



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Chaverim,

Welcome to my first President's message to be published in our Newsletter. I know that it has been a long time coming, but sometimes change is like that. Other times, change comes suddenly. And it can be welcome or unwelcome, joyous or tragic. Seeing my message here is a miniscule change in the universe of changes we are all experiencing, not only at Pleasantville Community Synagogue, but personally, globally, and everything between.

Passover is a time to recognize change. Slavery to freedom, and winter to spring. Rebirth, renewal, and revitalization. When Moses went to the burning bush, it did not change, but burned without being consumed. And Hashem's identity as spoken from the bush spoke of changelessness, or perhaps eternal and constant change: *ehyeh asher ehyeh* — I will be what I will be.

They say that change is the one true constant — the one thing that always remains the same — is that nothing can ever remain the same. Some of us have new jobs, while others of us have lost jobs, while for others our jobs are changing, keeping up with the times or following company mergers. We have welcomed new families to the community, babies were born, and friends or loved ones passed away. Marriages are made and broken, and our children grow, graduate, and move on to build lives of their own.

As we close in on the Passover holiday, change is before our eyes. We witness the change of the seasons (if the snow ever leaves, that is) from winter into spring as we prepare our tables to relive our people's change from slavery to freedom. And even through the sameness of the Passover seder we witness change: Is there a new addition to the family, or a new friend attending? Is there somebody missing who can never be replaced? Or is the change represented only in wisdom learned through the passage of time?

They say that change is hard. But it happens without our input or effort. Rather, we are challenged to accept change and thrive. Spring happens without our effort, but we must realize that gray rainy days result in flowers and rainbows to dance under. We know that slavery could end in death or despair, but we hold it close as a lesson to us, changing it from mere tragedy to a source of strength and faith, teaching our children what freedom truly means.

Change results from action or inaction, and is often out of our control. But how we experience change and how we react lies within our control. Growing up and growing old are easy — it happens to us all with just the passage of time. But making the most of those changes, that's hard. We must work to change into a responsible adult or a wise elder, to add our own repairs to the world. We work diligently to break the habits of many years and develop new patterns of thought, and see change as new opportunities. We work tirelessly to honor the memories of loved ones who have gone, and we carry them with us to pursue dreams, goals, and aspirations. We work passionately to enable the seeds deep within our souls to grow toward the light, so they can flourish and serve the world.

They say every change is an opportunity. When my kids were born, the blessings of change were apparent and welcome. When it came time to leave my old synagogue 12 years ago, I found PCS; warm, welcoming, and inviting, it has become my true spiritual home. When I lost my job several years ago, another one came along that was, indeed, better than my old one. During my divorce, I have been overwhelmed by the love I have experienced from friends and family. Life is change, and we will all be what we will be — the challenge and the joy is how we embrace those changes, to recognize the opportunities, and to grow, enrich, and fulfill our lives.

Yes, change is a constant companion. But throughout all the changes that come, some things remain the same — love is always there. The love of parent or child, the love of family and friends, the love of Hashem for His people. We are loved.

May each of us experience the blessings of love to help us make the most of the changes that come.

B'shalom — Michael Safranek

HEBREW SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

by Galit Sperling, Principal



This month in Hebrew School was filled with activities during which we celebrated family and tradition. On March 15, our fourth graders (Kitah Daled) celebrated Heritage Day. Heritage Day is a wonderful annual event at which each fourth-grade student presents an artifact from his or her family that represents a moment from that student's Jewish heritage. The fourth-grade parents were invited to present alongside their children, and we were touched to hear their own stories and memories, as they were passed down from generation to generation.

During challah making throughout the month, parents of first through sixth graders joined their children in Hebrew School to make challah bread from scratch. Challah, a traditional (and tasty!) part of Shabbat, is a lovely symbol for unity and tradition; like the braids of the challah bread, we all strive to be intertwined as families and communities alike.

On March 14, our sixth graders (Kitah Vav) led several prayers as part of the Saturday morning (*Shacharit*) Shabbat service. They sang with great conviction at their Shabbaton, and we look forward to the next time they will each be on the *bimah*, at their B'nei Mitzvah next year!

Time is flying this year, as already the Jewish holidays of Purim and Passover were upon us. For Purim, all of our students made festive masks and filled *Mishloach Manot* bags to be given to their peers. These *Mishloach Manot* bags were made up of treats students brought in as well as hamantaschen, and extended the tradition of giving to others during holiday time. For Passover, we held model Passover seders, following the order of the traditional holiday meal all together. Dipping parsley into salt water, breaking the middle matzah and searching for the *afikoman*, were a few of the highlights of the seders. See the following pages for a picture of our first and second grade (Kitah Aleph/Bet) seder, and keep an eye out for May's Newsletter for pictures from the model seder for our third through seventh grades.

