



THE RABBI'S COLUMN: TRULY THANKFUL

By Mark Sameth

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We all have memories of Thanksgivings past: of people with whom we shared our table, of eating too much, of watching the Macy's Parade. I'm guessing that what most of us don't have – I know that I don't – are memories of the day as a day of, well...of thanksgiving.

Coming after a month of Jewish holidays – Rosh Hashanna, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah – there's something – from a Jewish perspective - almost liberating about the notion of a "secular" holiday (even though, historically, the Pilgrim's harvest holiday was modeled on the ancient Jewish festival of Sukkot).

(As Casey Stengel said "You can look it up.")

(And while you're at it, you can look up Casey Stengel!)

But more and more these days, I find myself appreciating whatever opportunities present themselves – and Thanksgiving is certainly one of them - for reflecting with gratitude. We're all products of our times, and

I'm as steeped in the culture of irony - Letterman, Conan, and Jon Stewart - as anyone. In times like these, we all need a good laugh wherever we can get one. But we also need (or at least I know I do) times and places in which it's possible to let go of irony; to simply be present to the preciousness of immediate experience.

So my hope for all of us in this month of Thanksgiving, is that we find some time to actually reflect with gratitude. I don't mean we're going to recite Hallel (the traditional Jewish prayer service of thanks) at our holiday tables! Simply that we find a few moments at some point this month to sit with our natural feelings of appreciation for the fleetingness of time, the preciousness of having those we love around us (or the ability to hold them in memory), the miracle of consciousness, the possibility of healing and renewal, the great gift that we can – through a simple caring word or compassionate deed – be each one of us for the other.

Stuff like that.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I recently attended a talk and meditation led by Sharon Salzberg, who leads the Insight Meditation Center in Barre, Mass. The title of the talk was "Loving Kindness" which she had translated from a Buddhist word "Metta." As she spoke, and then led us through a visualization fleshing out the implications and ripples sent out by this concept, I was thinking "chesed," which has the same meaning and which is also one of the branches of the tree of life.

I am sure she knew the corresponding Hebrew word and that loving kindness must be combined with "gevurah," discipline, as it is in the kabbalistic tradition. This balance is always hard to achieve and most of us tend to overemphasize one aspect or the other depending on our upbringing or personality makeup. But what Salzberg was imparting to us that night, and in the many books she has written, is a way to focus and hold the intention toward loving kindness, not an action plan.

The meditation began by having us visualize loving kindness toward ourselves and then to move through someone we love, someone unknown to us and finally someone we dislike or have difficulty with. By the end I had a deep sense of calmness and openness that stayed with me and inspired me to write about my experience in this column.

This discipline, to hold others in our hearts lovingly, is for me the highest mitzvah I can perform, as it is the seed from which any right action I take blossoms. It is not easy; in fact, it may be the most challenging mitzvah anyone of us can ask of ourselves. We are always aware of the hurts we suffer from others, even those we love, and I know for myself that it is a constant struggle. Meditation is my chosen venue to work with this and I recommend it to one and all. Part of our Shabbat service each week is a meditation, which is growing as more people become aware of it, and I would invite more of you to sample it.

The loving kindness piece is

reinforced by a kavannah we recite just before the borchu, in which we declare our desire to love our neighbors as ourselves. By speaking these words aloud and then following them with a chant it helps to implant our intention more deeply.

I am deeply grateful for the community we have and for the increasing sense of good will and fellowship that exists. But I am also aware of how fragile this relationship is and that it needs nourishment, constant nourishment. It also needs the discipline I mentioned earlier. So, perhaps there are others of you reading this who would also like to practice together, to hold this intention as we move into the New Year.

- Peter Schaffer



THE PCS SUKKAH



Helping hands David Benattar, Peter Schaffer, Richard Levine , and Josh Marlow pause for a photo op



Noah Marlow enjoying the day

Special thanks to Amy Marlow for providing these photos!



NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The Hebrew School is off to a great start!! We had fun with the holidays. For Rosh Hashanah, the students all had an opportunity to practice blowing the shofar, with quite a few of the children able to produce healthy tekiah blasts! For Sukkot, the students made beautiful decorations that were hung in the sukkah. We all enjoyed fulfilling the mitzvah of eating in the sukkah by snacking on challah and juice. Everyone had a chance to shake the lulav and experience the delicious aroma of the citrus fruit, the etrog. We ended the month with a special visit from Israeli soldiers in the IDF. Tzahal Shalom of Northern Westchester, an organization dedicated to fostering strong ties between our community and Israel, brought active duty officers from all branches of the IDF, to share their experiences with our students at PCS, bringing Israel a little closer to home.



B'NEI MITZVAH PROJECT

Matthew Perlmutter
Bar Mitzvah – November 5, 2011

For my community service I am helping kids that are less fortunate than others learn the game of softball. My baseball coach, Lou Wachtel, introduced me to this great experience. On Tuesdays I go to the Cottage School in Pleasantville and help these kids learn how to play softball. When I am with some of these kids I feel like they are really enjoying it. That is because at the end of the day, my coach asks the kids if they want us to come back next week, and they all say “yes” in a cheerful manner. I will continue with this activity. I say that because the kids aren’t the only ones that are satisfied with this; I am too. I love playing sports, especially baseball, and it feels good helping the children have fun.



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**Hola, ¿habla español?
¿No? ¡Qué pena!**

SPANISH LESSONS

Brush up on your Spanish:

- if you're traveling
- to have a conversation
- to prepare for your school or college exams

Native Spanish speaker with an MA in
Language Teaching.
Call Cristina A. Martinez at 914-739-7457, or
email: inspanish@optonline.net



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info@shalomPCS.com

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srutman@shalompcs.com

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msafranek@shalomPCS.com

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Cristina Altieri-Martinez
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ocohen@shalomPCS.com

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info@shalompcs.com

Peter Schaffer
pschaffer@shalomPCS.com

Gary Greenwald
ggreenwald@shalompcs.com

Karen Neuburger
info@shalompcs.com

Laurie Hirsch Schulz
lhirschschoultz@shalompcs.com

Amy Gutenplan
info@shalompcs.com

Jerry Neuburger
jneuburger@shalomPCS.com

Kiersten Zweibaum
kzweibaum@shalompcs.com

Rabbi Mark Sameth
rabbi@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
Ronni Metzger, Religious School: (914) 773-0043; principal@shalompcs.com
Barbara Doctor, Member Accounts: (914) 747-3017; Accounts@shalomPCS.com

UNDER ONE ROOF



Under One Roof, the collaborative charitable effort by the Upper Westchester Muslim Society and PCS, successfully completed its first joint effort. Our sponsored food drive on behalf of Hope's Door, the local women's shelter, and the Katonah Community Center, a food pantry for the poor, netted over 3000 pounds and \$1000 worth of donated food.

Our next project will culminate on December 3, 2011, when our two communities will share a meal at the mosque in Thornwood and raise money for two noble causes. First, we are supporting the remarkable and heroic work of Dr. Hawa Abdi in Somalia, who transformed her family farm into a refugee camp for battered women and children who are victims of religious and factional violence between competing clans of marauding zealots. She provides food, water, shelter, schooling and medical attention to over 15,000 people on a continuing basis and is reliant upon outside donations to sustain her work. Dr. Abdi has been named Woman of the Year, has been cited by Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and been the focus of an article by Nicholas Kristoff in the New York Times.

As well, we will also be raising money for Birthday Angels which provides birthday parties for orphaned and destitute children in Israel who otherwise would not have the funds or the means to celebrate their birth. Every child deserves a party and it is within our power to provide one. Suggested price for the meal, which will be prepared by members of UWMS and PCS, is only \$15. (Feel free to contribute more!) Children under 10 eat free. We hope you can all come. It's an opportunity to mingle, learn, eat and have fun while making a huge difference in the lives of children in Somalia and Israel. Please RSVP to Michael Gold at the below email address. If you can't come but would like to support our work, please send a check payable to PCS with the memo portion filled in Under One Roof so it is properly credited.

