

SAVE THE DATE:



**Interfaith Gathering
of Spiritual leaders
to discuss
climate change.
FEB. 13, 2008
10 am - 3 pm
St. Johns's**

The Jackson Kol



NEWSLETTER FOR THE JACKSON HOLE JEWISH COMMUNITY • FEBRUARY 2008

Letter from the Presidents

This is the first letter from the new co-presidents, Al Zuckerman and Rachel Ravitz, who were elected by their fellow board members at the January board meeting. In addition to their election, Mary Grossman was elected secretary and Al volunteered to handle the treasurer's duties until such time as someone steps forward to take on this important responsibility.

The January board meeting was preceded the night before by the JHJC's annual meeting. Approximately 30 members attended. Susan Foster updated the membership with the treasurer's report. We are so grateful to Susan for her continued work as our bookkeeper and accountant. Her expertise is invaluable to our organization and we are so appreciative of the time and dedication she provides.

Also at the annual meeting new board members were elected as well as several board members returning for another term. We are excited to welcome E.J. Hirschfield, Lou Hochheiser, Josh Kleyman and Barbara Trachtenberg to the board. Board members who were elected to serve another two year term are past co-presidents Dava Zucker and Lisa Finkelstein, Mary Grossman and Scott

Stachel. We look forward to the infusion of new ideas and energy from our new members and the continuity and experience provided by those returning to serve another term.

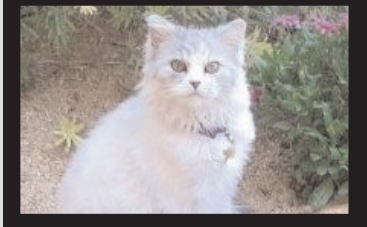
At both the annual meeting and the January board meeting, Rabbi Lane Steinger, our Regional Director of the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ), explained affiliation and answered any and all questions from those present. In compliance with the wishes of the JHJC as expressed in the last survey, affiliation with the URJ is one of the goals of the new board. To this end, a committee will be working on the application and the changing of our by-laws to comply with the URJ. We hope to get this done and submit our application to the URJ and be accepted by them as a member by October of this year.

We would be remiss if we did not take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contribution and hard work of out-going presidents, Dava Zucker and Lisa Finkelstein. The JHJC owes them a great deal of gratitude for their vision and wise leadership these past two years. As much time and energy as those positions

Directors 2007

- Rachel Ravitz, Co-President
- Al Zuckerman, Co-President
- Mary Grossman, Secretary
- Jen Daniels
- Lisa Finkelstein
- EJ Hirschfield
- Lou Hochheiser
- Josh Kleyman
- Shannon Troxler Thal
- Barbara Trachtenberg
- Dava Zucker
- Carol Mann ex-officio
- Rose Novak ex-officio
- Larry Thal ex-officio
- Phyllis Turtle ex-officio
- Linda Weil ex-officio

JEWISH PET OF THE MONTH



Mandee Goldfarb

If you have a pet that you would like featured in our newsletter, please e-mail a picture to info@jhjewishcommunity.org.

CALENDAR

February 1: Shabbat with Rabbi Jerry Weider and Chazzan Judd Grossman.

6:00 p.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, small chapel. Oneg to follow.

February 2: Ski with the Rabbi and adult discussion. 10:30 a.m. Meet at the bottom of the Gondola, JHMR.

February 3: Bar/Bat Mitzvah class with Rabbi Weider. 9:30 a.m. Conference room, 480 S. Cache St.

February 12: Gen X/Y Social Club at the Snow King Tube Park. 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Cost: \$14. Come out and show us your tubing skills!

Feb 13: Interfaith Gathering of Spiritual leaders of Teton County sponsored by the Murie Center. Thoughts, concerns, and actions will be discussed on the subject of climate change and the preservation of wilderness and what it means for various faiths. 10 am – 3 pm at St. John's Episcopal Church. Carol Mann will be speaking on behalf of the Jackson Hole Jewish Community.

February 17: JHJC Cross Country Ski Outing to Ditch Creek area in Kelly. Meet at the Rec. Center parking lot at 10 a.m. with your cross country gear. Terrain is moderate. We will return to town by 3 p.m. at the latest. For more details call Al Zuckerman at 699-1091.