The Purim and Passover stories are each exciting to retell in their own ways, classic tales with universally relevant themes to discuss and dissect today. For both holidays, Hebrew School students acted out those holiday stories, adding their own creative spin on the characters and presentation.

Thank you to all of the parents who joined us this month, whether for challah making, Heritage Day, or the Passover Model Seders! We look forward to continued opportunities to come together to celebrate festive times, commemorate the past and our old traditions, and create new traditions as well.

Important Upcoming Hebrew School Events:

Thursday, April 9: Hebrew School classes resume (Passover)

Sunday, April 12: Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) Service at 1 pm

Friday evening, April 17: First/second grade (Kitah Aleph/Bet) Shabbaton

Friday evening, April 24: Third grade (Kitah Gimel) Shabbaton

Sunday, April 26: Yom Ha'Atzma'ut (Israeli Independence Day) celebration during Hebrew School

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Making delicious
challah together!



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Kitah Aleph/Bet enjoying Purim with Morah Jaime and Galit...



and practicing for Passover at their model seder.





*Those fortunate enough to attend the recent PCS Bar Mitzvah of **Benjamin Lerman** were quite impressed with the speech he gave about the meaning of Passover. With the kind permission of Ben and his parents, we reprint it below:*

I want to first thank everyone for being here today. Many of you have travelled from across the country or from up and down the East Coast to celebrate with me, and I want you to know how much I appreciate it.

My Torah portion is HaChodesh, and since Passover is coming up on the Jewish calendar, it is all about that holiday. At first, it seemed like my section was just about killing innocent animals and instructing us about eating unleavened bread, but what it is really talking about is the story of Passover, which is what I want to talk about today.

Many of us here know about Passover, but I will give you a quick synopsis, just in case you haven't been to a seder recently. The story goes like this: About 2,500 years ago, the Jews were slaves in Egypt. When Moses came along, he demanded that the Pharaoh let his people go. Long story short, after some plagues and a lot of other bad stuff which G-d brought down on the Egyptians, the Pharaoh relented, the sea parted, and the Jews walked to freedom. You may know the saying, "Most Jewish holidays can be reduced to: They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat."

I have been going to seders all my life. Every year our family has two seders: on the first night, with my mom's family and then, soon after, a very unusual seder, called the Lerman Family Seder. The Lerman Family Seder is an annual event where our extended family of cousins, second cousins, two and three times removed, gets together in a different place in the country so that Lermans from all over can be together. It's always really fun to hang out with everyone, so, of course, this seder has taught me the importance of family. It has also taught me to think about what the Jewish people have been through in our long history. We don't use the usual Haggadah, which is the book that tells the story during dinner. At this seder, we use the Lerman Family Haggadah. This Haggadah is unique, written by members of our family, some of whom are here today, and one of the things it does is to try to make the Passover story relevant to our lives.

For example, when we dip our pinkies in the wine for all the plagues—we do all the usual plagues, like frogs, locusts, blood—but then we ask the 50 or so people in the room to share plagues in their own lives, whether it be illness, or personal, work or social challenges, or just something hard they are dealing with. This way of doing the seder has helped me to understand the Passover story in a personal way.

Here's how I see it: There are two forces in the story and they are related but are also in conflict with each other. The first is vengeance, as seen through the vengeful acts of G-d in this story. There is a lot of vengeance in the story of Passover. For example, G-d says he will set locusts on the crops and kill the firstborn Egyptian children. It is hard not to feel that G-d is quite vengeful and harsh in this section killing innocent animals, children, and destroying crops and deities. It is disturbing to realize this, since I think it is safe to say that vengeance is a problem in the world, and in our daily lives. I think most of us would agree that being vengeful does not usually help the situation, whatever that may be. Whether it's in middle school or the Middle East, vengeance never solves the problem.

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Part of my problem with what happens in this story is that it doesn't mention the fact that, in life, vengeance only leads to further separating people from different backgrounds, not bringing them together.

My family is a blended family, and we have lots of different traditions that are part of our lives. I don't believe that is a bad thing; I actually think that's a good thing.

It is important to remember in commenting on the story of Passover that the rabbis said that the Jews should never hate the Egyptians. They reminded us that the Egyptians may have enslaved us, but they also kept us from dying of famine. When the Egyptians were drowned at the Red Sea, God told the children of Israel, "Don't sing songs when my creatures are dying."

It is also important to understand the good in what G-d does in this story. And one of the most powerful things that happens is that G-d inspires the Jews to seek out their freedom. As I mentioned before, in the Passover story, the Jews were enslaved by the Egyptian Pharaoh. Since there is not historical evidence of this, I think it's more important to see what this story is trying to teach us. In an essay on the subject, Laura Geller says there is metaphorical way of thinking about this story, that we all have our own "personal Egypt" to escape from. If we think about it this way, we can see that the Passover story is not only about the value of the Jewish people, and really all people, being free of slavery, but it also makes me think that everyone might have a goal of getting out of their own "personal Egypt."

