



JCC JBM News

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Newsletter of the Jewish Community Center of Belle Mead **May 2006** Iyar-Sivan 5766

JCCBM

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2005-2006

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A New Name: A New Start

As Rabbi Tayvah wrote in his column (see p. 5) a new name can be a new beginning for our community. To better inform the community about how the Trustees came to this point in the process, allow us to share with you what we've done to date.

At the 2005 General Membership meeting a questionnaire was distributed asking members three basic questions:

- 1] What importance did the membership place on changing our name?;
- 2] What preference, if any, did one have for a Hebrew vs. and English name?; and
- 3] any suggestions for the new name.

The Trustees received 80 responses, a healthy number for a community our size. Some results were as follows:

• **By 46% to 34% (with 20% in the middle) the community felt a name change to be important.**

Many comments focused on the fact that we are not a "JCC" as it is commonly understood today. Nearly every week our office gets a call asking about our swimming pool or weight room. With this reality in mind, the Trustees went ahead with the name change process.

• 37% felt that a Hebrew only name would be best, compared to 21% for an English only name. 5% said a name with both would be best; 37% (!) expressed no preference.

After careful consideration of the strong preferences expressed for both an only English name, and an only Hebrew name, we chose to suggest to the membership a hybrid name: a Hebrew name for the community with an English geographic and descriptive "sub-name."

There were many comments in the surveys as to whether our community is best described as part of "Belle Mead", "Montgomery" or of a wider area. While most of our membership is from the towns closest to our building (Hillsborough and Montgomery) we also have a significant number of member families from Princeton and Franklin townships as well as from even further away. It seems our members choose us both for the kind of Judaism we stand for, and our locale. We are recommending that the English part of our name be:

"The Reconstructionist Congregation of Central New Jersey."

That just leaves the Hebrew part of our new name. Over 21 specific names were suggested, a number of them multiple times. Rabbi Tayvah distilled and translated these names into one list for board consideration. *The Trustees feel that the Hebrew portion of our name should capture the essence of our community, the qualities that make our synagogue different than others in our region.* Other considerations for the Hebrew name were that it should be easily pronounceable and clearly transliterated so that everyone will be able to read it easily. (The final spelling of the name will be settled on after the vote.)

At the March meeting of the Trustees a list of 18 possible Hebrew names was voted on to narrow it down to five semi-finalist names. These were then put to a vote to come up with the top three finalist names (in alphabetical order):

cont'd on page 2

Welcome Sofie!

Please welcome to the JCC of Belle Mead family, Ms. Sofie Uppal, our community's new part-time Administrator. She is in charge of all financial issues as well as many building related concerns. Sofie lives in Bridgewater (in fact, she's a neighbor of Michelle & Brian Brown!). She holds an MBA and has worked in the banking and finance worlds. Sofie grew up in Nigeria in Africa. She spent much of her childhood in Nigeria. She has also lived in Indonesia and is now settled here. Sofie has a 10 year old son, Isa. She will be available in our office Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday between 9:30 AM -2 PM.

Joe Himelfarb
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Name, cont'd from page 1

- **Ahm Kehillah** (People of Community)
- **B'nai Kehillah** (Children (sons) of Community)
- **Kehillat Shalom** (Community of Shalom (wholeness/peace))

Kehillah is the Hebrew work for community. Historically, it was the word used to describe regional or city-wide Jewish governments, usually with the adjective "*kedosha*" (holy) following it. Some of you may have come across the word in names of other synagogues, perhaps spelled as "*Kehillath* _____." As this name rose to the top of the voting, the Trustees felt that it captures how we value the importance of being a community.

The Trustees voted on these names using a "weighted voting" system. In this kind of voting, each person was given three different votes to cast: one vote worth three points, one of two points and one of one point. In this way each voter expresses not only a preference, but also the relative value of each choice.

We will be conducting the final vote at the General Membership meeting in the same way. Each member attending will be given three cards, with a 1, 2, and 3 on them to place in the bowls with each of the above names.

Please feel free to ask any Trustee, or Rabbi Tayvah, questions about this historical moment in our congregation. We look forward to your input at the General Meeting on May 21!