March 7: Shabbat with Rabbi Andrew Feig and Chazzan Judd Grossman. 6:00 p.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, small chapel. Oneg to follow.

March 21: Purim Party. 5:30 pm – 9 pm. Presbyterian Church. \$5/person.

TID BITS

Yerzeit and Anniversary Notices

The JHJC would like to send our members annual yerzeit reminders and remembrance candles on the anniversary of the passing of a family member or loved one. Please send us the name (English and Hebrew) and date of your loved one's death, so we may provide you with this service.

We would also like to recognize our members' anniversaries. Please send us your name and the date you were married, so we may recognize your simchah.

Send names and dates to:

PO Box 10667

Jackson, WY 83002

or e-mail us at:

info@jhjewishcommunity.org

WEIDER'S WORDS

Do Jews follow the Bible literally?

I have been reading the popular book *The Year of Living Biblically* with great interest. In this book the

author, A.J. Jacobs, attempts to live one year of his life by literally adhering to the laws, commandments and statutes of the Bible. After reading this book, Rabbi David Ellenson, President of Hebrew Union College noted that this book is

"an extremely compelling book, appropriately irreverent and highly entertaining. More significantly, it is a tale of an intense and intelligent spiritual search that will speak powerfully and instructively to a generation of seekers". (Back cover of the book)

I think Rabbi Ellenson has got it right, but for me, this book truly shows us why Judaism went beyond the literal words of the Bible and created a full blown way of life directly connected to our Biblical roots through the vehicle of interpretation. To follow the laws of the Bible literally would be difficult at best and untenable in certain situations.

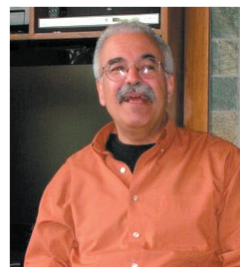
That is why the Rabbis of Judaism, after the biblical period closed (anywhere from 70-120 CE) created a system of interpretive laws that make the Biblical laws actually applicable to real life. This system is known as Rabbinic Judaism, and it is the direct forerunner of modern Judaism that we see today.

The process of creating a livable Judaism can be clearly seen in the Torah portion we will read together on February 1st, "Mishpatim—Laws".

This portion exemplifies the Rabbinic process of interpreting the biblical verses so that they can be made relevant for real life. Let me give you a simple example. We read in Exodus 23:19 (in our Torah portion, Mishpatim) "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

Well certainly, to boil a calf in its mother's milk would demonstrate a callousness and vulgarity unworthy of any humane person. So this should not be such a hard commandment to keep because no one in his/her right mind

would do such a thing. But the Rabbis go way beyond the obvious understanding of this simple commandment in their



interpretation of the Biblical verse. From this verse they build a fence around this heinous act and in so doing, create a whole subsystem of laws that separate the eating of milk and meat dishes. This interpretation of this Biblical verse would then become an essential part of the wider

laws of Kashrut, keeping Kosher.

So Judaism, as we know it, is a product of Rabbinic interpretation, discussion, understanding, insights, and clarification of the literal meaning of the Biblical verses wherein we find the commandments and the laws. That is why Judaism has survived the destruction of the great temple of old in Jerusalem, Diaspora, pogroms, anti-Semitic crusades, and discrimination. The concept of Rabbinic interpretation gives us permission to change to meet the needs of the time, place and circumstance of our conditions at any given moment in history.

In fact, the Rabbis in the Talmud teach, "Chay ba-hem— live by them" meaning, live by the laws and commandments through interpretation and adaptation. So if Mr. Jacobs has a hard time living by the letter of the Biblical law (and he acknowledges that he does), this is interesting to read about. But it is also proof positive that we Jews are ever evolving, ever changing and ever open to new ideas, new approaches and new interpretations of the well spring of our faith, the Bible. Jews are not Biblical literalists. We are followers of an open process of Rabbinic interpretation and adaptation to make Biblical law applicable in today's world.

—Rabbi Jerry Weider

PS while this is true for Jewish law, it is also true for Jewish communities as they grow, change, and evolve into new manifestations of organization and affiliation.

LETTER from page 1

require, it speaks to their dedication that they chose to return to the board for another term.