A personal Egypt can mean many things: It can mean being a prisoner of bad feelings or anger; giving into negativity, denial, or things like not wanting to do homework, and playing too many video games. There are many kinds of personal Egypts that we all need to escape from.

I value my Jewish heritage; it is a heritage of important ideas being handed down over hundreds, or actually thousands, of years. For me, Jewish tradition is something that inspires intellectuality and questioning what is commonly believed. With that in mind, I think it is OK to question some of what G-d does in this story.

So, in the spirit of Jewish questioning, I am questioning (thinking about?) the way G-d behaves in this story. I believe that the harshness and vengeance is something to fight against in ourselves and in our daily lives. The rabbis asked the same question. The rabbis believed that the Torah sometimes spoke with hyperbole, and always in human language. Along with this, I also value the spirit of finding new paths in life, and the theme of liberation.

And maybe these two themes were meant to work together; that through that questioning, thinking about what we feel is right and wrong, we can also liberate ourselves from our own road blocks in life, and finally escape whatever "personal Egypt" is in our way.

I would like to thank my parents for all their support, and Rabbi Mark for his guidance, Ed Sperling for teaching me Torah and everything I did today, my Hebrew school teachers such as Morah Karen, Isaac, Galit and Jamie, and all of my friends. Thanks for being brave and sitting through such a long service.



ASK THE RABBI:

Topics on the minds of our first and second graders

On March 15 Rabbi Mark paid a visit to our first and second grade class (Kitah Alef/Bet) for a session of "Ask the Rabbi." Here is an excerpt from that discussion:

LILLY BROWN: How did you become the rabbi of this temple?

RABBI MARK: Well, when I was in seminary in New York City (a seminary is a school where you study to be a rabbi), I was asked to come to Pleasantville a couple of times a month to lead the services and to teach the classes here at the synagogue. The synagogue was just getting started and had never had a rabbi before. And at the end of that year, after we had gotten to know each other, and just before I was about to become "ordained" (that's when you become a real rabbi), I was invited to be the first rabbi of Pleasantville Community Synagogue. And I said yes, I would like that. And that was 18 years ago.

NATHAN LIEB: Who wrote the Torah?

RABBI MARK: We don't actually know. The Torah never tells us. Some people believe G-d wrote it, but the Torah never says that and that's not what I believe. We do know the name of the first person to ever write the Torah in the Hebrew letters we have today. His name was Ezra the Scribe, and he lived in Babylonia 2,500 years ago! Before Ezra, the Jewish people wrote with an older form of Hebrew.

ANNA GOLDFARB: How did people know the holidays before the Torah was made?

RABBI MARK: They didn't! That's one of the reasons we love the Torah so much!

HARRY KREEGER: What is your favorite holiday?

RABBI MARK: Believe it or not, my favorite holiday comes once a week. It's Shabbat!

AIDEN MCGINLEY: When was Israel made?

RABBI MARK: Israel was made three times. The first time was 3,000 years ago. The first king was King Saul; and then came King David, King Solomon, and others. Later the Jews were forced to leave Israel, but they came back and made a second Israel about 2,500 years ago. And that Israel lasted for about another 500 years, and then most of the Jews were forced to leave again. But they came back, started speaking Hebrew again, and made the Israel you know—the third Israel—in 1948.

LILLY BROWN: What is a swastika?

RABBI MARK: A swastika is a symbol. It was used by different people over the years, but the last ones to use it were the Nazis, who were very, very bad. So when people see the swastika today, they think of it as a Nazi symbol. And so we never want to see it used.

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NATHAN LIEB: What is the structure of the Torah?

RABBI MARK: The Torah is written on a scroll, and it is kept in the ark in the sanctuary. Every synagogue has one. Since it's on a scroll, instead of turning pages, we roll it forward to read it. You asked about the structure of the Torah. The Torah is made up of five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (or in Hebrew: B'reishit, Shemot, Vayikra, Bamidbar, and Devarim). There are big white spaces in the scroll to separate each of the books. You'll get to read from the Torah on your Bar Mitzvah, Nathan!


ANNA GOLDFARB: What is the story of Sukkot?

RABBI MARK: Sukkot was the original Thanksgiving. It's true! Even though they were not Jewish, the pilgrims based their fall harvest festival—thanking God for all the food they were able to grow over the summer—on the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. Because it is so hot in the fields in the summer, farmers would have booths (sukkot is Hebrew for booths) in their fields so they could go inside and cool off in the middle of the day. There are also stories about the Children of Israel having booths in the desert when we left Egypt.

AIDEN MCGINLEY: Who made the Hebrew letters?

RABBI MARK: We're not sure. But we know that the first Hebrew letters were little pictures. Here's what the original Hebrew letter "mem" looked like: . What does it look like to you?

CHILDREN: A river!

