

HCRJ

APRIL 2016

HOUSTON CONGREGATION FOR REFORM JUDAISM



A Jewish State and Democracy

Our presidential primaries over the course of the past few months have been unseemly, vicious and at times undignified. The truth is that during election years, candidates on all sides often show sides of themselves which are rather disconcerting for the voting populous, but as our democratic system has proven again and again over the course of our history as a nation, this is all part of the process.

A democracy can be (and usually is) a messy process, especially when there are a lot of voices in the mix. This is, in part, because no society is homogeneous. There are countless issues and innumerable interests that need to find an advocate. Thus, one of the greatest challenges in any democratic system concerns ensuring pathways to inclusion.

During my recent trip to Israel, concerns regarding inclusion in Israel's democracy were evident throughout the country, but before I share some observations, it is important to point out that Israel is the only democracy in the entire Middle East. For over sixty years, power has changed hands with a vote in a voting booth and not through bloody revolutions in the streets. This is something that we, as a Jewish people, should take great pride in, and it is something that is grossly overlooked by those who are critical of Israel's politics and policies. In many ways, one of Israel's greatest attributes as a nation is its democracy.

It might be argued that a strong democracy goes hand in hand with a strong sense of security as a viable, stable state demands the peaceful coexistence of all its citizens. It is here that Israeli society at large and the Israeli democratic system in particular face some profound challenges.

On the one hand, Israel's democratic process strives to address the needs of all of its citizens. On the other hand, Israel is a Jewish State - which by definition is particularistic and exclusive. The newest poll by the PEW Research Center reflects this internal tension in the statistics it published in March of 2016.

In response to a question regarding Jews receiving preferential status in a Jewish State, virtually all Israeli Jews (98%) believe that all Jews around the world have the right to move to Israel if they wish. Furthermore, most Israeli Jews (79%) also say Jews deserve preferential treatment in Israel. (It is important to note that this survey question asked about preferential treatment in general and did not specify what kind of preference Jews should receive). These statistics point to a very challenging reality for non-Jewish minorities living as citizens of a Jewish State. Arab-Israeli Christians, Muslims and Druze are part of the voting population as well, and as Israel continues to evolve as a nation, it must be able to address these ever increasing voices of diversity.

During my weeklong conference in Israel last month, I chose to spend time exploring the needs and issues concerning a number of these underrepresented voices. I met with two Arab-Israeli Christian college students who were attending Hebrew University. I met with a young Arab Muslim chef and a Muslim businessman, who devotes his spare time to building bridges for interfaith cooperation and understanding among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Each of these individuals was an Israeli citizen; each was a voting member of Israeli society; and while each had a very different story to share, they were unanimous in feeling extremely marginalized in society.

These marginalized minorities pose a major challenge to the ability to balance the values of a democracy in the context of a Jewish State. As these and other minority voices continue to grow, Israel must find a way to respond. Hopefully, the response will lean toward inclusion, openness and mutual respect, for as messy as a democracy can be, it is far better than blood in the streets.

1st Annual Pancake Breakfast - Sunday, May 15

Join us for our 1st Annual Pancake Breakfast followed by the Annual Meeting on May 15. This breakfast is intended to bring our community together as we celebrate the culmination of a great year of programming. The breakfast will begin at 9:00AM and will be immediately followed by the Annual Meeting at 10:00AM.



We need you for a quorum. Every vote counts. Every idea matters.
Our community depends on the vision of its membership. Please join us to help shape the future of HCRJ.

April Calendar

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 6:00PM
6:15PM
7:15PM | Tot Shabbat
Family Dinner
Family Shabbat Services & Game Night |
| 3 | 9:00AM
10:30AM | Religious School Family Breakfast
Sunday Brunch with Rabbi Sam Karff |
| 4 | 10:00AM | Senior Chai Yoga Class |
| 6 | 1:00PM | Senior Chai Pastels Class |
| 7 | 6:30PM | Drinks and Hors d'Oeuvres, Buffet
Dinner, Casino Party, Music and Roast
Honoring the 10th Anniversary of Rabbi
Steve Gross |
| 8 | 7:15PM | Shabbat Service, Oneg and Toast
Honoring the 30th Anniversary of
Music Director, Jane Becker |
| 9 | 10:30AM | Bar Mitzvah of Benjamin Sweetland |
| 10 | 9:30AM | Religious School |
| 12 | 10:30AM
11:30AM
7:00PM | Senior Chai Passover Program
Knitzvah Group
Board Meeting |
| 13 | 1:00PM | Senior Chai Pastels Class |
| 15 | 7:15PM | Shabbat Services |
| 16 | 10:30AM | Bat Mitzvah of Alexa Tabin |
| 17 | 9:30AM | Religious School |
| 18 | 10:00AM | Senior Chai Yoga Class |
| 20 | 6:30PM | Passover Seder Set-Up and Matzo Balls
and Charoset Preparation |
| 22 | 6:00PM | Passover begins at sundown
HCRJ Passover Seder |
| 23 | 7:30AM or
12:00PM | Social Action: Helping Build a Houston
Habitat for Humanity House in 5th Ward |
| 24 | | No Religious School |
| 25 | 10:00AM | Senior Chai Yoga Class |
| 27 | 1:00PM | Senior Chai Pastels Class |
| 29 | 7:15PM | Shabbat Services (HOUSTY Shabbat Service) |

