



**Rabbi Hillel's
Message**

February 2012 / 8 Shevat-6 Adar 5772

Rabbi Skolnik's Installation!

Sat. February 11 @7:30 pm at Rosen Plaza Hotel

There is a song that is sung all over Israeli schools around this time of year, the time of *Tu Bishvat*, the holiday in which we celebrate the birthday of the trees. The song goes as follows:

*Hashkeidiyah porachat
V'shemesh bah zorachat
Tziporim meirosh kol gag
M'vasrot et bo hechag*

*Tu Bishvat Higi'ah
Chag La'ilanot
Tu Bishvat Higi'ah
Chag La'ilanot*

In English:

The almond tree is blooming
And the sun is shining on it
Birds are chirping from every rooftop
Announcing the coming of the holiday

*Tu Bishvat is coming
A holiday for the trees
Tu Bishvat is coming
A holiday for the trees*

In Israel, the song is seasonally appropriate as the "winter" time is ending and spring is about to begin. Indeed in Israel at this time of year you can find trees blooming and the rainy season is set to end. Yet here in Florida, especially this year, it feels as though summer has basically never ended. Even as I write this article we are enjoying temperatures that easily reach 80 degrees on a daily basis. I do realize that for a seasoned Florida veteran this is probably quite cool. But for a new immigrant to this area, it feels like summer every day.

Although *Tu Bishvat* is quite clearly a very minor holiday on the calendar, for us it has the added significance of reminding us that there are people out there who do have more serious seasons, including a cold winter, and for whom the onset of warmer temperatures is exciting. And even though our winter has been a mild one, we too look forward to the beginning of spring and all the excitement that accompanies it.

Shabbat Services

February 3 & 4, 2012
Fri. 6:00 pm Tot Shabbat
7:30 pm Services
Sat. 9:30 am Services

February 10 & 11, 2012
Fri. 7:30 pm Services
Sat. 9:30 am Services

February 17 & 18, 2012
Fri 6:30 pm Tu Bishvat Dinner
Fri. 7:30 pm Services
Sat. 9:30 am Services

February 24 & 25, 2012
Fri. 7:30 pm Services
Sat. 9:30 am Services

Board of Directors' Elections

Sun. February 26 9— 1 pm

PLEASE VOTE

(continued on Pg 4)



President's Message

Michele Fischer

On February 29th, SOJC will hold elections to select our Board of Directors. We encourage everyone to come to SOJC between 9:00 am - 12:00 pm to cast your vote. Two of our current board members, Ellen Regen and Jules Gelade, will not be seeking re-election. Ellen and her family have always been involved in all SOJC events, from fundraisers, to Shabbat dinners, to PTA functions. We sincerely thank her for the time and support she gives to SOJC. Jules Gelade has been a voice of reason at our board meetings. Jules is using his artistic talents to produce "The Purim Schpiel". Jules, Karen, and Lon have been hard at work writing, dancing, and singing as they join with our SOJC theatrical troupe to produce this musical comedy. You will have the opportunity to see the fruits of their labor on Sunday, March 4 at 1:00 in the afternoon. Come and be prepared to chuckle, tap your feet, and be impressed by all the talent found at SOJC. Tickets are only \$5.00 per person, \$10.00 price fixed per family. Mark your calendars and get there early for a good seat. Be prepared to Laugh! You will be greatly entertained!

Our incoming board members will be chosen by you on February 29th. A list of Bios for each person running will be available immediately following the Rabbi's Installation Gala. I thank all of our board members, past, present and future for their unyielding dedication, hard work, and allegiance to SOJC.

The Board's focus has been to "build a family" at SOJC. A family that is committed to each other, our building, and our community. Every time you enter SOJC you can feel the warmth and comfort that comes from entering your "home". As we look forward to next year's goals, we will continue to work to strengthen our communal family bonds, and look to continue to grow our ever increasing membership. In addition, the Board will be focusing on ways to improve the building and infrastructure which serves as our home away from home. Our goal is to make SOJC a safe, warm, and caring place that all will feel proud to call home.

Please check the www.SOJC.org website for continual updates and the calendar page. We have a plethora of planned events, and you don't want to miss a single one!



Rabbi Hillel Skolnik's Installation
Southwest Orlando Jewish Congregation's
Biggest Fundraising Event of the Year
February 11, 2012
7:30 PM
Rosen Plaza Hotel
Orlando, FL

Thank you to Karen & Larry Goldman for donating the invitations for the Rabbi's Installation Dinner & Auction!

Thank you Vivian Kerstein for all your hard work on the Tribute Book!

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In that light I hope you will join SOJC to celebrate *Tu Bishvat* with us on Sunday February 12 at 11 a.m. at the Little Slice Ranch in Clermont, which also happens to be the home of our very own Cantor Doug and Dr. Maris Ramsay. It promises to be an exciting day for all of us and we hope to see you there.