RABBI MARK: That's right! The word for water in Hebrew is "mayim" and it begins with the letter "mem" which looked like a river. Now watch this. If I erase the ends of the picture-letter, what do we get? 

CHILDREN: An "m"!

RABBI MARK: That's right! The English letter "m" comes from the Hebrew letter "mem." Just like the word "alphabet" comes from the Hebrew "alef-bet." Later—around 2,500 years ago—Ezra the Scribe introduced the Hebrew letters we use today (they are called Ashurit letters). But the original Hebrew letters? They were little pictures.

EVE RUTMAN (via e-mail): Why do we wear masks on Purim?

RABBI MARK: The story of Purim is about how things are not always how they seem. Queen Esther was secretly a Jew—no one knew that—and because of that secret she was able to save her people. So on Purim we dress in costumes to hide who we really are, and we remember to look behind whatever we see and to remember that there is more than meets the eye! Even when things don't go our way, often there is something good waiting for us. Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, a famous rabbi, once said that a Jew should never give up hope! Keep looking for the good!

HaZamir: The International Jewish High School Choir

by Gordon Ward

33,405 hours of rehearsal. 1,755 measures of music. 350 singers. 26 cities and conductors. Two countries. One maestro. One stage. One joyous sound. Or at least that's what the t-shirt says. Looking back on our HaZamir performance on March 22 at Avery Fisher Hall, I have to say that I feel as if I should have been more excited. After all, it is one of the most famous concert halls in the world. However, I'm a bit jaded after having performed at Rose Hall/Jazz at Lincoln Center my first year in HaZamir, and at Carnegie Hall the second year.

Festival weekend (Thursday through Sunday leading up to our big annual concert) is always a great experience, and this year was no exception. Festival is the culmination of all the hard work put in by HaZamir singers and conductors throughout the year, when each chapter meets weekly to rehearse the same repertoire as every other chapter. From 26 chapters (21 in the U.S. and five in Israel), hundreds of people gather to celebrate Jewish choral music.

HaZamir singers come in all shapes and sizes, but we all have a few things in common: We are Jewish students in grades eight to 12 who love to sing, and we're pretty good at it, if I do say so myself. Our repertoire includes songs in Hebrew, English, and Yiddish. But during Festival weekend, although there are lots of rehearsals, we don't only sing. We chat, we laugh, we eat, we pray, we joke around, and we make amazing friends and memories.



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Although we have a great time, it can get a bit emotional. Each year we learn new repertoire, including works that are commissioned especially for HaZamir. But in addition to our theme song, "HaZamir," two other songs remain the same, and every year when these are sung, people start to cry: the seniors' song, "Yachad Na'amod," and the final song, "T'fillah (LiShlom Medinat Yisrael)." Both of these songs have very deep meaning for us. While we are sad to see our American friends who are high school seniors leave us to move on to college, we are saddened even more by the thought that our dear Israeli friends who are high school seniors will soon be doing their duty protecting Israel as members of the IDF; by singing "T'fillah," we pray that G-d will keep them safe and that we will be blessed to see them again.

And then after a long weekend of rehearsals, talking, and food (lots and LOTS of food), it's time to perform. Every year HaZamir also honors a generous contributor to the organization. This year, the Kinor David award was presented to Dr. Ruth Westheimer, a long-time supporter of HaZamir and Jewish music, and someone with whom I was unfamiliar until the day of our concert; Dr. Ruth is that tiny spot of pink in the photo at the bottom of the previous page. We were thrilled to have her conduct us in Lewandowski's arrangement of "Tzaddik KaTomar" from Psalm 92. Dr. Ruth explained to us why this piece was so important to her, saying, "Every time I hear this piece, I feel my father's hand holding mine as we walked to synagogue every Friday night."

After performing 20 pieces at Avery Fisher Hall this year, we got our things, said our goodbyes, and went home. And even after all this, I can't wait for our next rehearsal. While we do have a few performances after Festival, including one at the Annual Gathering of Remembrance on April 19 at Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan, everything kind of winds down after the big concert. But that doesn't mean we stop working. If anything, we work harder in anticipation of participating in HaZamir the following year. I am so glad that, three years ago, my mom and I found that flyer at PCS advertising an open audition for the Westchester chapter of HaZamir!



If you are interested in learning more about HaZamir, and especially if you know a Jewish teenager in the U.S. or Israel who loves to sing and would be interested in participating in HaZamir, please visit www.zamirchoralfoundation.org.

PROFESSOR SARAH TAUBER — Open Minds, Devoted Hearts: The Need for Progressive Religious Communities in an Age of Religious Extremism

Reported by Estelle Rosen Kersh

Dr. Sarah Tauber, professor of Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary, presented an interesting lecture and discussion at PCS on March 19 regarding the very timely topic of progressive religious communities. American Jewish rabbinical leaders and educators have researched live records regarding education and leadership, and Professor Tauber's course of research revealed how the progressive religious community affects all religions: Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, extremists.