The world is conditioned to believe and expect that our two communities are capable of nothing more than killing each other. Here is a chance to demonstrate in the most tangible of ways that people of good will can join together to promote the common good and, while doing so, learn to accept and enjoy each other for our similarities and differences. If you are interested in participating in the work of Under One Roof on a regular or sporadic basis, would like to make a donation or just find out more of what we do, please contact Michael Gold at Michaelgold@aol.com.

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.

PCS OFFERS AN INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

Many came to join Rabbi Mark on Sunday morning at his first of 16 “whirlwind tour of Jewish history” class. Over the course of this year, he’ll be looking at Jewish beliefs, spirituality, the origins of the Jewish prayer service, ritual, mysticism (Kabbalah), the various Jewish denominations, death and dying, and more.

Says Rabbi Mark: “We start from the very beginning, assume no prior knowledge, but then move along quickly. You’ll get a bird’s eye view of every topic, but we’ll always have time to delve deeply into the issues we’re uncovering. It’s fun, open, interactive, non-judgmental, and all questions are welcome and entertained.”

If you’re thinking of taking the class and have any questions, email pcsyn@mindspring.com. Donations are always welcome, but unlike elsewhere, there is no fee for this course. Classes meet Sundays, from 11:30 am to 1 pm.



Jewish Belief in God

by Phil Paris

(from David Ariel, *What do Jews Believe*)

Belief in God is a major issue for many Jews today. Yet, it is difficult to imagine Jewish identity without a belief in God. Unlike our ancestors, we look for material, scientific and political explanations for events. As children of the Enlightenment, we no longer look for explanations in heaven. For many people, God is a heavenly, masculine figure who can be called on in times of distress. However, the Jewish conception of God was rarely so simple or concrete.

Jewish belief in God results from spiritual seeking over the course of four thousand years. Generations have struggled with the questions: how is it possible to believe in one, unknowable, invisible God? How can a supernatural being have a presence in the daily lives of ordinary people? And how do we explain the gap between belief in God and the reality of living in a world of suffering and conflict.

While there is no one Jewish conception of God, perhaps we should begin with the most traditional of views. God was able to communicate to Moses a series of instructions that led a people in slavery to Mount Sinai. There, God was able to instruct Moses on the writing of ten basic statements of Jewish Law and followed that with years of instruction, producing our Torah. These teachings were a profound advancement in ancient mores which had depended upon idols and sacrifices and which included the killing of human beings.

Moses Maimonides, the most famous of Jewish thinkers in the Middle Ages, had a problem with the way God was being regarded by Jewish people. Too many adopted a literal interpretation of our cherished texts, believing God had eyes to see with and arms to smite with. This was God in human terms, experiencing human emotions and feelings. Maimonides believed we know nothing about the essence of God. We confuse human and divine actions by attributing to God what are human physical and emotional characteristics. While this message was not received well by religious authorities of his time, Maimonides and his teachings became popular among educated Jewish people.

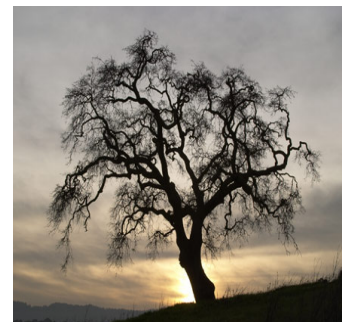
Baruch Spinoza has been called the first "modern" Jewish thinker. He had doubts about the personal God of Torah. His God is the God of nature, where all things, animate and non-animate, are part of God's essence. God and the universe are one! For this, Spinoza was accused of atheism and excommunicated by the Jewish community of Amsterdam. Nevertheless, our inability to know a personal God was no longer a scandalous thought. But the failure to have a personal relationship with God is terribly unsatisfying to many Jewish people. The Baal Shem Tov teaches us a person can achieve a personal relationship with God. For him this was possible through prayer and by a commitment to the ritual obligations of Judaism.

Modern Jewish thinkers take into account all of these contributions in thinking about God. Some see our task as simply asking the right questions, of "wrestling" with God. There is amazement with the orderliness of the universe and the miraculous nature of historical events, including the very survival of the Jewish people.

Finally, we meet the contribution of Martin Buber, a man who rarely entered a synagogue, but whose writings are among the most profound in all of Jewish history. Buber believed each one of us is created "in the image of God." For Buber, God is experienced within every encounter between ourselves and others. If you really want to see God, just look in the eyes of the next person you meet and there you will encounter the Almighty.