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JCC Donations

The JCC gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

Regular Donations

Joel & Joan Weisblatt	In honor of our loving family & friends on the occasion of our son, Bobby's Bar Mitzvah.
George Cohen & Lesley Germaine	Samuel Cohen Bar Mitzvah
Sheryl & Richard Rosenberg	Building Fund – In honor of Larry Fridkis's 50 th birthday, birth of Kevin Nathan Fass (to Brian & Laura Fass), 50 th Anniversary of Marilyn & Morris Plotkin, & 20 th Anniversary of Inez & David Gutman
Edward B. Krisiloff Susan A. Forster	In Memory of Rabbi's father
Joy (Edelstein) Zelkind-Dunst & Michael Dunst	Donation for Rabbi Tayvah's officiating at the wedding of Joy (Edelstein) Zelkind-Dunst & Michael Dunst.
Hilary S. Crist Peter A. Crist	Stationery Donation
Edward B. Krisiloff & Susan A. Forster	In memory of the Rabbi's father
Aaron D. Gavzy Ann B. Gavzy	Bar Mizvah Book Donation
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Tobie Parnett	Donation in memory of Rabbi Michael Tayvah's father
Norman & Jeanne Schechter	In memory of Dr. S. Plotnick
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KVELLINS

Congratulations to Saul Rubinstein and Marc Rosenberg on their becoming the second and third members of our small community to be elected to their local boards of Education. They join Andrea Bradley who is a continuing Montgomery District School board member.

Jewish LIFE

Jewish LIFE thanks all those who attended and supported the programs offered this year. We are working on the 2006-2007 calendar of events and look forward to bringing to our community another terrific lineup of programs. We look forward to hosting Abigail Pogrebin, author of *"The Stars of David"* on November 2. Ruth Messinger, President & Executive Director of American Jewish World Services, will be our guest speaker on November 19. Ms. Messinger will speak on *"Jews as Global Citizens: Our Responsibility in the World"*. The Jewish LIFE brochure for the new season will be available in the fall. ***Jewish LIFE needs your support.*** Please consider becoming a Patron or Benefactor of Jewish LIFE for its new season. Details will be published in the brochure, or contact Laura Friedman, Associate Executive Director, Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, 908-275-6994 x213; LFriedman@ssbjcc.org.

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Hebrew School Happenings

LEEBA" H

May 2006

5/3 Class Wed

5/7 Class Sun- Open House/ Bake Sale/ Car Wash/ Yom Hashoah Wax



Museum/ Yom Haatzmaut learning centers- everyone is welcome!

5/10 Class Wed **Dance**

5/14 Class Sun- practice for Siyum-

Open House- **Dance + Music Shababt k-4**

5/17 Class Wed

5/21 Class Sun- Siyuum- **Dance+Music** – Only one session from 8:30-9:30ish- **No second session**

Please see www.jccbm.org for Shabbat Superstars!

Youth Stages presented a theater workshop on the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. Students were asked to leave their book bags on the side of the room and sit on a circle that was taped to the floor. The facilitators explained that students would sometimes be spoken to "in character" and would be asked to respond in kind. The first task was to build the pyramids under the watchful eye of a taskmaster. Students worked hard to pass the bricks and watched in awe as



Moses came and killed the taskmaster.

The hour continued the story of Passover. Students experienced what it was like to be slaves, talk to Moses as the burning bush, live through the plagues, crossing the Red Sea (and drowning in it as Egyptians) and finally singing as free people on the other side.

This Hebrew School has a three-year

rotation of Passover experiences. In the first year, the students pass through learning centers in which they learn the parts of the Seder. In the second year, students experience a traditional model Seder. In this, the third year, students played out the Magid, the telling of the story.



Acorn Glen Interview and Collaborations:

The fifth, sixth and seventh graders visited Acorn Glen and then worked together to create biographies of the residents that they interviewed. Here are some samples:

Sophie:

Her name is Sophie. Sophie was born in New York City and was raised in Brooklyn. She had a brother named Paul and a sister named May. Sophie loved her childhood and had a great time in school. Her role model was her piano teacher and Sophie loved playing together with her. Sophie did not attend a college, but attended a Music School. The most spectacular place that Sophie ever went was Israel.

She married and had children in Brooklyn. Her children had seven grandchildren. The most unexpected change in her life was 9/11. Once she met Itzhak Pearlman at the Jackie Gleason Theater. The one major historical event in Sophie's life was World War II because her husband almost got drafted in the army. Her son had Parkinson's disease.



Geanne:

Geanne Tells was born in Brooklyn, NY. She grew up with two younger brothers. Unfortunately, her parents got divorced, but her Dad worked with Broadway and she got to see every show.

Her role model growing up was Ethel Merman, a very famous singer.

Geanne's first job was babysitting. She got 50 cents a night! She started working when she was only twelve years old. She quotes, "I'd hope they'd go to bed so I could do my homework."

Geanne rode her first car somewhere in the 1930's. In 1963, she rode in one of the early planes.

She attended Hunter College in New York. This was an all girl's school. In fact, after grade 5, she never had another boy in her class. There she majored in English.