Professor Tauber spoke about the role of religious congregational rabbis as democratic educators, and the fact that, while many Americans are affiliated, there are 20% of Americans classified as "none" — religiously non-affiliated. As organized religious leaders are the educators, the "none" or non-affiliated create a void and, Professor Tauber believes, a need for progressive religious communities.

According to Professor Tauber, today's religious climate needs to express fluidity due to changing dynamics, including the different patterns and personalities of religious extremism. Professor Tauber explained that religious communities are at the grass roots level of contributing to a democratic culture which helps to strengthen democratic society. Therefore, she feels there is a relationship between democracy and education.

Professor Tauber described religious extremism as an appropriate term for religious fundamentalism and is more about a set of attitudes that cuts across extremist ideas and different kinds of extremist religious groups — are authoritarian, patriarchal, and can lead to rationalize violence in the name of the good of "their truth." Our age of globalization is creating a speeding forward of mass social communication — to some these are shocking encounters and linked to religious extremism — with serious and complex reactions.

Her description of a progressive religious community incorporates a supportive, encouraging fusion of speech and thought around religion, with an ever-evolving open text. It favors grounding religious experiences in our real lives, with historical honesty, and a human crafted and -created institution that must change to stay relevant.

According to Professor Tauber, a progressive religious community:

- Aspires to support and sustain egalitarian sensitivity — membership gives them authenticity
- Humanly designed, so it is up to humans to figure out where G-d relationship fits
- Rabbis as leadership — teach don't preach
- Truth comes out of the interactive process based on questions that emerge in the community

Professor Tauber explained that, as a progressive religious community, we would travel tough roads together, need to maintain the capacity for attentive listening, and be interactive with congregants. She further pointed out that it is up to the adults to set the example and create a real sense of empowerment, i.e., adults communally contribute. The adults in a progressive religious community can lead the way — walk the walk — believing in the sanctity of life for all human beings, compassion, love, mercy, acts of loving kindness, and empathy.

Professor Tauber believes that religious discipline is a sense of ethical behavior that supports appropriate control, and she reminds us that every part of our literacy ends with *Shalom*, meaning non-violence. "We need to be in a pluralist world," says Professor Tauber, "where we embrace pluralism and where we sustain a democratic way of life, even while we are still in the early phases of trying to understand what is happening..."

Professor Tauber and audience members engaged in relevant conversation during her lecture, and the Q & A reflected a lively and provocative discussion pointing out that these issues are perplexing and there is no one correct answer.

Professor Tauber's book, *Open Minds, Devoted Hearts: Portraits of Adult Religious Educators*, should be available Fall 2015.





Rosh Chodesh is a monthly holiday marking the new month in the Hebrew calendar. The PCS Rosh Chodesh Group will use the themes of the months as the basis for group study. On March 18, eight women met at PCS to celebrate Rosh Chodesh Nisan and shared in a ritual based upon clearing the chametz from our homes. After reading and discussing a poem, each participant wrote on slips of paper something we didn't want to carry forward into the new month and new season. We then burned the slips of paper!

The next meeting, for Rosh Chodesh Sivan, will take place at PCS on Wednesday, May 20, at 7:30 pm. Using as our "text" a ritual for Shavuot described in *Miriam's Well* by Penina Adelman ("A Time to Honor the Fruit of the Seed"), Jan Gordon will introduce us to flower arranging.

Over time, we hope that the focus on the month and on our group will become, as Penina Adelman says in her book, *Miriam's Well*, a "springboard in the process of rediscovering the sacred with which life is infused."

All women and teens are welcome. Refreshments will be served.



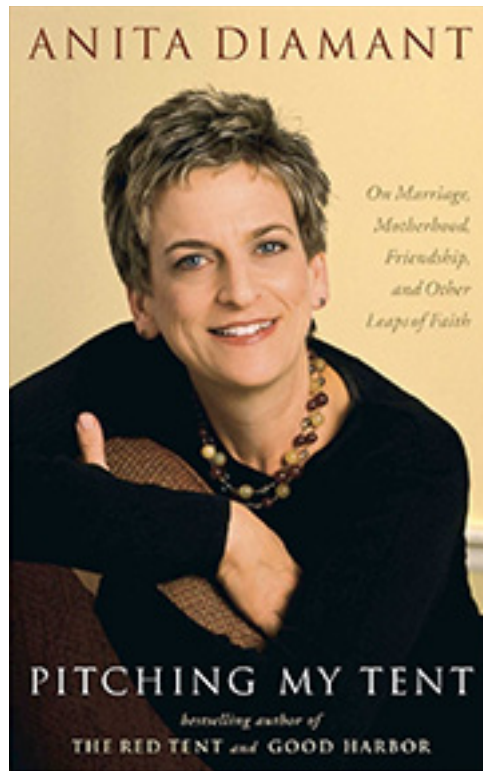
Rosh Chodesh Nisan gathering



From the PCS Bookworm... Eileen Jagoda

Pitching My Tent: On Marriage, Motherhood, Friendship, and Other Leaps of Faith

by Anita Diamant



Anita Diamant is well known to many of us at PCS. Our Rosh Chodesh group read her acclaimed best seller, *The Red Tent*, several years ago.

