at 2:00 pm.

Reflections on Tishrei/Cheshvan

*Grace Fredkin, Havurah Columnist
Marcy Epstein, GV Editor*

Grace's column will appear again next month—until then here's a poem about this season of tekufah, of autumn. It comes from Yokheved Bat-Miriam, a twentieth-century Hebrew poet and one of the most influential female figures in Hebrew modernism. Yokheved Bat-Miriam (born Zhelezhiak) completed pedagogical courses in Kharkov and then studied at universities in Odessa and Moscow. She immigrated to Palestine in 1928.

Bat-Miriam's first poems were published in *Ha-Tekufah* (1922). In Russia, she belonged to the Hebrew Octobrists Circle, a group dedicated to producing Hebrew revolutionary works in Soviet Russia. She moved to Palestine and published several compelling volumes of socio-political poetry.

During the Israeli War of Independence, Bat-Miriam's son, Nahum (Zuzik), was killed in one of the battles for Jerusalem, and as a result she virtually stopped writing. In 1963 she approved the

publication of a wide selection of her poetry and was awarded the Bialik Prize for this anthology. Nine years later she received the Israel Prize for literature. (yivoencyclopedia.com)

An Apple Cake for the Ages

Marcy Epstein, Grapevine Editor

Cranes from the Threshold

By Yocheved Bat-Miriam

Translated by A.Z. Foreman

*You remained on the roadway behind me
But the hymn of my steps remains:
A golden sheaf's reflection,
A meadow of cranes upon cranes!*

*I stumble on cloud as on stone.
I stumble on my day as on sin.
I am borne between blue and a star
By your innocent, stammering grin.*

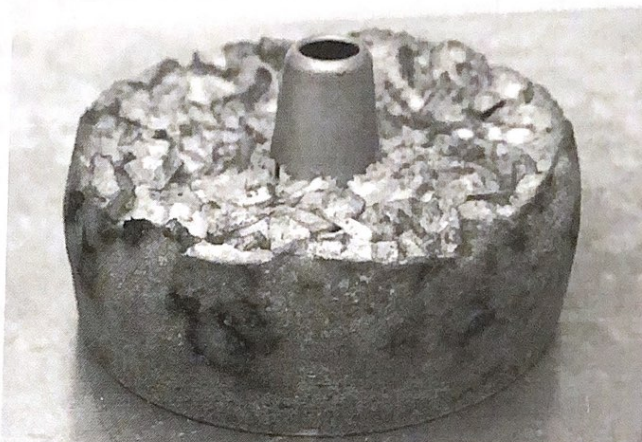
*Because you once were and shone tearful
And leaned on a painted wave's form
And breathed, as you sailed over yonder,
An invisible shore into storm,*

*As they pound toward the shore and toward
you
(Who are held in its far gold gleam)
My days are poured out for me, pounding
The beat of your cherished dream.*

*Splendors and unmeaning silence!
Splendors and unnamed sky!
Unique in the blue is the hour
That is shuttered away from my eye.*

*Alone to the stone and the threshold
That chanted your hymn to the age
Like a gold-bearing letter they guide me,
Like a name on your very first page.*

This Rosh Hashanah, Nancy Meadow made us an exquisite apple challah from a recipe of her mom Rosanna Tendler Worth (z"l) that fulfilled both the holiday tradition and recalled the tender sweetness of



generations past. To honor the season and her memory, here's a quick Mom's apple cake recipe:

Somebody's Mom's Jewish Apple Cake

Ingredients: 6 McIntosh apples, 1 tablespoon cinnamon, 5 tablespoons sugar, 2 3/4 cups flour, sifted, 1 tablespoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 cup vegetable oil, 2 cups sugar, 1/4 cup orange juice, 2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla, 4 eggs, 1 cup walnuts.

Directions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a tube pan. Peel, core and chop apples into chunks. Toss with cinnamon and sugar and set aside.

Stir together flour, baking powder and salt in a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together oil, orange juice, sugar and vanilla. Mix wet ingredients into the dry ones, then add eggs, one at a time. Scrape down the bowl to ensure all ingredients are incorporated. Pour half of batter into prepared pan. Spread half of apples over it. Pour the remaining batter over the apples and arrange the remaining apples on top. Bake for about 1 1/2 hours, or until a tester comes out clean.

Mitzvah Corp Offers Friendship, Support

Mike Ehmann, 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.

Mitzvah Corp Committee Members:

Mike Ehmann (mtehmenn@comcast.net, 734-913-0630)
Nancy Meadow (nancymeadow@gmail.com, 734-663-2037)
Paul Resnick (resnick.paul@gmail.com, 734 644-4037) and
Karen Cooper (kcooper02@comcast.net 734 761-1895).

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

Karin Ahbel-Rappe, Havurah Board

From September's meeting:

1. Registration for this year's retreat is running ahead of last year! Join us October 12-14 at the Emrich Center in Brighton. There are still plenty of volunteer opportunities and needs. If you can help, contact Mike Ehmann at mtehmenn@comcast.net.

2. Our congregation will be hosting a booth at the Sukkarhival to be held September 30 at the JCC.

3. The Havurah will be submitting a proposal for a 2013 Community Impact Grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. We will propose convening a multi-congregational musical shabbaton and will pursue a joint proposal with Eastern Michigan University.

4. After months of careful work, the Board has crafted a plan for rabbinic leadership and a name change for consideration by our community. Look for the article by Debbie Zivan in this issue of the *Grapevine*. We will discuss the plan as a congregation at our annual meeting November 11, 9:45-11:15.

5. Kudos to everyone who made our High Holy Day services successful and meaningful this year. We wish everyone shanah tova!

Seedlings, Simchas, & Sorrows

Condolences to prospective members Rosie Bellovin, Jon Curtiss, and Kit Bellovin. Jon's father, Richard "Pat" Curtiss, passed away last week in Princeton, New Jersey. May his memory be for a blessing.