Unfortunately, she did not really have a career.

Geanne's travels brought her to a spectacular place, Italy! She quotes, "It was wonderful!"



Reeva:

Reeva Isaacs was born and raised in Patterson, NJ. She has one brother who lives in Florida. Her childhood was wonderful. The depression didn't

bother her at all.

Reeva's first role model was her grandmother. Her first job was in high school selling clothes part time. Reeva's career was working at George's office (her husband).

The first time she was on a plane was going to Florida to visit her brother. The two most spectacular places she's been are Israel and England.

She had three children, Audrey, Myra, and Hannah and she has four grandchildren. Two of them live in NJ and two live in Virginia. The most unexpected change in the world since her childhood was the TV. The most historical event in her life was World War II. The most famous person she ever met was an actor.

Nathan:

We interviewed Nathan Hand. He was born in Brooklyn, NY in

1908. He grew up in New York, of course. He has two brothers and two sisters. Nathan used to like flying airplanes. His role models were people who told the truth. In his early twenties, he got his first job, which was being a lawyer. He enjoyed this very much. For college, he went to St. John's University and studied law. He was married for 56 years. Nathan had one daughter. He raised his family in Monticello, New York. He has two grandchildren. One goes to Stanford University and one goes to high school. One major thing that happened to Nathan was landing his plane on a four-lane highway. He prayed to live during this event. When we asked Nathan if there was one time he could go back to do, he said, he is satisfied that he is alive now, unlike many. He is especially proud of his family and his life.



What is the Babaganewz...

The Fifth and Sixth Graders have been reading a magazine called Babaganewz all year. It focuses on one mitzvah every month and relates that mitzvah to the current world of our children. There are articles about Jewish music and books, charities and opportunities to do tikun olam. Classes made Passover cards and sent them to Israeli soldiers, learned about Matisyahu, talked about social action, and worked on word puzzles and read lots of articles. If you would like to learn more, there is a website www.babaganewz.com with more information, a parents' section, a kids' section and a teachers' section (the password is eggplant).

What's in a name?



1:5 God called the light: Day! and the darkness God called: Night! ...

1:8 God called the dome: Sky! ...

1:10 God called the dry land: Earth! and the gathering of waters God called: Seas! ...

2:19 [God] brought each [of the creatures] to the Human, to see what the Human would call it; whatever the Human called it as a

living being, that became its name.

from the Book of Genesis

Naming is a natural and an essential human act, an act that frames our understanding of our world. If we take the Torah's opening stories as a guide, we see that humans naturally name things. As quoted above, God merely brings the animals to the First Human "to see what the Human would name them." No commandment, not even a request is needed to get the Human to start naming.

We need names. Can you remember a time when an event took place for which we did not yet have a name? What we now call "9/11" at first went by a number of names until a cultural consensus emerged around the date as a name. I recall the late 1980's when Palestinian civil unrest erupted in the West Bank and Gaza. For months it was called, "the situation" or "the disturbances" until finally it came to be known as the *intifada*. In both those cases it was unsettling to not have a name for those events.

We humans give names. We name quickly, and the names we give often show how we understand what we name.

Back in the early 1980's, a group of Jews gathered here in Montgomery Township for fellowship and to satisfy their religious needs. From the meeting of the four people around Harvey & Marian Tesser's kitchen table, to the letter sent out to all the Jewish sounding names in the area, through the first meetings of the group, there wasn't a name.

Bob Fass recalls that at one of the early meetings of the Board of Trustees the issue of what to call this new group arose. He suggested "*Barukh Belle Mead*." Harvey Tesser said that people came together to create a community center, a place where all the Jews in the area could meet and be together. The suggestion became the name, **The Jewish Community Center of Belle Mead**.

However, from nearly the beginning, there was always some dissatisfaction with the name. Some felt that they wanted a *synagogue* and not a JCC. For most American Jews, a JCC means the place with the gym, the weight room and the pool; not a shul!

In 1992, when our community was ten years old and we were in our present building for six years, a name change was proposed. The suggested name was "*Congregation Ahavat Torah*" (which means "lovers of Torah"). The archives note the proposal, but not the process or outcome; we assume it did not pass.

Today our community is at a cross-roads. There have been great changes in the past three years. We are not as numerous as the community once was, and it feels like the group has lost its direction. Yet whenever I ask people

about what makes this congregation special, two qualities always come up.

First: people are attracted to this congregation because of the quality of the relationships here. We have and do put people and relationships first. In some profound way we are about building the connections between people, in a word, we're about **community**.