For Our Tots:



Tot Shabbat Services on April 1 at 6:00PM. Join us for Shabbat fun.

Family Shabbat April 1 at 6:15PM



Greek Feast: Chicken gyros, lemon potatoes, greek salad, macaroni and cheese and chicken nuggets.

Dinner is \$5 per person over 4 years old.

The April Family Shabbat Dinner is sponsored by Debbie Hurwitz and Family in memory of Donna Cameron and by Maria May.

Interest Group for April

Please attend two previously scheduled events:

Sunday, April 3, 10:30AM - Brunch with Rabbi Karff

Tuesday, April 12, 10:30AM - Senior Chai Passover Program led by Rabbi Gross



Social Action: Build a House with Us!

The Edward and Helen Oppenheimer Foundation is sponsoring a Houston Habitat for Humanity Build in the 5th Ward.

Date: Saturday, April 23

Times: We have two time slots to volunteer.

7:30AM - 11:00AM (Group 1)

11:00AM - 12:00PM (Lunch - Both Groups)

12:00PM - 2:30PM (Group 2)

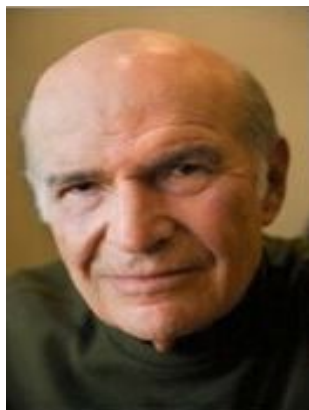
If you are interested in joining us, please contact Justin in the temple office at admin@hcrj.org.

Must be 16 years and older to participate. No construction experience is necessary. We will be joined by friends from different interfaith communities.

Save the Date: Friday, May 6

HCRJ's Teacher Appreciation Shabbat is on Friday, May 6. Join us in thanking our teachers for all of their hard work and dedication. Our 6th grade students will be leading the Shabbat Service.

SUNDAY BRUNCH WITH RABBI SAM KARFF Sunday, April 3, 10:30AM-12:00PM



Join us for this special congregational event and learn why Rabbi Sam Karff is praised as one of the most beloved and influential rabbis in the United States. The brunch is open to all, and the experience of learning from one of the finest rabbis in our generation promises to be an experience to remember. Interested in attending?

Please RSVP to Justin at 713-782-4162 or admin@hcrj.org by Friday, April 1.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Honors and Memorials Fund

