



Hakol

THE VOICE OF THE
PELHAM JEWISH CENTER
June 2018
5778 Sivan / Tammuz



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Upcoming PJC Activities & Events

June

1 -- Shabbaton at the PJC

2 -- Shabbaton at the PJC

12 -- Soup Kitchen/
4:30pm

13 -- Board Meeting/
7pm

16 -- Women's Group/
1pm

24 -- Annual Meeting/
10am

July

4 -- Offices Closed

12 -- Board Meeting/
7pm

29 -- Blood Drive/
9am-1:30pm

August

9 -- Board Meeting/
7pm

30 -- Open House &

Rabbi Salzberg's Message

As I write this column, my mind is drawn back over and over again to the losses that we have recently suffered at the PJC.

If you have ever been at a shiva with me, you have almost certainly heard me say some version of the following: "On behalf of the family, I would like thank all of you for being here. I am thanking you, because one of the restrictions on a mourner sitting shiva is that they are not supposed to thank people. This is because showing up and supporting them is not an act of kindness. It is kind, and I can guarantee you that it is appreciated, but that is not why we do it. Visiting a mourner is a religious obligation, and we all do so in fulfillment of that obligation."

Part of the reason that I make this speech is for the sake of the mourners themselves. It is incredibly difficult, bordering on impossible, not to thank someone. It is a habit that has been ingrained in us since childhood, and it is particularly difficult when we feel intense



been ingrained in us since childhood - and it is particularly difficult when we feel intense gratitude, as is often the case in these moments. And so, I remind the mourner that this counter-intuitive practice is part of shiva.

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- [2017-18 Calendar](#)
- [2017-18 Board of Directors](#)

I would like to share with all of you some of the other practices and rituals that are a part of making a shiva visit. *ניחום אבילים* - *Nichum Aveilim*, comforting mourners - is one of the most important actions that we can take as Jews and as part of a Jewish community. It is so important, that our tradition teaches that when God blessed Isaac after the death of his father, Abraham, this was an act of *nichum aveilim*; when we act similarly, we are imitating one of the Divine Attributes.

This is an area where the PJC community truly takes its religious commitments seriously. I have never experienced a shiva where we failed to make a minyan so that the mourner can recite kaddish. This is a significant accomplishment for a synagogue of our size, an area where much larger communities struggle. It is a sign of the strength of our community, and one that we should all take great pride in.

No doubt much of this will be familiar to you, but if it isn't, the shiva visit itself is not the moment to have this conversation.

When entering a shiva home, it is customary not to greet the mourner. We must take our cues from them. It may be that they are not in the mood to talk, in which case we should sit quietly nearby, offering the support of our presence. It may be that they will want to talk in a few minutes and will start a conversation. It may be that they are not in the mood to talk at all and we will leave without saying much of anything.

A shiva visit can seem like a perfect opportunity to catch up with the friends whom we encounter. It is easy to check in and find out what is new - I frequently catch myself starting to do this. We are a tight-knit community, we always have something to talk about. But this can transform a visit of comfort into a social visit, a house of mourning into a gathering of friends. If there is something vitally important that needs to be discussed, we should step outside so as not to distract the mourners or minimize the importance of their grief.

The shiva minyan - the prayer service that takes place in the morning or the evening - is a central feature of sitting shiva. It gives the mourners an opportunity to say kaddish, without requiring them to go out and find a service at a synagogue. Instead, we bring the community to them. The service is brief and can be an important marker of the passage of time for the mourner. By engaging in our rituals and traditions, we help ground the mourner when they might easily become unmoored.

But really, the most important part of a shiva visit is making the visit itself. Visits do not need to be long, 15 or 20 minutes can be enough, and might be as much as the mourners themselves can handle in the moment. They can happen before or after the shiva minyan, but just as appropriately at other times during the day. Indeed, visit at other times can have a much greater impact, because it is generally quieter, and a deeper connection is possible.

Visiting a person in the midst of their grief can have a powerful effect, reminding them that they are not alone and are part of a community that cares about them. It is important - and easy - to do this when the mourner is someone that we know and care about. But it is just as important to visit when we aren't close with the mourner, and even if we do not know them.