Second: We accept people where they are, being more concerned about who they are rather than how they dress, what they do, or even to whom they are married. Our communal culture is informal. We tend to leave our professional titles in the parking lot. We welcome intermarried couples, as well as Gay and Lesbian families. Our community has had both gay and straight clergy.

Given these cultural norms is it any wonder that the three finalist names chosen by the Trustees to present to the congregation all have the word "community" or *kehilah* in them.

The Romans used to say: *Nomen nest omen* - a name is an omen.

As Rabbi Shim'on, who lived during the time of the Romans, said: "There are three crowns (sources of authority / power): The Crown of Torah (learning), the Crown of the *Kehunah* (the hereditary "priesthood" of the descendants of Aaron) and the Crown of Sovereignty (governmental authority). But the **Crown of a good name** rises above all of them!" (Mishnah, Pirkay Avot, 4:17)

No matter the outcome of the vote at the annual meeting, I hope that this name change will be a pivotal moment in this community's history. I hope that the name will propel us to engage with each other more as true fellow community members: to know more of each other, to support each other, to celebrate each other's joys. May we choose well, and may we live up to the name we choose for this holy community. *Michael Tavvah*

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Youth Group News/Hebrew High/

JCCBM YOUTH GROUP

March's Purim Carnival was a grand success due in part to the large participation of teens from our youth group and Hebrew High School programs. Twenty teenagers were buzzing around the building running the games, crafts, entrance, pizza and prize tables. Three cheers to Eric Dean, Erica Gavzy, Erika Goldstein, Arielle, Sabrina, and David Starkman, Jason Sokol, Jeni Burke and friend, Sarah Van Peenan, Lindsey Rosenthal, Josh and Mara Cige, Josh and Ali Kent, Jake and Gabe Fridkis, Lizzie and Laura Smulian, and Jon Yuresko! Everyone gave their all to make this year's Purim carnival a festival fun filled afternoon. It was an absolute delight to walk through our synagogue and see the interaction of our older students as they guided the play of the younger congregants. From the candle shooting game to face painting to lawn darts to the dress up race every where one looked, smiling faces could be found. Thanks to Audrey Starkman for her tireless help in the preparations for the carnival and to the other adults who leant a hand on the day of the carnival. Let's do it again next year!

In April the youth group joined together to participate in the annual MS Walk on Sunday, April 23.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, May 7 - 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

It's time for our annual Spring Open House with car wash and bake sale. Calling all teenagers to bring their delicious home baked treats to the synagogue and stay to wash cars on the first Sunday morning in May. Come prepared to get wet and have fun as you scrub down the vehicles that drive up to be washed. In between washing, relax with friends and have a well deserved snack.

We need a coordinator for this event. Please call and email if you can help.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, May 21 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

The JCCBM annual meeting is this morning. Your help is needed once more! Come and play with the younger children from our congregation as their parents attend the meeting in the sanctuary for two hours on the third Sunday in May. Last year there was an informal ball game organized by the teens in the back yard. It's a fun morning for all as the older children organize games and activities for the younger students. Please let me know if you are available for this mitzvah.

SAVE THE DATE: June activity - To be finalized. Email notice will be sent for possible youth group activity in June. Canoe trip anyone?

RECONSTRUCTIONIST REGIONAL YOUTH GROUP

In March the Regional Youth Group met in Princeton for an afternoon on the Princeton University campus to participate in the university's Middle Eastern Festival. It was a beautiful spring day to hang outside together, walk around the Woodrow Wilson School fountain off Washington Street, and check out the food, crafts, sights and sounds of the Middle East. The festival was organized by Salaam-Shalom and co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Life. Live music by the Moshav Band and Yousef Shamoun filled the spring air as did the smells of falafel and shwarma.

A youth group leaders meeting was planned for the evening of April 24th in order for the leaders to talk about future events for this year.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 29 - Event to be announced via email

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, May 12-Shabbat service in Bordentown. Pot luck dinner before service.

Details will be emailed by youth group leader, Alissa Wise.

All JCCBM teenagers are welcome to attend any youth group event. If you would like to participate in an event, please email me.

Shalom, *Karen Fridkis*, youth group chair

HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

The Hebrew High school had a reduced schedule in April due to Passover observance. Before Passover the rabbi instructed each session in the intricacies of keeping kosher for Pesach. Students learned the reasoning behind the laws governing what one can and cannot eat during the holiday.

Wednesday's class continued their studies on the Holocaust with Barbara Lehman. Susan Waskow lead interesting discussions on current events and encouraged the students to voice their opinions on a wide range of topics. The rabbi taught the class about Israel's election process. On March 29th the students also participated in the cooking program run by Josh Fischman and made (and ate!)hamentashen.

