Shabbat this week

Kiddush—Main: Sponsored and prepared by the SOI Sisterhood.

Rabbi Epstein’s Shabbat Afternoon Class: Will meet at 3:45pm.

Seudah Sh’lishit: Co-Sponsored by Sara Bernstein in honor of her 60th Birthday and Allen Seftel in memory of his father, Larry Seftel.

People to People

Mazel Tov:
- To Eric & Rachel Klein and family on the birth of a baby boy.
- **SHALOM ZACHER:** 7:30pm at the home of Ron & Sarah Zanger (407 Tanforan Dr.)
- To Howard & Aileen Uderman on the birth of a grandson to Eric and Rachel.
- To Rabbi Jeffrey & Iris Bilinsky on the birth of a granddaughter, Yehudit, in Israel.

**Hakarat Hatov (Thank You):**
- To Sybil Bernstein for volunteering to repair our torn Torah cover. Thanks for your beautiful work!

Bnei Akiva Events this Weekend

**Friday Night**
Tisch at 8:00pm for High School students at the Lindenberg Home (67 Knollwood Drive)

**Shabbat Afternoon**
Snif at 3:40pm for kids in grades 3-8.
(Please try to come on time since snif is a little shorter because of Shabbat ending so early!)

**Motzei Shabbat**
Pizza and Movie Night for Z’ach (Grades 7 & 8) from 7:30-9:30pm at the Shifman Home (7 Meryl Lane)

**Also, please stay tuned for information about upcoming shabbatons!**

Shabbat Programming for Girls

**Girls Seudah Sh’lishit** (At the home of Jennifer Reich, 332 Cherry Hill Blvd)
**THIS WEEK:** December 28, 3:30-4:45 for 5th through 8th grade girls.

120th Anniversary Lecture Series

On Sunday evening, January 12th, Rabbi Mordechai Becher will be the 2nd speaker in our lecture series honoring our 120th Anniversary. Rabbi Becher will be speaking at 7:00pm following a deli dinner. All are invited to attend the lecture.

For those interested in attending the dinner, RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST. Cost is $10.00 per person. For reservations, please call Larry Miller at 667-0860 or e-mail him at twinks-3043@msn.com.

Parking in the Fire Lane

People have been parking in front of the shul in the fire lane. This is a safety code violation. You put people in jeopardy by parking there. Please park in appropriate parking spaces.
Seudah Sh’lishit

Sponsors are needed. Please contact the office if you want to sponsor a Seudah Sh’lishit for a special birthday, anniversary, to mark a yahrtzeit, or for any reason.

Jan 4: Allen and Carol Sefter
Jan 11: 
Jan 18: Charles and Shari Weg
Jan 25: 

Mitzvah Meals & More

If you are need of these services OR are available to participate in helping perform these important Mitzvot please contact:

New Born Baby Meals:
Our community provides meals to families who had a recent addition. Please contact Shira Baratz at (609) 558-5785.

Refuah Shelaima Meals:
For those that are recovering from illness/surgery; meals will be provided. Contact Rachel Evans (856) 979-7218 or email esr180@gmail.com.

Shiva Meals:
For meals during the week of Shiva contact Marjie Letzter at 321-1026.

Welcome Baskets:
Welcome baskets are organized by Audrey Dahan and Susan Handman. If you know of a new family moving into our community, please let Susan know at 609-440-6161.

Baby Supply Gemach:
If you have a gently used baby item to donate or would like to borrow a baby item, please contact Nechama Tropper at 856-321-1868.

Save the Date—Our Gala Weekend

On Shabbat Jan 31—Feb 1, 2014 we will be having many special events to honor our 120th year, including a distinguished Scholar in Residence, a Friday Night dinner at the shul and a special Kiddush.

Our Scholar in Residence will be Mark Dratch, founder of JSAFE (The Jewish Institute Supporting an Abuse-Free Environment) and Executive Vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA). In 2010 and 2013 he was named as one of Newsweek’s Top 50 Rabbis in America.

Please RSVP by January 5th to Suzie Mindel – 482-0954

Progressive Shabbat Dinner

Friday, January 11th 2014

Kabbalat Shabbat brimming with Ruach

A delicious Shabbat meal

Activities during dinner will provide an opportunity to get to know other congregants. Be prepared to move around during this progressive meal, as you may find yourself eating dinner at a different table and with different people than when you eat dessert!

$18/adult
$10/child (4-12 years of age)
Children under 3 are free

We are delighted to share news of all happy occasions & accomplishments of our congregants. Just let us know by email!

Deadline for each week’s issue is Wednesday.
Announcements: soinewslink@gmail.com
Advertising: soinewslinkads@gmail.com

Your SOI Newslink Staff:
Editorial Team:
Alise Panitch & Aaron Greenberg
Advertising Manager: Tova Freidenreich
Dedications

A lovely way to honor the memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special simcha is by dedicating a new Chumash or Siddur or by making a contribution to the prayer book fund. Please contact Sisterhood liaison Sylvia Levine at 667-5993 to make dedications.