NOVEMBER 2011 YAHR ZEITS

Harold Faust, Father of Barry Faust	November 1
Florence Fuchs, Sister of Audrey Lenoff	November 1
Henry Elkin, Father of Eve Marie Schaffer	November 1
Rose Dulberg, Grandmother of Lisa Lipkin	November 2
Ruth Goldberg, Mother of Eric Goldberg	November 2
Esther Levine, Mother of Susan Netburn	November 3
Irwin Rutman, Father of Seth Rutman	November 7
Nora Donn, Mother of Cynthia Strauss	November 7
Warren Singer, Stepbrother of Sharon Friedman	November 10
Leo Sheinkopf, Father of David Sheinkopf	November 14
Jennie Etkin, Grandmother of Rhea Wolfthal	November 20
Glenda Salyman, Mother of Susan Raab	November 21
Mathilde Dick, Mother of Gertrude Cohen	November 26
Josef Dick, Father of Gertrude Cohen	November 26
Walter Arenwald, Father of Elaine Barella	November 29
Ida Lapine, Mother of Richard Lapine	November 30
Rudy Sichel, Father of Helen Silberblatt	November 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 769-2672, and Michael Gold at 238-9219.

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 organisations.

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. They can be emailed to Judy Chinitz at judyhope@optonline.net or cristina@lightbodymusic.com.

*** Ad Specifications:**

Ads will be published in one size only: one-quarter page, which is approximately 3 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches. The artwork should be provided by the advertiser.

*** Advertising Rates:**

The cost per ad (for 10 issues - no bulletin published in July and August) is \$100 for 1/4 page. Note: Checks preferred. Can be mailed 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.

SAVE THE DATE

UJA–Federation of New York/Northern Westchester Women’s Philanthropy

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

12:00 - 2:00 P.M.

RECIPES REMEMBERED A CELEBRATION OF SURVIVAL

Please join us for lunch and conversation with June Hersh author of the acclaimed new cookbook *Recipes Remembered*

THIS IS BOTH A TIMELESS COOKBOOK FILLED WITH INCREDIBLE STORIES AS WELL AS A FACTUAL STORYBOOK FILLED WITH DELICIOUS RECIPES.

The 170 recipes will take you on a culinary journey as diverse as the holocaust survivors who contributed their recipes and memories to this classic book.

To be held at a private home in Chappaqua
27 Radio Circle Drive, Mount Kisco, NY 10549 | 1.914.666.9650
www.ujafedny.org/westchester

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

David Felder
info@shalomPCS.com

Emma Reisman
info@shalompcs.com

B’nei Mitzvah
Eileen Jagoda
ejagoda@shalomPCS.com

Phil Paris
pparis@shalomPCS.com

Building Committee
Richard Levine
rlevine@shalomPCS.com

Communications

Cristina Altieri-Martinez
cmartinez@shalomPCS.com

Education

Kiersten Zweibaum
kzweibaum@shalomPCS.com

Spiritual Life

Michael Safranek
msafranek@shalomPCS.com

Finance

Oren Cohen
ocohen@shalomPCS.com

Fundraising

Kenneth Furst
kfurst@shalomPCS.com

High Holidays

Jerry Neuburger
jneuburger@shalomPCS.com

Human Resources

Lisa Lipkin
llipkin@shalomPCS.com

Membership Inreach

Laurie Hirsch Schulz
lhirschsulz@shalomPCS.com

Membership Outreach

info@shalomPCS.com

Israel Action Committee

Ofri Felder
ofelder@shalomPCS.com

Seth Rutman
srutman@shalomPCS.com

Rosh Chodesh

Estelle Rosen-Kersh
info@shalomPCS.com

Tikkun Olam

Michael Gold
mgold@shalomPCS.com

Youth Committee

Evan Kingsley
ekingsley@shalomPCS.com

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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.