The religious obligation is no less in these moments, and the message that such a visit sends can be profound. It demonstrates that we are cared for not only by our family and our friends, but by the community at large. It is a reminder that we are part of a larger Jewish people and a visible reification of the Talmudic instruction: *כל ישראל אעריב* - *kol yisrael areivim zeh lazeh*, All of Israel is responsible for one another.

I pray that it will be a long time before we need to put any of this into practice again. I am confident that when that time comes, we will step forward to support one another, offering comfort and presence.

Thank you,
Rabbi Alex Salberg

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Education Director's Message



In my first trip to Cuba, during the Summer of 2016, I purchased a painting from the Cuban artist Ariel Broche. From the first time I laid my eyes on the painting, at a local artists' gallery, I couldn't stop looking at it. Something about that picture kept me so attracted to it that I ended up purchasing from the artist, (who then invited me to his home for a traditional Cuban coffee, and we became good friends).

In the painting, we see a young boy with his back to the viewer. He is kicking a ball upstream while water is streaming down from the cobblestones in a narrow street. The painting has an impressionist style, with vigorous strokes of different colors making the viewer feel as if we are there, at that moment, standing in the tropical rain with this shirtless barefoot kid. Needless to say, you all know how much I love soccer, and how much soccer helps me explain the world.

We hanged the picture in our living room, where I keep staring at it every day, feeling reinvigorated by the young boy who kicks the ball upstream, against all odds, while gravity and nature are forcing his ball to go the opposite direction. As I reflect on it, I think the reason why this painting attracted me so much was because I feel it somehow depicts the challenging



work of Jewish Education: the rain pours down a slippery slope and we keep trying to kick our ball upstream. Jewish Education is becoming an increasingly harder game to play in an ever-changing complex world. Using this painting as a metaphor, Jewish Education is the ball we try to kick upstream when many forces try to bring it down. And our Jewish educators are like the barefoot shirtless sweaty player, inexplicably sustaining the blind faith that in the end, we will be successful. (Tip: If you look closely at the picture, you will find out that even though it's raining, the sun is shining in the up left corner, giving us hope and certainty, the light that guides our way.)



During our end-of-the-year Assembly, one of our teachers, Morah Havi Pessa, stood up and thanked the parents for their support along the year. "It takes a village ", she said. And here lies the main difference between the Cuban painting and the PJC picture: we are not kicking that ball alone. We are a community, and Jewish Education is not a one-man show. It happens within a community. If we would paint our picture, it would show a group of people, hands on each other's shoulders, pulling that ball upstream together. We probably stand a much better chance to get it through, against all odds.

I see the painter's broad strokes of color as the ever-changing scenery of light and darkness, of the different types of energy we grapple with when struggling to bring our ancestral traditions to students in the 21st Century; it reminds me about how deeply humbled I feel by the creativity and the wisdom of our Learning Center teachers as they continue to craft powerful opportunities for our students to learn and engage with Judaism, Israel and G-d. As one of our teachers wrote in the end of the year Bnei Mitzvah class Report Cards we sent to the parents: "*(Name of student)* has much to offer, and we hope is given the opportunity and place to offer it. One of those places is the PJC Hebrew High School program, and we hope she will decide to join and contribute and take from that special program that teaches the children that Judaism doesn't stop at the Bar/t Mitzvah but is a life-long journey." I couldn't have said it in a better way; Judaism is a lifelong journey, and together we can continue to kick that ball upstream against all odds. I am hoping our B'nei Mitzvah will continue the journey with us as e=they enroll for our Hebrew High School and volunteer as madrichim in the fall. As our sages have said: "it's not on you to finish all repairing all the world's problems, but neither are you allowed to remove yourself from it.

As the LC's academic year comes to an end, I am thankful to Rabbi Salzberg for his guidance and wisdom, for the PJC board's trust and leadership, for our parents' confidence and continuous support, together with our Education Board. I would like to thank Sari Schulman for her friendship and support as our LC Education Chair for the last three years, and welcome Marjut Herzog, our new Education Chair, to join us in this adventure. Last but not least, I would like to thank the PJC congregants who volunteered in different ways and contributed so much for the success of this year of learning at the LC. Todah Rabbah!