Father & Son Learning

This Motzei Shabbat, and every Motzei Shabbat at 7:00pm Pizza * Raffles * Prizes

Please join us for a fun & educational evening.

TOPIC: Daily Life Questions in Halacha

Board Meeting Announcement

There will be General Board meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at 7:15pm in the SOI Social Hall. SOI members in good standing are welcome to attend and observe.

Community Directory Updates Needed

- Is your phone number incorrect?
- Is your address incorrect?
- Has your email address changed?
- Is your name spelled incorrectly?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, then we NEED you to email us the proper information ASAP.

If we have never had your email address, please send me an email with the proper information. Please note, we request your home phone AND cell phone numbers.

Thanking you in advance for your interest in helping to get our information correct! Any questions? Email at Lynn Jungreis at lynnbjungreis@gmail.com

Directories are still for sale from mark lowitz or the shul office for $10.

Sons of Israel @ 120

Historical Perspectives

Towards the end of the 1950’s, Rabbi Riff notified the shul that he was thinking about his retirement and a move to Israel. This put the wheels in motion to find a successor. After reviewing five candidates, the committee and Rabbi Riff made a choice: a young man currently with a congregation in Houston, Texas. His credentials were impeccable. His name was Rabbi Bernard E. Rothman, and he was ordained with Semicha by Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University with post graduate work at Columbia University.

In 1962, Rabbi Rothman took his position as Assistant Rabbi of the Congregation. His initial duties were to deliver the sermon on Shabbat mornings and to familiarize himself with the Congregation. Shortly after, there was great excitement as Rabbi Rothman took a bride. Her name was Greta. The wedding took place in June of 1963 in New York City. Many of the congregants attended. Over the years the Rothmans had four children - two girls and twin boys.

Congregation Sons of Israel was slowing in growth and was becoming a much older congregation through the 1960’s. Another factor affecting the Congregation was demographics. Suburbia was calling. What started as a trickle was turning into a steady stream. Rabbi Rothman was facing a growing problem with his Congregation. To turn the tide, the informal structure of the shul needed revamping. The relaxed dues system could not be continued. More organized action was needed. The Men’s Club looked to restructure. Rabbi Rothman looked to reach out to the younger couples. An initial meeting of five couples took place. From this meeting the Young Affiliates group was born, with Larry Miller as its initial president. This group grew from a beginning of five couples to forty couples and became an important part of the shul. For the next three years, Rabbis Riff and Rothman continued to lead the Congregation, seeing where changes could be made to strengthen it.

But then it was time to bid farewell to Rabbi Riff. In May of 1966, the Jewish community saw something never before experienced in Camden: the farewell testimonial dinner honoring Rabbi Riff. Six hundred people filled the ballroom of the Cherry Hill Inn (a large hotel now occupied by the Loew’s theatre complex). The ballroom was filled with congregants, Rabbinsmin, and leadership of every synagogue in the area. Many people were turned away due to space restraints. It was fitting that Rabbi Rothman acted as toastmaster: he was to pick up the gauntlet of greatness from his mentor and close friend.

For the next year and a half the shul was filled with cantatas (plays) from the graduating classes of Hebrew school students, Chanukah Balls, and Purim parties. But by 1967 many congregants had already planted new roots in Cherry Hill. The era of Camelot was giving way. It was time for the Congregation to consider leaving Camden.

To be continued...
Tora-lationships: Parshat Va’ei'ra

In Parshat Va’ei'ra we read of the first 7 plagues that G-d inflicted upon the Egyptians before the evil Pharaoh decreed that the Israelites may leave Egypt.

It is noteworthy that although Moshe is the appointed leader of Israel, it is Aharon, his brother that is called upon to activate the first three plagues: Blood, Frogs and Lice.

Rashi explains that since Moshe was saved when he was a baby in the water, and Moshe buried the Egyptian he killed in the sand, it would have been ungrateful for Moshe to execute the plague of Blood from the Nile River or the plagues of Frogs or Lice from the sand.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler in Michtav Meeliyahu writes that if we see in the Torah that we must feel and demonstrate gratitude even to inanimate objects like water and sand, how much more so must we demonstrate gratitude to people that provide benefit for us every single day.

Our nature is to take for granted all of the good done for us on a regular basis. If we are fortunate to have our meals prepared for us, our clothing washed, our mail delivered and our children looked after and picked up at carpool- shouldn’t we feel and express gratitude to the providers? The Talmud teaches that those that do not express gratitude to people who provide benefit for them, will eventually deny the good G-d does for them too.

The Lesson: One of the bedrock foundations of any healthy personality and relationship is Hakarat HaTov - recognizing and feeling grateful for the good done on our behalf. There are a dozen excuses why we do not express gratitude: 1) he’s just doing his job, 2) she does not need my thanks 3) we take it for granted..... none of the excuses above are cogent. Bottom line: Learn from Moshe who expressed gratitude even to inanimate objects that we should certainly express gratitude towards all the people and Hashem who provide goodness for us every single day.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Ephraim Epstein