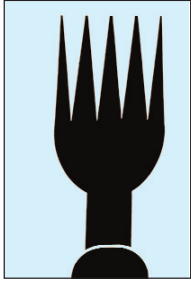


**Challah Baking
& Pot-Luck
Shabbat Dinner**

**Friday, June 29
6:30 pm**

*At the home of Mike
and Shawn Daus*

The Jackson Kol



NEWSLETTER FOR THE JACKSON HOLE JEWISH COMMUNITY • JUNE 2007

Letter *from the Presidents*

It was a joy to join with Brandon Kapelow and his family in May as he celebrated his Bar Mitzvah. Brandon was confident and poised as he read from the Torah and his speech was well-reasoned and thoughtful. Mazel Tov to the Kapelow family and we look forward to Brandon sharing his knowledge and experience with our upcoming B'nai Mitzvahs. Thank you to Dan Gordon and Judd Grossman for the leadership and beautiful song at Brandon's simchah and an uplifting Friday night service. It was wonderful to see so many old friends and welcome new friends at the services.

Your officers traveled to Park City last month on a fact-finding mission. We attended a Shabbat service led by Rabbi Josh Aaronson in Temple Har Shalom's temporary home. Later over dinner with Rabbi, their past president, vice presidents and executive and programming directors, we discussed affiliation, organization, building and rabbi search, among other topics. Our board will continue the discussions with Rabbi Gerry Weider during his visit June 15-17. Rabbi Weider was involved in the leadership search and organization of the Park City congregation and will be working with us this next year in our efforts to move forward. Come and meet Rabbi Weider and his wife, Rosalie, and join us for a Shabbat service and Oneg on Friday night at the home of Sandy and Linda Weiner and a Havdalah and adult

education discussion on Saturday night at the Finkelstein-Domsky house.

Included in this month's newsletter is a survey. We ask that you please take the time to answer the questions. Your efforts and your input will help guide us as we plan for the future. We will share the results of the survey within the next few months.

The JHJC is a proud cosponsor with the Teton County Library Foundation of the former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins. He will be speaking at the high school on June 4 and all 500 tickets are long gone. He will also be facilitating a workshop at the Jackson Hole Writers Conference. We have thoroughly enjoyed this collaboration and will consider more co-sponsorships like this in the future as part of our Old Bill's cultural outreach programming. Looking ahead, on July 11 we will be hosting Seth Ward, a religious studies professor at the University of Wyoming, for a lecture-discussion on Kabbalah.

As always we appreciate hearing your voices and the opportunity to have conversations with you. We encourage you to contact us or any board member. Together we will continue to grow and build and flourish and celebrate living Jewishly in our beautiful valley.

**B'Shalom
Lisa and Dava**

Directors 2007

Lisa Finkelstein, Co-President
Dava Zucker, Co-President
Rachel Ravitz Co-Vice President
Al Zuckerman Co-Vice President
David Mayers, Treasurer
Scott Stachel, Secretary
Brent Blue
Jen Daniels
Mary Grossman
Merle Lundy
Karin McQuillan
Shannon Thal
Linda Wiener
Carol Mann ex-officio
Rose Novak ex-officio
Larry Thal ex-officio
Phyllis Turtle ex-officio
Linda Weil ex-officio



**Hannah Turtle smiles with a celebratory
"Mazel Tov Bet Sefer" cake after finishing
the last day of Hebrew school.**

CALENDAR

June 4: US Poet Laureate Billy Collins will give a reading and commentary at the Jackson Hole High School at 7pm.

June 6: Board Meeting. 5:15 p.m. downstairs conference room, 480 S. Cache.

June 15: Shabbat with Rabbi Jerry Weider and Chazzan Judd Grossman. 6:30 p.m. at the home of Sandy and Linda Wiener. Childcare provided. Oneg to follow. Contact 734-1999 or info@jhjewishcommunity.org for directions.

June 16: Havdalah and Discussion: "What is the meaning of Mitzvah?" with Rabbi Jerry Weider. 7 p.m. at the home of Marc Domskey and Lisa Finkelstein. Contact 734-1999 or info@jhjewishcommunity.org for directions.

June 29: Challah Baking and Potluck Shabbat Dinner. Learn to make challah and then gather with the community for Shabbat pot-luck dinner. 6:30 p.m. at the home of Shawn and Mike Daus. Contact the office for more information and directions 734-1999 or info@jhjewishcommunity.org.

July 11: Kabbalah lecture given by University of WY Judaic Studies professor **Seth Ward**. Teton County Library, 7 p.m.

August 14: AIPAC Meeting with WY Congressional Delegation.

NOTES FROM OUR VISIT TO PARK CITY



President Dava Zucker listens intently to **Rabbi Aaronson** from Park City as they discuss ideas for a successful Jewish community in a small mountain town.

The board of the Jackson Hole Jewish Community has been discussing ways to organize, motivate and move our congregation forward. To this end, we decided to visit the thriving Park City Jewish Community.

The Park City Jewish Community's early history and dynamics parallel our current situation. Their ambitious vision has translated into a full-time Rabbi, several full-time staff, year-round social and cultural events, a vibrant Hebrew School and the construction of a temple.

Your presidents and vice-presidents attended Friday night Shabbat services in their temporary home, followed by a dinner meeting with Rabbi Josh Aaronson and board officers and staff members. We discussed a

wide range of topics, including an overall vision, affiliation, Rabbinical leadership, fundraising, membership dues, programming, and tzedakah.