ED SPERLING FUND

JAN AND BERNARD GORDON

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HELEN AND JOHN HARRISON, IN HONOR OF THEIR SON, EVAN, BECOMING A BAR MITZVAH

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ELEANOR AND RUSSELL HANDLER
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RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

EMANUEL HERZ, IN MEMORY OF HIS BELOVED WIFE, FLORENCE, ALSO THE MOTHER OF IRENE HERZ

KIDDUSH FUND

BARRIE AND JEFFREY KERPER, IN HONOR OF THEIR DAUGHTER, ALYSSA, BECOMING A BAT MITZVAH, SEPT. 24

HELEN AND JOHN HARRISON, IN HONOR OF THEIR SON, EVAN, BECOMING A BAR MITZVAH

SUE AND ROBERT SPIEGEL, IN HONOR OF THEIR SON, NOAH, BECOMING A BAR MITZVAH, OCT. 15
LEYLA NAKISBENDI FOR SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION, OCT. 21

DAVID SHEINKOPF, IN HONOR OF HIS FATHER'S YAHRZEIT, NOV. 12

LISA AND MICHAEL PFEFFER, IN HONOR OF THEIR SON, ALEX, BECOMING A BAR MITZVAH, OCT. 29

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June. Articles and photos should be submitted by the 15th of the month. They can be e-mailed to Judith Chinitz, Editor, at judyhope@optonline.net or dropped off at the newsletter box in the Synagogue office.

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FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SUPPORT

General Fund

Finances 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.

Building Fund

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

Hebrew School Emergency 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.

Kiddush Fund

Your donation provides lunch after services on Shabbat morning: salads, bagels and pastry.

SPECIAL FUND: ED SPERLING

Pleasantville Community Synagogue continues to collect funds for Ed. Please keep Ed in your prayers. His Hebrew name is Asher David ben Miriam.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PLEASANTVILLE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE

Send acknowledgement to: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

In honor/
memory of: _____

Fund: _____

Amount: _____

Please send me an acknowledgement of this gift.

Yes

No

PLEASE NOTE: To help our bookkeeper, please issue separate checks for dues or other special events. All donations should be made payable to Pleasantville Community Synagogue (please indicate which fund in the memo section of your check).

November 2011 - PCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Rosh Chodesh event at home of Eileen Jagoda, 7:30 pm Kita Zayin class, 11am-1pm Introduction to Judaism, 11:30am-1pm	31 NO Yoga Class	1	2	3 Hebrew High School, 6:15 pm - 7:30 pm	4 Children's service, 7:15 pm Global Hunger Shabbat PCS House Band 5:30pm-5:48pm - Candle lighting	5 Morning Meditation, 9 am; Shabbat Service, 9:30 am Parashat Lech-Lecha Bar Mitzvah - Matthew Perlmutter 6:59pm-7:00pm - Havdalah (72 min)
6 Introduction to Judaism, 11:30am-1pm	7	8	9 Social Action Committee meeting, 7 pm Learn to Lead Shabbat Service, 7:30 pm	10	11 4:23pm-4:41pm - Candle lighting	12 Morning Shabbat Service, 9 am Parashat Vayera 2nd Annual Night of Learning 5:52pm-5:53pm - Havdalah (72 min)
13 Kita Zayin class, 11am-1pm Introduction to Judaism, 11:30am-1pm Executive committee meeting, 7:30pm	14	15	16 Learn to Lead Shabbat Service, 7:30 pm	17 Hebrew High School, 6:15 pm - 7:30 pm PCS Board meeting, 7:30 pm	18 Children's service, 7:15 pm Tot Shabbat PCS House Band 4:16pm-4:34pm - Candle lighting	19 Morning Meditation, 9 am; Shabbat Service, 9:30 am Parashat Chayei Sara Bar Mitzvah - Lucas Cohen 5:46pm-5:47pm - Havdalah (72 min)
20 Pre- and Post-Adoptive Parent Group at PCS - 7pm Introduction to Judaism, 11:30am-1pm	21	22	23	24 NO HEBREW SCHOOL Thanksgiving	25 4:12pm-4:30pm - Candle lighting	26 Morning Meditation 9 am Family Education Shabbat 10 am Parashat Toldot 5:41pm-5:42pm - Havdalah (72 min)
27 NO HEBREW SCHOOL	28	29	30 Learn to Lead Shabbat Service, 7:30 pm	1	2 Children's service, 7:15 pm New Member Dinner PCS House Band Birthday blessings	3 Morning Meditation, 9 am; Shabbat Service, 9:30 am Under One Roof dinner/fundraiser at Upper Westchester Muslim Society, Bar Mitzvah - David Zweibaum

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. Future months are also on the website.