Pitching My Tent is a wonderful collection of vignettes from Anita's life. What I love is the very "everydayness" of it. Her day is like our day; her problems with a teenage daughter are familiar to us. Her life is greatly identified with her Judaism. This dictates her path to contentment. Family relationships are paramount; how much to explain about terrorism, events in the news like Columbine, anti-Semitism and other thorny problems. The chapter on assimilating non-Jewish holidays with Jewish holidays is just perfect. Let Anita take you on this journey of life! L'Chaim!

Anita Diamant is the author of eight books about contemporary Jewish life as well as five novels.

Pitching My Tent is available at your local library, Amazon, or your favorite bricks-and-mortar or online bookseller.

ON THE HORIZON AT PLEASANTVILLE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE

The **PCS Vision Committee** has distributed a community survey which PCS members should have received by email. The **Vision Survey** will be closed as of **Friday, April 3**.

If you have not already done so, please let your voice be heard and let us know what you think. Take the survey now, and thank you!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SB9L2FZ>

Please contact Committee Chair Laurie Hirsch Schulz at lhirschsulz@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.

The **Rosh Chodesh Group** event on Wednesday, May 20, at 7:30 pm, will be a **Flower Design** presentation by PCS member Jan L. Gordon, owner of **East Meets West Flowers**.

Contact Group Chair Robin Berman: awake.robin@gmail.com.

In our May issue, **PCS Bookworm**, Eileen Jagoda, will review Book I in the *Rashi's Daughters* trilogy, *Joheved: A Novel of Love and the Talmud in Medieval France* by Maggie Anton.

- Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (in Latin, Salomon Isaacides, and today generally known by the acronym **Rashi**) was a medieval French rabbi and the author of comprehensive commentaries on the Talmud and the Tanakh.
- Born: February 22, 1040, Troyes, France
- Died: July 13, 1105, Troyes, France
- Children: Joheved, Miriam, Rachel



The Jacob Burns Film Center – 2015 Westchester Jewish Film Festival – April 8-30

This promises to be an extraordinary event, so get your tickets before they are sold out!

The **PCS Newsletter** editors are requesting photos taken in Israel that include you and your family, from either past or current travels. Please send as attachment via email to:

Estelle Rosen Kersh - eaststar18@optonline.net

Roberta Korus - robertakorus@gmail.com

Yom HaShoah
**Holocaust Remembrance
Day Service**

Sunday, April 12, 1 p.m.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue

*Featuring special musical remembrances with original music
by Peter Volgyes and special guest clarinetist, Gary Mayer*



Words found on the walls of a cellar in Germany where Jews hid from Nazis:

*I believe.
I believe in the sun
even when it is not shining.
I believe in love
even when I do not feel it.
I believe in God
even when God is silent.
Our God and God of our ancestors –
We lament in fields of loneliness*



Fifth, sixth and seventh grade B'nei Mitzvah students will receive credit for service attendance.

*Long-time members, new members,
prospective members, and everyone else!
Please join us for another joyful*

Pajama Shabbat!

Friday night, April 24

5:45 pm doors open ~ 6:00 pm Pajama Shabbat Service (up to age 6)

6:15 pm Dinner* (all ages) ~ 7:15 pm Family Service featuring our
Hebrew School Third Graders ~

8:30 pm Festive "Oneg Shabbat" Refreshment Hour

**The dinner is free but RSVPs are a must and donations are welcome!*



You've read about us in *The New York Times*.
You've heard about us from friends and neighbors.
Pleasantville Community Synagogue... with members from
20 towns, villages, and cities all across Westchester.

Joyful Judaism!



The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth, and Justice

Pleasantville Community Synagogue is proud to host a
fascinating presentation by the
Jewish Museum of New York.

Through art, we will gain an understanding of a series of events from
1894–1906, when Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer
and a Jew, was falsely accused and convicted of treason.

Tuesday, April 28, 7:30 pm

This public event is free but donations are always welcome.

Sponsored by the PCS Adult Education Committee.



CONTRIBUTIONS

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who support the Pleasantville Community Synagogue by remembering and honoring their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions.