We are very excited to bring this information back to our board. Together we will consult with Rabbi Weider in mid-June in an ongoing process to develop a vision, goals and strategies. We look forward to sharing our conversations in future newsletters. We encourage you to respond to the enclosed survey and to contact any board member with your thoughts and ideas.

We would like to send a huge thank you to our new friends in Park City for taking the time to meet with us.

-Dava, Lisa, Al, and Rachel



Sydney Daniels congratulates **Aviva Thal** for completing another year of Hebrew school.



Bet Sefer students **Arthur Blue** and **Ben Scher** thank their teachers **Dave Bergart** and **Josh Kleyman** with flowers and a card.

BAR MITZVAH: THE JOY OF LEARNING



In some Jewish communities, a bar or bat mitzvah is an every week occurrence. In a smaller community, like Jackson Hole, we have fewer teenagers approaching this milestone. Since there are so few bar and bat mitzvahs here, each one is a

very special event, a community simcha (joyous occasion).

I had the honor of participating in our most recent bar mitzvah, which inspired some thoughts about the overall meaning and history of this important ritual. As the Jewish "coming of age" ceremony, some wonder why it occurs at age thirteen. A bar mitzvah ceremony is actually a very modern innovation. There is no implication that a thirteen year-old is a full adult. In Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Ancestors), it is said that while 13 is the proper age for fulfillment of the Commandments, 18 is the proper age for marriage and 20 is the proper age for earning a livelihood. Elsewhere in the Talmud, the proper age for marriage is said to be 16-24. Some scholars go back to ancient times and theorize that thirteen was chosen because it was the age when Abraham's oldest son, Ishmael, was circumcised.

In its earliest and most basic form, the bar mitzvah was simply the first time a thirteen year-old would fulfill the mitzvah of an aliyah, or blessing for the Torah reading. The first bat mitzvah was in 1922. The girl was Judith Kaplan (Eisenstein), the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, who was the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism. But the truth is that a Jewish person, upon reaching age thirteen (12 for girls in some communities), becomes bar or bat mitzvah – a son or daughter of the commandments – with or without a ceremony. They come to the age in which they are responsible for fulfilling the commandments that we don't expect of children. They are not expected to drive cars, drink alcohol, vote in elections or perform military service. They are expected to observe moral commandments, such as giving charity, visiting the sick, respecting the elderly and caring for the environment. Religious commandments, such as fasting on Yom Kippur, keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws,

observing holidays and saying blessings, may not have the obvious societal benefits, but are also obligations expected of someone who is now old enough to take responsibility for him or herself.

In the early years of the Reform Movement in Judaism, there was an attempt to replace the bar mitzvah with another ceremony called Confirmation. This occurred later in the teenage years, at age 16 or 18. At the time, the leaders of the movement said that thirteen is too young to be considered for adult responsibility. The Confirmation ceremony caught on in many Reform communities, and even now in many Conservative synagogues. But it never replaced a bar mitzvah as it was intended to do.

The age thirteen has stood the test of time. Just as children are learning about themselves and their identity, they have this wonderful opportunity to tell the world, "Here I am!" For this to have true meaning, we need to look at this event not as a culmination of learning, but as a beginning. The children learn valuable skills, such as reading Hebrew and preparing a d'var Torah (teaching speech) to prepare them for the next step. The younger years are devoted to learning information. Now, it's time to move into more sophisticated learning. Children learn about the holidays; adults observe them. Children learn what the laws are; adults learn how to fulfill them.

Today, we commemorate the coming of age with a beautiful Shabbat service in which children demonstrate their learning and offer a teaching to the community. We then celebrate the accomplishment with a festive meal and, often, a party. The key to remember is that the joy of this milestone is about learning. We celebrate both what we have learned, and the endless opportunities awaiting us for our future learning.

All of us, regardless of age, have much more to learn. All of us older than thirteen are already B'nai Mitzvah, children of the sacred obligations that connect us with our people. As Pirke Avot says, "Don't say I'll study when I have time, because you won't have time." In order to make the world a better place, it is our sacred obligation as adults to learn how.

Coming together as a community, we can learn from each other. Our young people, with their endless enthusiasm, are often the best role models.

**B'shalom,
Dan Gordon**

TID BITS

Pot-Luck Shabbat Dinner

Gather with the community on Friday, June 29th at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Mike and Shawn Daus as we celebrate Shabbat. Expert challah-maker Josh Kleyman will show us how to make the perfect loaf. As for dinner, if your last name begins with an A-G please bring a salad, H-M please bring a side dish, N-S please bring a main course, T-Z please bring something sweet. Please contact the office for directions: info@jhjewishcommunity.org or 734-1999.

Camp Registration

Registration for our annual two week summer day camp has begun. If you would like to sign your child(ren) up, please contact Andrea Mazer for registration materials at 734-1999 or info@jhjewishcommunity.org.

JHJC Cookbooks

Don't forget to send your yummy recipes to phyllis@cogitech.com for our cookbook fundraiser for Bet Sefer. If you'd rather submit them in writing, that's fine too. Send them to Phyllis Turtle, PO Box 4937 Jackson, WY 83001.

Many Thanks:

Sandy Ress and **Susan Foster** for hosting **Dan Gordon** at their home in May.

Mazel Tov:

To **Veronica Silberberg** on her recent conversion to Judaism.
To the **students** and **teachers of Bet Sefer** for completing another year of Hebrew school.

JHJC Wish List

- Sponsor our monthly Newsletter: \$100 (per month)
- JHJC personalized stationary: \$150
- Host a Rabbi at your home or guest house for a weekend that we have a Shabbat service



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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.



Several board members from the Jackson Hole Jewish Community toured the construction site for Park City's new synagogue.