In memory of Esther Shelby

From **Mitchell and Dawn Rubinstein**

From **Bill and Marcia Chaffin**

From **Dee Dee Dochen**

From **Ken and Sandy Kantor**

From **Michael and Madeleine Appel**

From **Ann Jerecka Burdine**

From **Jack and Dorothy Miller**

In memory of Donna Cameron

From **Danek Family**

From **Charlotte Robinson**

In honor of the birth of Logan Blake Wolfson

From **Ken and Sandy Kantor**

Special Music Fund

From **Mark Weisberg**

In memory of Donna Cameron

From **Michael and Madeleine Appel**

From **Ken and Sandy Kantor**

From **Bill and Marcia Chaffin**

From **Bruce and Carol Appelbaum**

From **Mike Malloy and Ruth Schlanger**

From **Cynthia Whitty**

From **Brad and Laura Frank**

From **Daniel and Melinda Neumann**

From **Stephen Melnick and Trucilla Sabatino**

General Operating Fund

From **Michael Boylan**

From **Paula Goldstein**

From **Ted and Maria Johnson**

From **Adam Weinstein**

In memory of Donna Cameron

From **Herb Fred**

Oneg Sponsorship

In Memory of Hyman and Helen Schwartz

From **Sylvia Brauer**

In Memory of Arleen Arone and Mimi Kravitz

From **Joel Kravitz**

Religious School Family Breakfast Sponsorship

In memory of Esther Shelby

From **Alan and Fran Brochstein**

Family Shabbat Dinner Sponsorship

From **Maria May**

In memory of Donna Cameron

From **Debbie Hurwitz and Family**

Arrangements Fund

In memory of Esther Shelby

From **Eddie and Trina Schukar**

Religious School Fund

In honor of the birth of Logan Blake Wolfson

From **Fran Podell**

In honor of Julie Jerden

From **Dolph Simon and Elizabeth Berry**

In honor of Fran Brochstein

From **Dolph Simon and Elizabeth Berry**

Senior Chai Program

From **Mark Weisberg**

From **Manon Shields**

Brag and Boast



Mazel Tov to Benjamin and Meredith Silverstein on the birth of their twins, Alexis Farrah and Madison Jordan, on February 23, 2016.



Mazel Tov to Benjamin Sweetland, son of Robert and Caren, who will become a Bar Mitzvah on April 9, 2016.



Mazel Tov to Alexa Tabin, daughter of Joshua and Melissa, who will become a Bat Mitzvah on April 16, 2016.



Mazel Tov to Dolph Simon, HCRJ 7th grade teacher, on being a recipient of the Irving L. Samuels Outstanding Teacher Award for Judaic Studies. Dolph will be honored at the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston's Annual Teacher Appreciation Evening on Monday, May 9.

Our heartfelt condolences...

On the death of Donna Cameron, who passed away on February 26, 2016.

On the death of Dorothy Swann, who passed away on March 23, 2016.

May the memory of our beloved ones always remain a blessing to those who were graced by their presence.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

A wonderful mitzvah opportunity awaits you!

Celebrate a life cycle event or honor a loved one by sponsoring a Friday Night Oneg (Sabbath reception), a Family Sabbath Dinner or a Religious School Breakfast. These events represent just some of the ways our community gathers in fellowship, and your sponsorship enables us to frame these occasions with additional beauty and joy. If you wish to sponsor a meal or a Sabbath reception, please let us know by filling out the form below and mailing it to the temple or by contacting the office at 713-782-4162 or admin@hcrj.org.

Sabbath Oneg —\$100.00

Religious School Breakfast—\$100.00

Family Shabbat Dinner —\$150.00

Contribution to Arrangements Fund—\$_____

In honor/memory of:

Date of event: _____

Your name: _____

April Oneg Sponsorships

April 1: Available.

April 8: Sponsored by the Sweetland Family in honor of Benjamin's Bar Mitzvah.

April 15: Sponsored by the Tabin Family in honor of Alexa's Bat Mitzvah.

April 29: Available.



Passover Seder Reservation Form **REGISTER ONLINE AT** <http://hcrj.org/event/hcrj-passover-seder>

Please complete and return the attached Reservation Form. **YOUR PAYMENT GUARANTEES YOUR RESERVATION. THE DEADLINE IS MONDAY, APRIL 11.** The Seder fills up fast!

If you have any questions, please contact Justin at 713-782-4162 or admin@hcrj.org.
Get your reservation in early. Seating is limited to Temple members and their families.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Adults \$25 (11 years +) ____ **Children** \$13 (6-10 years) ____ \$6 (2-5 years) ____ **FREE** (under 2) ____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ I am reserving seats for: # _____ of people.

Names of guests (including ages of children): _____

Please seat with: _____

We would love your help preparing for the Seder (check one):

- ☐ Preparing Matzo Balls and Charoset (April 20 - 6:30pm at HCRJ) ☐ Assistance with Dessert
☐ Set-Up (April 20 - 6:30pm at HCRJ) ☐ Clean Up (After Seder)

Please bring a bottle of wine to enjoy at the Seder.

RESERVATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 11, 2016.

I cannot attend but would like to help out. Enclosed is my additional monetary donation of \$ _____
Mail your completed form to HCRJ, 801 Bering Drive, Houston, TX 77057

Passover Food Drive

What is *Chametz*?

"*Chametz*" is any food product made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt, or their derivatives, which has leavened (risen). Our sages have determined that flour from any of these five grains that comes in contact with water or moisture will leaven, unless fully baked within eighteen minutes.

As we are commanded by the Torah, if a food contains even a trace of *chametz*, we don't eat it, we don't derive benefit from it, and we make sure not to have any of it in our possession for all the days of Passover.

If you are cleaning out your pantry for Passover, bring your food to HCRJ for our Passover food drive. Collections will be donated to the residents at Turning Point Center. Food donations will be collected through Friday, April 29.