Of course this year, the season of *Tu Bishvat* holds extra significance for me and for our entire community as we officially celebrate another new beginning, that being my installation as Rabbi of the Southwest Orlando Jewish Congregation. That celebration will take place Saturday evening February 11 at 7:30 PM at the Rosen Plaza. As much as I am looking forward to that very special occasion, I equally want to thank all those who have worked so hard to make the evening a success. Our synagogue could not function without the incredible work of so many volunteers and the joy that will be shared that night is a testament to that hard work. I hope to see you there as well.

Sincerely,
Rabbi Hillel Skolnik

ASK THE RABBI



The following question was submitted to the “Ask the Rabbi” column:

What do Jews believe about heaven and hell? And what do Jews believe happens after one dies?

As I said to the member who asked this, this is an incredibly complex question, which would be unfair to answer in such a short column. While it is difficult to define beliefs that *all* Jews share, there are ideas pertaining to the concept of a Jewish afterlife which many Jews can agree upon, despite there also being room for personal opinions. Our religion most certainly espouses the idea of an *olam haba*, of a “world to come”. As to exactly what that is, there is no clear answer. Whether it is a place in which bagels and lox is available for breakfast every morning, or where our favorite movies are showing every evening, or where we have the opportunity to interact with the divine is not clear. There is also the notion of *Gehenom*, or underworld, which is a stopping point on our journey to the *olam haba*, where those not yet worthy for entrance have the opportunity to repent and prepare themselves for *olam haba*. In the afterlife, we will be allowed entrance into this *olam haba*, though the size of our portion and the amount of goodness we experience there may vary. Ultimately Judaism teaches that our job on this Earth is to be a holy nation and use God’s commandments as our guide for living, and that if we truly lead a good life, we’ll receive our due portion in the world to come.

Rabbi Hillel

If you’re interested in continuing this discussion or have another question for this column, please feel free to be in touch with me either by phone – 407-239-5444 - or by email – rabbi@sojc.org



From Cantor Doug Ramsay

Education Station

This is the time of year when we begin the Grade Shabbatot. It is always a pleasure for me to share the bima with our wonderful students, and it is a great experience for them to daven as a class. We make every effort to make Grade Shabbatot correspond to Family Fridays for an extra special night for them and the congregation. Please check the SOJC website calendar for when your child's Grade Shabbat is and make every effort to clear your schedule to attend. As educators we count that experience as part of a student's education, so it should occupy the same priority in our lives.

Progress Reports from the first semester will be coming home in February. Please go over the teacher notes with your child, communicating your interest, involvement, and love for their accomplishments. If you have any questions regarding those notes, please contact the teacher for clarification. As always, I am open to discuss your child's progress as well.

Note that we do not have school on Feb 12 so that you can attend the 3rd Annual Tu B'Shvat Outing at Little Slice Ranch. Tu B'Shvat celebrates the birthday of the trees, and is a time for Jews to frolic in the outdoors as well as promoting the planting and learning about trees. If you have not attended before, DON'T MISS IT! If you have attended before there is no need for me to tell you what a great time the entire family will have. See the flyer in this Newsletter.

Remember that you can always download registration forms, volunteer forms, a School Calendar at a Glance page and view the most up-to-date Calendar at our website: www.sojc.org
Here is this month's schedule:

2/1/12	5:30pm	Religious School for Grades 3-7
2/3/12	6:00pm	Tot Shabbat
2/5/12	9:00am	Religious School for Grades K-7
2/8/12	5:30pm	Religious School for Grades 3-7 Tu B'Shvat
2/12/12	NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL-	Tu B'Shvat Outing at Little Slice Ranch
	11:00am	3 rd Annual Tu B'Shvat Outing at Little Slice Ranch (see flyer)
2/15/12	5:30pm	Religious School for Grades 3-7
2/17/12	6:30pm	Tu B'Shvat Family Friday Dinner (prepay RSVP required)
	7:30pm	6 th Grade Shabbat
2/19/12	9:00am	NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
2/22/12	5:30pm	Religious School for Grades 3-7
2/26/12	9:00am	Religious School for Grades K-7
2/29/12	5:30pm	Religious School for Grades 3-7
3/2/12	6:00pm	Tot Shabbat
3/4/12	9:00am	Religious School for Grades K-7
	12:15pm	lunch and refreshments at a nominal fee, show to follow
	1:00pm	PURIM SCHPIEL (see flyer)
3/7/12	5:30pm	NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL-Ta'anit Ester
3/11/12	9:00am	Religious School for Grades K-7
	11:00am	PURIM CARNIVAL



Cantorial Corps News by Cantor Doug

In January Rebecca Lubin, Mason Moncayo, Michael Walters, Shana Medel, Jacob Alvarado, and Lexi Walters all read Torah beautifully. Gabe Klavans, Rebecca Lubin, Michael Walters, Mason Moncayo, Jacob Alvarado, and Cubby Rubenstein led Shabbat services with confidence and skill.