Thursday class had the opportunity to continue their studies with the rabbi as well as take advantage of the warmer weather with a couple of informal games of Frisbee at the start of class.

Pizza dinners were enjoyed by all.

Thanks for the parents who purchased the pizza for each session - Carrie Fischman, Natalie London, Susan Krisiloff, and Elaine Donoghue.

May Hebrew High School calendar:

Wednesday	Thursdays
May 3	May 4
May 10	May 11
May 17 - last class	May 18 - last class

Year-end parties to celebrate the successful year for the Wednesday class and the Thursday class are in the planning stages. Information will be communicated to the students via email when the details and dates have been finalized.

Shalom,
Karen Fridkis, Hebrew High School chair

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MAY 2006



Celebrate Israel's Birthday!
What's going on at the JCC of Belle Mead, NJ?

May 2006
3 Iyyar 5766 - 4 Sivan 5766

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 3 Iyyar 18 L'Omer	2 4 Iyyar 19 L'Omer §8:41PM YOM HAZIKARON	3 5 Iyyar 20 L'Omer §8:42PM YOM HA'ATZMAUT Deut. 7.12-8.18. Isaiah 10.32-12.6. Leeba"n & 8/9 Hebrew Chai Schools 5 - 7 PM	4 6 Iyyar 21 L'Omer 10 - 12 Hebrew Chai School 5 - 7 PM	5 7 Iyyar 22 L'Omer §7:41PM 7 PM Story Telling Shabbat Service	6 8 Iyyar 23 L'Omer §8:45PM Ahare Mot: Levit. 16.25- 18.5 Kedoshim: Levit. 19.23- 20.7. Amos 9.7-15 9:15 am Shaharit service - Scott Grollman celebrates becoming a Bar Mitzvah
7 9 Iyyar 24 L'Omer Leeba"n School 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Open House 10-1	8 10 Iyyar 25 L'Omer	9 11 Iyyar 26 L'Omer Board of Trustees meeting 7:30 PM	10 12 Iyyar 27 L'Omer Leeba"n & 8/9 Hebrew Chai Schools 5 - 7 PM	11 13 Iyyar 28 L'Omer 10 - 12 Hebrew Chai School 5 - 7 PM	12 14 Iyyar 29 L'Omer §8:50PM/§7:47PM PESACH SHEINI 7:45 PM Food for thought Shabbat Service	13 15 Iyyar 30 L'Omer §8:51PM Emor: Levit. 22.17-23.22. Ezekiel 44.15-31. 3:45 pm Mincha service - Michael Stewart celebrates becoming a Bar Mitzvah
14 16 Iyyar 31 L'Omer Leeba"n School 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Happy Mother's Day!	15 17 Iyyar 32 L'Omer	16 18 Iyyar 33 L'Omer §8:54PM LAG B'OMER	17 19 Iyyar 34 L'Omer Leeba"n & 8/9 Hebrew Chai Schools 5 - 7 PM Last Class for 8/9 Chai School	18 20 Iyyar 35 L'Omer 10 - 12 Hebrew Chai School 5 - 7 PM Last Class	19 21 Iyyar 36 L'Omer §7:54PM 7:00 PM Musical Shabbat Service	20 22 Iyyar 37 L'Omer §8:58PM Behar: Levit. 25.25-25.46 Behukotai: Levit. 26.3- 27.34. Jeremiah 16.19-17.14.
21 23 Iyyar 38 L'Omer Leeba"n School 8:30 am Siyuum- Last Class 10 am Annual Membership Meeting	22 24 Iyyar 39 L'Omer	23 25 Iyyar 40 L'Omer	24 26 Iyyar 41 L'Omer	25 27 Iyyar 42 L'Omer	26 28 Iyyar 43 L'Omer §9:03PM/§8:00PM YOM YERUSHALAYIM 7:45 PM Shabbat Eve Service	27 29 Iyyar 44 L'Omer §9:04PM Bemidbar: Num. 2.1-3.39. Preceding Rosh Hodesh: I Samuel 20.18-42. 9:30 am Shaharit service - Nicholas Bradley celebrates becoming a Bar Mitzvah
28 1 Sivan 45 L'Omer ROSH HODESH Num. 28.1-15.	29 2 Sivan 46 L'Omer	30 3 Sivan 47 L'Omer	31 4 Sivan 48 L'Omer			

[i]Candle Lighting, §Observance End. Times are for Belle Mead, NJ



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The Newsletter of Jewish Community Center of Belle Mead

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Fulfilling the religious, educational and social needs of our Jewish community since 1982.

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