Join Rabbi Gross for an evening of
steak, beer and scotch!
Sunday, April 17, 6:30-9:00PM

\$40 Per Person

This annual event brings men from all branches of
Judaism together for an evening of feasting and fun.
All Proceeds go to the JFS Passover Fund

Please register online by Tuesday, April 12:
<http://www.uosh.org/event/mansmockseder.html>

Reservations can also be made with a check made out
to United Orthodox Synagogues.

The Roast

Thursday, April 7

6:30PM

Sign-In, Drinks and
Hors d'Oeuvres

7:15PM

Dinner & Roast of Rabbi Gross

Music by Dee Dee Dochen
and Mike Kahn
Casino Party

Tickets Required

The Toast

Friday, April 8

7:15PM

Special Shabbat Service
Honoring Dr. Jane Becker

8:30PM

Special Oneg Honoring
Dr. Jane Becker

All Are Invited - Free Event

The Board of Trustees of HCRJ cordially
invites you to attend
Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism's



honoring
**The 10th Anniversary of
Rabbi Steve Gross (the Roast)**
and
**The 30th Anniversary of
Music Director, Jane Becker (the Toast)**

Thank you to our
Table Sponsors:

Stephen Breslauer

Larry and Katherine Buck

Rabbi Steve Gross

Herman Families

Bob and Johnita Lebow

Edward and Helen
Oppenheimer Foundation

Shelby Family

Weinstein and Forman
Families

HCRJ Happenings

It's been a busy month at HCRJ - check out pictures below from our
He-Brew Class and Social Action Committee

He-Brew - March 6



He-Brew Photos Courtesy of Kathy Zieben, Jewish-Herald Voice

Social Action - March 19



HCRJ's Social Action Committee volunteered at the Lyons
Avenue Renaissance Festival in Houston's 5th Ward



Through a variety of social, educational and recreational activities, the Senior Chai program is dedicated to enriching the lives of those 60 and above. This program is generously underwritten in memory of Mozelle and David Barg and Esther and Robert Shelby. All programs are open to the community. Please RSVP for events by calling the HCRJ office at 713-782-4162 or emailing admin@hcrj.org.

Passover Program

Tuesday, April 12, 10:30AM-11:30AM

\$5 Per Person

Expand your knowledge of Passover as Rabbi Steve Gross leads a discussion about the traditions of this holiday. Centered around a food tasting of traditional Passover foods, this program is designed for guests of all faiths. Through songs and stories, Rabbi Gross will engage those who have attended Seders for years and those who are just beginning to learn about this holiday. Senior Chai is collaborating with the Trotter Family YMCA on this event.

Glass Blowing Experience

Wednesday, May 25, 9:00AM-1:00PM

\$25 Per Person

Join us for this hands-on experience at Three Dimensional Visions glass blowing studio. The day will start with a live glass blowing demonstration and tour of the hot shop, show room and gallery space. Next, all participants will have the opportunity to create their own beautiful piece of blown glass. Space is limited for this unique experience - only 6 spots left!

Youth Activities

Family Shabbat Dinner, Service & Game Night!

Friday, April 1, 6:15PM

On the first Friday of every month, we meet to enjoy a delicious meal before services. Cost is \$5 per person over 4 years of age. After services, join us for some family game night fun. You'll find classic board games mixed with new current ones and there is sure to be games for all ages!

J-Serve 2016

Sunday, April 17

J-Serve 2016, the International Day of Jewish Youth Service (bringing tens of thousands of teens in 6th-12th grades around the world together for service) is a great opportunity for teens to make a difference in the world around them and pick up some end-of-school-year community service hours, too. To register for a project, please go here: <http://www.jservice.org/>

HOUSTY Shabbat Service

Friday, April 29, 7:15PM

Join HOUSTY (our high school youth group) and Jon Swann for our teen-led Shabbat service. Please join us in supporting the next generation of Jewish leaders at this special Shabbat service.

Purim Fun



Religious School Registration

Religious School registration for the 2016-2017 school year will begin soon. We will again be using an online registration process. Instructions on how to register for Religious School will be emailed to families on Monday, April 11. Register online at home or come visit us at the registration table at the Religious School Family Breakfast on May 1 or the final day of Religious School on May 15.