General Fund/Fair Share

The Park Avenue Charitable Fund in memory of Alice Jacobs, beloved mother of Barbara Altman Bruno
Janice Sandbank in memory of Charlie Sandbank and Charles Lubelsky

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

The Park Avenue Charitable Fund in memory of Alice Jacobs, beloved mother of Barbara Altman Bruno
Ariela and Douglas Wehrle in honor of "our dear Rabbi Mark Sameth" and in memory of Doug's "dear, beautiful mother, Elizabeth Wehrle"

Kiddush and Shabbat Dinner Fund

Heidi Pinsky

Andrew Rothfarb in honor of the occasion of his daughter, Samantha Rothfarb, becoming a Bat Mitzvah

The Jewish Child Care Association in honor of the occasion of Samantha Rothfarb becoming a Bat Mitzvah

APRIL 2015 YAHRZEITS

Emily Borenstein, mother of Marc Borenstein	April 1
Irving Goldman, father of Dorian Goldman	April 2
Louis Goldman, grandfather of Dorian Goldman	April 3
George Johnston, father of Bradley Johnston	April 4
Hyman Karmen, grandfather of Abbe Karmen	April 4
Florence Hydecker, grandmother of Larry Reinhartz	April 5
Blanche Stiker, mother of Judith Schmidt	April 10
Fredric Weiss, husband of Miriam Seiler	April 16
Mildred Goodman, mother of Jonathan Goodman	April 16
Morris Borenstein, father of Marc Borenstein	April 17
Herman Sheft, father of Janice Gambino	April 18
Florry Jablow, mother of Robert Jablow	April 27
Jeanette Chiarizia, mother of Maria Levine	April 28
Robert Levine, father of Daniel Levine	April 28
Albert Marans, father of Ron Marans	April 30

To All PCS Members:

If you or another member suffer personal tragedy or loss or are otherwise in need of help, please immediately call Rabbi Mark at (914) 769-2672, and Michael Gold at (914) 238-9219.



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Introducing to Briarcliff the new owner of Zokkoz Salon, Jillian Sherman. Ever since she discovered Aveda a few years ago, she has tried to live by their mission. The combination of her love for hair and making people's true beauty come out with Aveda's products has proven to give her the ability to deliver healthy, sexy hair that is safe for her guests as well as the environment. Her next quest is to share her knowledge and passion with her staff at Zokkoz. Briarcliff has been so friendly and has made her feel so welcomed. She would like to pass that feeling on to you. Please come in and mention this ad and save 40% off your first appointment and we guarantee you'll love the results!!!

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NEWSLETTER ACCEPTS ADS!

The PCS newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June, and it is emailed to every member family as well as to prospective members and some Jewish organizations.

If you provide professional or business services in the area, the PCS newsletter might provide some extra, valuable visibility. To arrange for your ad to appear in the newsletter, here's what you need to know:

*** Deadlines:**

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month by emailing them to mgray@shalompcs.com.

*** Ad Specifications:**

Ads will be published in one size only: one-quarter page, which is approximately 3½ x 4¾ inches. The entire ad (both text and artwork) should be provided by the advertiser in GIF, JPEG, PDF or TIFF format ONLY. Please proofread your ad before sending.

*** Advertising Rates:**

The cost per ad (for 10 issues - no bulletin is published in July and August) is \$125 for ¼ page. **Note:** Checks preferred; please mail checks to Pleasantville Community Synagogue, PO Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570 with "newsletter ad" in the memo section. To pay by credit card, please call the synagogue office at (914) 769-2672.



ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June. Articles and photos should be submitted by the 24th of the month. They can be e-mailed to Roberta Korus or Estelle Rosen Kersh, Editors, at robertakorus@gmail.com or eaststar18@optonline.net, or dropped off at the newsletter box in the synagogue office.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue * 219 Bedford Road * Pleasantville, NY 10570
phone (914) 769 - 2672 fax (914) 769 - 1795

Pleasantville Community Synagogue Mission Statement

Pleasantville Community Synagogue is a transdenominational, inclusive community, a spiritual home deeply rooted in Torah (study), Avodah (prayer), and Gemilut Chasadim (deeds of loving-kindness). We seek to facilitate lifelong spiritual growth by engaging each member wherever that member may be on life's journey, embracing all generations. We encourage Tikkun Middot (repair of the self) and Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) through Jewish education for all ages, social action, Ahavat Yisrael (love of Israel), and a commitment to the understanding and fulfillment of mitzvot. We are a highly participatory community which relies on the commitment of time and energy from all members and which aspires to become an integral part of each member's life and their family's lives.

PLEASANTVILLE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Officers

President/Secretary: Michael Safranek
 VP/Treasurer: April Lasher Sanders
 Vice President: Kiersten Zweibaum
 Vice President: Laurie Hirsch Schulz
 Vice President: Mark Freiheit

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PCS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

All the committees of the Pleasantville Community Synagogue are eager for your participation and suggestions. If you'd like to get more involved in the life of the PCS community, this is the way to begin! Below are the names of the committees, their chairs, and contact information.