I would like to wish each and every one in our PJC family a summer full of light and much fun. I can't wait to see all our students back and refreshed in the fall! On a very personal note, I also wish for a summer of excellent soccer as the World Cup starts... Israel and USA aren't playing this year, so maybe you'll root with me for my "other" soccer team: Brazil! Let's kick that ball!

L'shalom,
Ana Turkienicz

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Our Pelham Interfaith Council Representative

Did you know that members of the Pelham Jewish Center are invited to attend the monthly Board meetings? Board meeting dates appear on the [PJC website calendar](#).

Pelham Interfaith Council PJC Representative Judy Cooper discusses her role ...

The Pelham Interfaith Council (PIC) was established in 1964 to provide an opportunity for understanding and appreciation of the religious heritage represented in the town. The membership consists of representatives of each of the houses of worship in Pelham and is open to people of all faiths.

I recently was asked by Leah to be the lay representative from the PJC to this most vital organization; Rabbi Salzberg, of course, is also a member along with the clergy of each of the other religious groups. It was an honor and privilege for me to accept this request, and I will do my best to well represent our wonderful synagogue.

The PIC is in the process of developing ideas to augment the traditional Thanksgiving worship service that it sponsors, including a potential "book club" featuring a selection that would be of interest to all. I would be most interested in hearing of other ideas that any of you may have for the PIC to consider as focus areas for this group. Please email me at [Judy Cooper](#).

While the sharing of mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect among Pelham's diverse religions and cultures always is important, are we not living in a time when these goals are heightened in their importance?

New Member Spotlight - Meet the Gerber Family!



Tell us a little bit about your family!

We're new to Pelham, after a long stint in NYC - more than 20 years for Adam, and more than 10 for Jen. Adam claims Syracuse as home, but also lived in Ohio, Canada, and Florida while growing up. He is a graduate of Boston University, but is a big SU fan. His parents and sisters have migrated to Southern California over the years. Adam is the SVP of Investment for one of WPPs media agencies - Essence - and travels all the time!

Jen grew up in California, in the Bay Area. She attended the University of California, San Diego. Her family is mostly scattered around Northern California. Jen is a Project Manager at the NY Times.

We will be celebrating our fifth wedding anniversary this July. We have enjoyed quite a bit of travel together - before we got married, we went to New Orleans, Sonoma, Jamaica, Turks and Caicos. We honeymooned in Thailand, and babymooned at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles. As a family, we have traveled to Florida, Hawaii, Maine (Ogunquit), Nantucket, Aruba, Syracuse, and of course, California to visit our families.

Max, age 12, is finishing the 6th grade at Riverdale Country School. He plays piano and saxophone, loves gardening, acting, and making art, and enjoys cooking. He was one of twelve contestants on the first season of Top Chef Jr. He is currently preparing for his Bar Mitzvah. Max's splits his time between his dad's house and his mom's (Sarah), who lives in Inwood.

Ava, age 4, is finishing her first year of preschool at the Alcott School in Dobbs Ferry. She loves all things Frozen and Moana, but her favorite buddy is Doctor (Curious) George. She enjoys painting and music, and loves to dance. Ava is often the last one on the dance floor at any party. She is a big fan of Tot Shabbat, and she calls PJC, "the big yellow house."

Fun fact:

Adam's father is a Rabbi, but now works in the furniture industry.

When did you join the PJC?

We joined the PJC last summer. Our goal was to find a family-oriented, close-knit Jewish experience that was welcoming. Rabbi Salzberg closed it for us - he's great!

When did you move to Pelham?

July, 2017

Favorite PJC memory?

Two come to mind ... the first time Max was honored by being asked to open the Ark at his first Saturday morning service, and at Sukkot when Ava got to shake the lulav!

PJC event you are looking forward to?

We can't wait for Rabbi Salzberg to officiate at our daughter Ava's conversion to Judaism, and Max's Bar Mitzvah this October.

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Letter from the Editor



The phrase that come up most often when people talk about the PJC is "small but vibrant." Taking over Hakol in September only reinforced how true this is to me.

I grew up at the Pelham Jewish Center, from learning about Shabbat in my kindergarten Hebrew School Class to USY and Hebrew High School. The experiences I had in our little community shaped the way I view Judaism and my place in the Jewish community out in the world.