As we celebrate the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday we are reminded of the struggles for tolerance in the world today. It is our hope that the new board and the members of the JHJC will remain a strong advocate in this endeavor and

will continue to sponsor cultural programming that promotes tolerance and understanding and that our members through their good works in the name of JHJC, will continue to be a positive influence in our community.

*B'Shalom,
Al Zuckerman
and Rachel Ravitz*

ADULTS-ONLY PASSOVER SEDER

Carol Mann is offering a new Seder in addition to the Community Seder this year. It will be held the first night of Passover. (Carl Levenson will be leading the Community Seder on the last night of the holiday at Snow King).

The additional Seder will be for adults only. It will focus on the spiritual and mystical meanings and processes built in to the Seder. The spiritual dimensions of Freedom are about letting go of ego directives and embracing the soul, which allows for



Carol Mann

a direct experience of God and the expanded possibilities in life (miracles) which accompany that relationship. Simply stated, the Seder contains a series of instructions for accomplishing this. We will follow this flow, and enjoy discussions along the way.

We are looking for a generous host in order for the event to take place. We will begin to take reservations if we find a place to hold the event. Potluck meal, based on the Seder menu. Max. 20 people. Cost: \$30/person.

TID BITS

JHJC Seeks Camp Director

We are looking for a camp director for summer 2008 for our two week summer day camp. The director will plan and execute the program, & hire and oversee counselors. The camp hours are 9 am – 4 pm daily for the weeks of July 21-25 & July 28-August 1. Must have experience working with children. Salary dependent on experience. Send resume to info@jhjewishcommunity.org. Contact Andrea Mazer for more information at 734-1999 or info@jhjewishcommunity.org.

Summer Torah Trek Opportunities

Led by Rabbi and Israeli desert guide Mike Comins, Torah Trek explores the connection between inner and outer geography, between the journey into the wilderness and the path of the soul.

Wyoming Goat-Pack: Wind River Range, WY July 1-7. Hike into the breathtaking Wind River Range backcountry, without the 50 pound pack.

Grand Teton Retreat: Grand Teton National Park, July 10-13. Daily Torah Trek program at the Murie Ranch in Grand Teton National Park. Each day is independent, come one or come all.

If you are interested in attending a Torah Trek this summer or would like more information, please contact the office at info@jhjewishcommunity.org or 734.1999.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Jackson Hole Jewish Community Income and Expenses for 2007

INCOME

- Member dues and donations (\$27,017 rollover from previous years) **\$90,556**
- Bet Sefer and Camp Fees and Donations **\$25,327**
- Religious Events Donations **\$10,985**
- Other Income **\$3,386**
- 130,254**

EXPENSES

- Administrative **\$35,761**
- Bet Sefer and Camp **\$23,359**
- Religious Events **\$40,254**
- Other **\$1,578**
- 100,952**
- NET INCOME**
\$29,302

The JHJC gratefully acknowledges the following donations:

To: Ali Shafraneck

"Thanks for being such a wonderful and devoted daughter. I love you."

From: Mom

Many Thanks:

Christine Schuller for making snacks for our annual membership meeting.

Mary Grossman for hosting our January Oneg.

Happy Birthday:

Norm Wolff

Deepest Condolences:

Sylvia, Larry and **Laurie Thal** on the loss of their beloved daughter and sister **Karuna**.

JHJC Wish List:

Synagogue Database program for our office computer: \$2750

Underwrite a Rabbi visit: \$1500



JACKSON HOLE
JEWISH
COMMUNITY
P.O. Box 10667
JACKSON, WY 83002

Phone: (307) 734-1999
Fax: Same by arrangement
info@JHJewishCommunity.org
www.JHJewishCommunity.org

The office is at 480 S. Cache St.,
Suite 6, Jackson Hole
Office hours are by arrangement.



The Jackson Hole Jewish Community is committed to creating a diverse Jewish presence that unites us, celebrates our faith and promotes tolerance in the greater Jackson community. We strive to engage all families and individuals in spirituality, education, tzedakah and the joys of Jewish life.

Winter Social Events

February 12th

Gen X/Y Social Club
Tubing at Snow King

6:30 - 7:30 pm
Cost: \$14

February 17th

Cross Country ski tour
with Al Zuckerman

**Meet at the Rec.
Center parking lot
at 10 am.**