Adult Education

Barbara Doctor
bdoctor670@gmail.com

B'nei Mitzvah

Ed Sperling
edsperling@gmail.com

Building

Richard Levine
rlevine@shalomPCS.com

Jewish Education

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Communications

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Spiritual Life

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Fundraising

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High Holidays

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Human Resources

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Membership Engagement

Laurie Hirsch Schulz
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Membership Outreach

Leyla Nakisbendi
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Ofri Felder
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Robin Berman
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Tikkun Olam

Michael Gold
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Youth

Laurie Hirsch Schulz
info@shalomPCS.com

To contact PCS: Phone (914) 769-2672; Fax (914) 769-1795; Website: www.shalomPCS.com

Marcy Gray, Synagogue Administrator: (914) 769-2672; mgray@shalomPCS.com

Galit Sperling, Religious School: (914) 773-0043; principal@shalomPCS.com

Barbara Doctor, Member Accounts: (914) 747-3017; Accounts@shalomPCS.com



Pleasantville Community Synagogue

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Building Fund

To preserve the beauty and functionality of our physical plant, and to build reserves for future expansion.

General Fund/Fair Share

Helps to finance any need of the synagogue considered necessary by the Board of Trustees. All unspecified gifts are credited to the General Fund.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Supports various individuals, organizations and/or programs at the discretion of the rabbi.

Hebrew School Scholarship Fund

Provides scholarships to children who would like to attend our Hebrew School and may not currently have the financial resources to do so.

Yahrzeit Memorial Board Nameplate (\$360)

A nameplate with the name and date of departed loved ones will be lit in their honor on the anniversary of their passing. Please contact the office for appropriate form.

Name and fund selected: _____

Donation in honor/memory of (please specify which): _____

Donor contact information (if not a PCS member): _____

Name and address of third party for acknowledgement of your donation if applicable:

<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bill my credit card	
Credit Card # _____	Exp. Date: ____/____
Circle One: VISA MasterCard	
Name as it appears on card: _____	

Phone number in case verification is needed:	

Your Signature _____	Amount to charge: _____
Print Name	

PLEASE NOTE: Checks preferred. To help our bookkeeper, please issue separate checks for dues or other special events. Checks should be made payable to "Pleasantville Community Synagogue." Please indicate the fund to which you are donating in the memo section of your check and **mail your check to PCS, PO Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570.**
If paying by credit card, please email this form to Accounts@shalomPCS.com, fax it to (914) 769-1795, or call Barbara Doctor at (914) 747-3017, or PCS, (914) 769-2672 to provide your credit card information.

April 2015 - PCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 No Hebrew School	30 7:15pm Yoga class	31	1	2 Ta'anit Bechorot (Fast of the First Born) No Hebrew School	3 ★ Erev Pesach 7:04 pm - Candle lighting	4 ★ 10:00am Passover I service No morning meditation 8:35 pm - Havdalah
5 ★ 10:00am Passover II service No Hebrew School 8:36 pm - Havdalah	6 7:15pm Yoga class ★ Passover III (CH"M)	7 ★ Passover IV (CH"M)	8 ★ Passover V (CH"M)	9 4:00pm Ask the Rabbi, 6th grade ★ Passover VI (CH"M) Back to Hebrew School 7:10 pm - Candle lighting	10 7:15pm Services ★ Passover VII Children's Service 7:10 pm - Candle lighting	11 ★ Passover VIII - Yizkor service Morning meditation, 9 am; Shabbat service, 9:30 am 8:42 pm - Havdalah
12 11:30am Rabbi Mark's class 1:00pm Yom HaShoa (Holocaust Memorial Day) Service	13 7:15pm Yoga class	14 7:30pm 5th Grade Parents' Meeting	15	16 ★ Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day)	17 7:15pm Services Alef/Bet Shabbaton 7:18 pm - Candle lighting	18 9:00am Morning Meditation; Shabbat Service including B'nei Mitzvah of Nathan and Aaron Foote, 9:30 am Parashat Shmini 8:50 pm - Havdalah
19 11:30am Rabbi Mark's class Rosh Chodesh Iyyar Executive Board meeting, 7 pm	20 7:15pm Yoga class	21 Board of Trustees meeting, 7:30 pm	22 ★ Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day)	23 ★ Yom HaAtzma'ut (Israel Independence Day)	24 PJ Shabbat Dinner Kita Gimmel Shabbaton 7:26 pm - Candle lighting	25 9:00am Morning Meditation; Family Education Shabbat service, 10 am Parashat Tazria-Metzora 8:57 pm - Havdalah
26	27 7:15pm Yoga class	28 7:30pm Jewish Museum presentation on the infamous Dreyfus Affair	29	30	1 7:15pm Services Children's Service 7:33 pm - Candle lighting	2 9:00am Morning Meditation; Shabbat Service, 9:30 am Parashat Achrei Mot-Kedoshim 9:04 pm - Havdalah

Note: Times and dates of events may change after the newsletter has come out. To get the latest information on any possible changes, please check the calendar on our website: www.ShalomPCS.com. Calendars for future months are also on the website.