WJCS JEWISH HEALING CENTER
(SELECTED PROGRAMS)

Spiritual Journeying Groups

Monthly Mussar Group - 4 Mondays, September 12, October 17, November 21, December 12, 6:30-8:15 PM

The Literature of Grief * – a monthly reading group of literature dealing with the themes of grief and bereavement - 4 Wednesdays, September 14, November 9, December 14, January 11, 6:00-7:30 PM

Writing Our Lives: A Spiritual Memoir Group – 5 Wednesdays, Sept. 14, Oct. 26, November 9, December 14, January 11, 7:45-9:15 PM

Spiritual Support Groups

Living the Legacy: Coping with Parental Loss – a support group for adult children grieving the death of a parent - 5 Wednesdays, October 26, November 2, 16, and 30, December 7, 6:30-8:00 PM

A Men's Divorce Support Group – 4 Mondays, November 7, 14, 21, and 28, 6:30-8:00 PM

Who/What Are You Angry At? A Spiritual Support Group for Family Caregivers * - 3 Wednesdays, Nov. 16 and 30, Dec. 7, 12:30-2:00 PM

Fractured Families – a workshop for those dealing with family estrangements – Monday, January 9, 2012, 6:00-9:00 PM

* Please note: The Literature of Grief, Writing Your Ethical Will, and Who/What are You Angry At? are programs co-sponsored with the WJCS Pathways to Care program.

For further information on these or our many other programs, or to register, please contact:

Rabbi Pamela Wax
Spiritual Care Coordinator
Westchester Jewish Community Services
845 North Broadway
North White Plains, NY 10603
914-761-0600 x149
fax 914-949-6778
www.wjcs.com



JOIN YOUR COMMUNITY FOR AN EXCITING EVENTS IN NOVEMBER!

**Join us for the Annual Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast
Co-sponsored with the American Jewish Committee
Celebrating the Immigrant Narrative
Thursday, November 17, 8:00 AM
Reid Castle, Manhattanville College, Purchase**

**For more information call the Westchester Jewish Council (914) 328-7001
info@wjcouncil.org visit us at www.wjcouncil.org
A proud beneficiary of UJA-Federation of New York**



SAVE THE DATE!!!

Rosh Chodesh Moms & Kids Hannukah Celebration

Celebrate the first night of Hannukah with the PCS community. This Rosh Chodesh will include ingredients to satisfy across the generations including food, games and other engaging activities all focused around the light and spirit of the Hannukah holiday. Save the date and we look forward to welcoming Hannukah together with you.

**When: Wednesday, December 21, 7:00 - 8:30pm
Where: PCS**

PAINTING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Guided by Eve-Marie Elkin Schaffer, LCAT,
LMSW

Painting from the Inside Out uses paint as a catalyst for growth and exploration....encouraging adults and children to express spontaneously, without judgment or concern for outcome.

The paintbrush is a tool; whether it is a color a dot, an outline or an image, a gesture appears from within. Spontaneity is awakened for exploration and play.

No training is involved. No skills required; just the desire to experience a sense of freedom and joy.

More info: www.evemarieelkin.com
eevelkin@yahoo.com, 914 909 6292



REMINDER!!!!

ISRAEL DAY PARADE

JUNE 3, 2012

BE THERE!!!!



SAVE THE DATES:



Friday, November 4: AJWS Global Hunger Shabbat at PCS, 7:15 pm

Saturday, November 12: Westchester Board of Rabbis' Second Annual Night of Learning (at New Rochelle's Beth El Synagogue)

Sunday, November 20: Pleasantville Clergy Association's annual Thanksgiving Service, 6 pm, United Methodist Church, Pleasantville

Saturday, December 3: "Under One Roof" Jewish-Muslim Interfaith Charity Dinner at the Upper Westchester Muslim Society