This past year, I attended Yeshivat Hadar, a year-long fellowship program run by The Hadar Institute on the Upper West Side. As I immersed myself fully in Jewish culture and learning, I was reminded time and time again how fortunate I am that I have such a strong foundation of positive Jewish experiences built in Pelham. In many ways, my experience at Hadar felt extremely far from my experiences at the PJC: it was non-denominational, I was asked to strictly keep Shabbat, and I learned Talmud and Mishna for the first time.

However, one of the best parts of Hadar is that it allowed me to continue participating at PJC in ways I never thought I would be able to do. In addition to taking over Hakol in September, I was able to read an entire Torah Portion and give the siyyum teaching at the Fast of the First Born before Passover. The support of Rabbi Salzberg and the PJC community was invaluable during this time, and I truly felt the joy of Jewish learning and community.

The way that people at Pelham Jewish Center community support one another, show up for and put their heart into events and holidays, is what makes it a special place, and one that will always be synonymous with Jewish community for me.

This is the last issue of Hakol until September, and I want to continue making it reflect the warmth and vibrancy of the community. I want to encourage you all to contact me with ideas for articles and content, no matter how big or small the idea or inspiration. Let's work together to make this newsletter uniquely us.

See you in September!

Lisa Yelsey

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Share a Simcha!

simcha!

"Share a Simcha" allows congregants to share their news with our PJC community. Please submit news about family members -- engagements, births, job updates, kid achievements, community acknowledgements and any other milestones to [Lisa Yelsey](#). This will continue to be a regular *Hakol* feature, so keep your news and

updates coming!

- Sending a *Mazel Tov* to Greg Breskin who was named to the Pelham Village Architectural Review Board.
- Much *Mazel* to Efreem & Freddie Sigel who are celebrating 40 years of PJC membership!
- *Mazel Tov* to Greg & Theresa Breskin in honor of the *Bat Mitzvah* of their daughter, Larisa, on June 9th.
- Wishing *Mazel* to our PJC graduating High School seniors: Nick Breskin / Madi Echelman / Charles Katz / Chloe Krulak / Izak Lee / Jonny Liesman

Tributes & Donations



Make Tributes & Donations [ONLINE!](#)

Donations to the PJC from...

- Marvin & Shari Chinitz, in honor of Leah Leonard as she begins her term as President of the PJC Board
- Marvin & Shari Chinitz, in memory of Roslyn Sachs, mother of Kate Lauzar
- Robert & Sandra Goldman, in memory of Roslyn Sachs
- Robert & Sandra Goldman, in memory of Deborah Stampfer, wife of Morris Stampfer
- Patricia Levinson, in memory of Roslyn Sachs
- Patricia Levinson, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- Marc & Elaine Prager, in honor of Dan Mailick successfully defending his Ph.D. dissertation
- Marc & Elaine Prager, in honor of Efrem & Frederica Sigel on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary
- Marc & Elaine Prager, in memory of Roslyn Sachs
- Marc & Elaine Prager, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- David & Harriet Rudnick, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- Steven & Virginia Salzberg, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- Doris-Patt Smith, in memory of Roslyn Sachs
- Doris-Patt Smith, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- Mark & Eleanor Walfish, in honor of Efrem & Frederica Sigel on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary
- Harold & Sally Weisman, in honor of Efrem & Frederica Sigel on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary

Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund from...

- Leslie & Sybil Rosenberg, in honor of Dan Mailick successfully defending his Ph.D. dissertation
- Leslie & Sybil Rosenberg, in honor of Efrem & Frederica Sigel on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary
- Leslie & Sybil Rosenberg, in memory of Roslyn Sachs
- Leslie & Sybil Rosenberg, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- Barbara Saunders-Adams & Samuel Adams, in memory of Deborah Stampfer
- Doris-Patt Smith, in honor of Rabbi Alex Salzberg

At any time, if you wish to pay by check, please make it payable to "**The Pelham Jewish Center**" and mail it to our bookkeeping firm at: The Pelham Jewish Center, P.O. Box 418, Montvale, NJ 07645.

All donations to the [Rabbi's Discretionary Fund](#), at any time throughout the year, should be made payable to "**The Pelham Jewish Center -- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**" and mailed directly [to Julia Coss at the PJC office](#).

Thank you!

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