BIRTHDAYS

4/3 Shirley Marks
 4/4 Ann Lerner
 4/4 Todd Mogil
 4/5 Dan Medford
 4/7 Melvin Gross
 4/8 Steve Hershkowitz
 4/9 David Flory
 4/11 Martha Stelly
 4/12 Justin Deutsch
 4/13 Samuel Marazzo
 4/14 Larry Davis
 4/14 Lauren Eagle
 4/14 Michelle Gross
 4/15 Madeline Podorzer
 4/16 Steve Gross
 4/17 Karen Jameson
 4/17 Michael Tucker
 4/19 Pearl Goldman
 4/21 Mitchell Rubinstein
 4/23 Daniel Gollins
 4/24 Larry Lipshultz
 4/25 Jonathan Kaplow
 4/25 Bruce Shelby
 4/26 Lesley Fox
 4/26 Debra Hurwitz
 4/27 Johnita Lebow
 4/27 Madeleine Appel
 4/28 Marty Gross
 4/28 Joan Helfgott
 4/29 Betty Mae Dante
 4/29 Richard Hudson
 4/30 Joel Androphy
 4/30 Barbara Brownstein
 4/30 William Getschow

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR KIDS

4/2 Camil Ferguson
 4/2 Daniel Marglous
 4/2 Avram Plager
 4/3 Samuel McGuire
 4/6 Sage Goldman
 4/11 Noah Hammerman
 4/12 Drew Beckelman
 4/15 Lee Lazear
 4/17 Ruth Abramczyk
 4/17 Flint Goldman
 4/19 Joshua Sweetland
 4/20 Frankie Berko
 4/21 Brandon Gomel
 4/21 Anna Sucec
 4/21 Alexa Tabin
 4/22 Benjamin Sweetland
 4/25 Chase Aden
 4/25 Alex Lewis
 4/25 Sara Plager
 4/26 Blake Jameson
 4/27 Nadine Rosenthal
 4/28 Thames Lerner
 4/29 Brandon Kamin

ANNIVERSARIES

4/1 Brian & Cheryl Fielkow
 4/4 Gordon & Lesley Fox
 4/4 Ted Wedel & Julie Levin
 4/9 Brad & Deborah Sondock
 4/12 Ronald & Randi Schramm
 4/12 Bruce & Laura Shelby
 4/14 Jon & Dina Glasser
 4/15 Alan & Fran C. Brochstein
 4/18 Waju Syed & Laura Sheinkopf
 4/19 Steve Hershkowitz & Hilary Unger
 4/20 Eric & Melanie Marglous
 4/24 Don & Anne Graubart
 4/28 Elliot Evans & Emmie Chang

YARZEITS

4/1 Sally Nagel
 4/1 Lenora Silberman
 4/3 Pesche Fred
 4/3 Nathan Kantor
 4/3 Susan Weil
 4/4 Philip Gary Lusky
 4/4 Cecile Ritzwoller
 4/4 Phyllis Rossenblum
 4/6 Pamela Warner
 4/7 Phil Berman
 4/8 Jake Mesinger
 4/10 Leonard Androphy
 4/11 Nettie More
 4/11 John Soifer
 4/12 Dawn Gross
 4/12 Sherman Robinson
 4/14 Sonia Simpson
 4/15 Simon Frank
 4/15 I.J. Shapiro
 4/15 Joe Polunsky
 4/16 May Lefkowitz
 4/16 Mildred Popper
 4/17 Mary Brochstein
 4/18 Lester Baron
 4/18 Rosemarie Joseph
 4/19 Florence Kamber
 4/19 Milton Lipschutz
 4/19 Ann Nelkin
 4/19 Henry Nelkin
 4/19 Norton Nelkin
 4/20 Sam Botzman
 4/20 Gladys Dante
 4/24 Lou Marks
 4/25 Ralph Herman
 4/25 Dina Steinberg
 4/25 Bettiruth Susholtz
 4/26 Patricia Goss
 4/26 Selma Muslin
 4/27 Adrien Kahn
 4/27 David Gross
 4/27 John Higginbotham
 4/29 Harry Folloder

You are invited to join HCRJ
for our monthly



April 1, 2016

Dinner 6:15 pm
Sabbath Services 7:15 pm

\$5.00 per person

Please feel free to bring a side dish to show off your culinary talents.

April Family Dinner

Chicken gyros, lemon potatoes, greek salad,
macaroni and cheese and chicken nuggets

Steven M. Gross, Senior Rabbi
rabbigross@hcrj.org

Rochelle Sinderbrand, Bookkeeper
RochelleS@hcrj.org

Michael P. LeBurkien, Rabbi Emeritus
rabbileburkien@sbcglobal.net (private email)

Julie Barry, President

Melissa Wolfson, Executive Director
hcrj@hcrj.org

Bruce Shelby, Vice President

Hilary Kamin, Director of Education
hilaryk@hcrj.org

Debby Jones, Secretary

Justin Deutsch, Administrative Assistant
admin@hcrj.org

Sandy Kantor, Treasurer

Michelle Renfrow, Director of Youth Engagement
hcrjyouth@hcrj.org

Madeleine Appel, Past President

Darlene Medford, Membership Chair

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