We have specific dates and some specific itinerary items for our Cantorial Corps Trip to Charleston SC. We will be hosted by a Conservative synagogue for Shabbat, we will be visiting the historic attractions of the city in a Jewish light, and we will be visiting the 2nd oldest synagogue building in the US. There will be fun, sun, and camaraderie for this group of teens that will qualify for the trip.

If you feel strongly that we must support and nurture these future leaders of American Judaism, please donate generously to the Cantorial Corps whenever you can. All proceeds are used to ease the cost of the trip to the teens and their families. Thanks to synagogue member donations in the past, no teen has been denied a CC trip because of inability to pay. Let's keep that record going!

Here's our busy schedule:

Saturday, Feb 25	9:30am Cantorial Corps Shabbat
Sunday, Mar 18	12:30pm Cantorial Corps Meeting-Charleston Choose
Saturday, Mar 24	9:30am Cantorial Corps Shabbat
Monday, July 2-9	Cantorial Corps Trip to Charleston, SC

Am shalom v'shir,
Cantor Doug Ramsay

Torah Team News by Cantor Doug

This January Jules Gelade, Yvonne Bleecker, Henry Fried, and Lexi Walters all read Torah with inspiration. Mel Marsel, Ed Bromberg, and Jules Gelade all chanted Haftarah beautifully. Mel Marsel and Mary Roufa also assisted in leading services on Shabbat mornings.

These adult Laypeople are an inspiration to us all. Some of them have honed their skills all their lives, but most have come to their mastery of these skills during adulthood and continue to practice these skills in service to our synagogue. If you would like to learn, or want to get on the list to read Torah, Haftarah or to lead a service, or if you just want more info, e-mail me at cantor@sojc.org. It's a mitzvah, it's uplifting, and it's a wonderful experience!

Saturday, Mar 3 rd	9:30am Torah Team Shabbat
Saturday, Mar 24 th	9:30am Torah Team Shabbat



February 2012 Birthdays



- 2 Joseph Jamoom
- 3 Richard Waldor
- 4 Tom Nelson
- 8 Jeremy Havas
- 9 Ruth Gelfand
- 9 Mindy Gerber
- 20 Golde Finkler
- 25 Stephanie Glasser
- 25 Linda Nelson
- 26 Steven Nathan
- 28 Cynthia Posner
- 28 Rabbi Hillel Skolnik

Thank you

To Mel and Judy Marsel for donating the Challah every Shabbat morning!!

To Marian and Ed Bromberg for donating the food on Shabbat mornings!

To Michele and Jeff Fischer for donating the yummy desserts every Friday night.

.We appreciate your continued support and generosity!!

FEBRUARY 2012 YAHRZEIT MEMORIAL



Observance	Deceased	Observer
February 1, 2012	Nathan Beltzer	Laurence Beltzer
February 1, 2012	Alice Feldman	Marc Feldman
February 4, 2012	Alice Bender	Selma Schifter
February 10, 2012	Harold Krystal	Rosalind Beltzer
February 11, 2012	Kenneth Fried	Henry Fried
February 12, 2012	Diane Mishael	Robert Mischael
February 12, 2012	Nathan Kesten	Michael Kesten
February 15, 2012	Renee Bolusky	Ben Bolusky
February 16, 2012	Barnet Selman	Abby Pait
February 18, 2012	Sonia Drianski	Tamara Kaufman
February 19, 2012	Elinor Fishman	Scott Fishman
February 20, 2012	William Halpern	Miriam Lewis
February 21, 2012	Morton Miller	Modesai Miller
February 21, 2012	Celia Gordon	Anna Gordon
February 21, 2012	William Wolarsky	Marian Bromberg
February 24, 2012	Philip Rosen	Jeff Rosen
February 24, 2012	Rose Fagner	Holly Myerson
February 25, 2012	Celia Abramson	Bill Abramson
February 26, 2012	Lillian Uretsky	Doris Abramson
February 27, 2012	Evelyn Nathan	Cheryl Nathan-Weiner
February 27, 2012	Rachel Chusid	Andrew Snitz
February 29, 2012	Florence Kaplan	Zalman Kaplan
February 29, 2012	Robert Aaron Allen	Amy Karr
February 29, 2012	Berek Gelade	Jules Gelade

FEBRUARY 2012 ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Henry & Rebecca Fried
- 11 Andrew & Karin Snitz
- 14 David & Stephanie Glasser
- 14 Lenn & Holly Myerson
- 15 G. Ellis & Harlene Matza



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407-239-5444**



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SOJC Board of Directors



If you know of any unaffiliated Jews in the Southwest Orlando area, please give their name and number to the office at (407) 239-5444. We would like to invite and welcome them to attend our social events throughout the year.

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WWW.SOJC.ORG

Come visit our new website:

View the SOJC Calendar including all events and services Youth programs, Religious School dates, Family Programs... get it all!

- View our newsletters
- Download registration and membership forms
- Learn about USY, Kadima and the Cantorial Corps
- Read about our fantastic Religious School
- Contact us directly through the website
- More content and features are being added every week

Thank you to Jacob Weiner and Jeff Sikora for donating their time and efforts to bring our presence back to the web!