

HCRJ

HOUSTON CONGREGATION FOR REFORM JUDAISM

Living What We Learn

I recently read an essay written by my son, Simon, who is currently 15 years old. The paper was on the pursuit of happiness, and I was pleasantly surprised that one of his primary arguments was crafted around something he had learned in Sunday school. The teaching had come from his 7th grade Sunday school teacher, Dolph Simon, who said, "In order to make a change for the better, changing your attitude in order to change your behavior will not work. You have to change your behavior to change your attitude."

As I read this essay, my heart swelled with pride. I was proud of Simon who found a way to apply what he was learning in Sunday school to his everyday life, and I was Sunday school toacher. Delph, who consistently inspires our students to apply what

proud of Simon's Sunday school teacher, Dolph, who consistently inspires our students to apply what they learn to how they live.

Reading this small part of Simon's essay reminded me that Sunday school should not exist in isolation. The hope is that our children will apply the values they learn in class to making this world a better place. This hope is embedded in our parenting strategies as well, as our responsibility to transmit our faith to the next generation can, at times, be very challenging.

As Jewish parents, we try our best to provide our children with ways to weave their Jewish values into the fabric of life in a secular world. We want our children to be proud and loyal to their heritage, but when the demands and rhythms of Jewish life compete with those of secular life, major challenges arise.

One of the many ways to approach these growing challenges is to model, through our own behaviors, the values we hope our children will embrace. We often tell our children, "Do what I do and not what I say," and the same should be true as we seek to transmit the values and customs of our faith. In Sunday school and at home, we can talk a good talk about our Judaism, but if our children do not see us applying our Judaism to everyday life, our words simply become nods to the past. However, if we are truly committed to transferring the lessons of our heritage from generation to generation, then each of us needs to find ways to inspire our children (and others) to live what they learn.

In just a few weeks, Jews around the world will gather around their Seder tables in celebration of Passover. Through the rituals and the rites of the Seder meal, we all become students of our faith as values concerning human freedoms and issues around social justice are woven into the fabric of the Passover feast. As we re-enact the story of our ancestral Exodus from Egypt from year to year, we

HCRJ Family Bingo



For all ages! Prizes for bingo winners! Sunday, April 7 at 12:00PM

\$8 per person in advance, \$12 at the door Includes 3 bingo cards for 10 games, pizza and drinks

Anril Calendar

| April Calendar | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Yoga |
| 2 | 12:00 PM | Senior Chai Men's Group |
| 3 | 10:00 AM 1:00 PM | Senior Chai Mah Jongg Senior Chai Colored Pencils |
| 4 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Bridge Group |
| 5 | 6:00 PM 6:15 PM 7:15 PM | Tot Shabbat Family Dinner Family Shabbat |
| 6 | 10:00 AM 6:00 PM | Cars, Coffee and Conversation Parents Night Out (Babysitting Event) |
| 7 | 9:00 AM 12:00 PM | Religious School Family Breakfast Family BINGO |
| 8 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Yoga |
| 9 | 7:00 PM | Board Meeting |
| 10 | 10:00 AM 1:00 PM | Senior Chai Mah Jongg Senior Chai Colored Pencils |
| 11 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Bridge Group |
| 12 | 7:15 PM | Shabbat Services |
| 13 | 5:00 PM 7:00 PM | Bat Mitzvah of Sloan Brinker Havdallah in the Heights |
| 14 | 9:30 AM 2:00 PM | Religious School Film Screening: <i>Bal Ej—The Hidden Jews</i> of <i>Ethiopia</i> |
| 15 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Yoga |
| 17 | 10:00 AM 10:30 AM | Senior Chai Mah Jongg Interest Group with Hadas Levy |
| 18 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Bridge Group |
| 19 | 6:00 PM | HCRJ Passover Seder (No Shabbat Services) |
| 21 | | NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL |
| 22 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Yoga |
| 24 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Mah Jongg |
| 25 | 10:00 AM | Senior Chai Bridge Group |
| 26 | 7:15 PM | Shabbat Services |
| 27 | 9:00 AM | Social Action Project: Heights Interfaith Ministries |
| 28 | 9:30 AM 1:30 PM | Religious School Mah Jongg Game Day |

Teacher Appreciation and Senior Send-Off Save the Date: May

EACHER APPRECIATION

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New this year: for our annual teacher appreciation service we will highlight our high school seniors who will lead the Shabbat service and share words that highlight their mentors.

Family Shabbat Family Shabbat: April 5

Tot Shabbat: 6:00PM

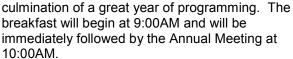
Dinner: 6:15PM

Family Services: 7:15PM

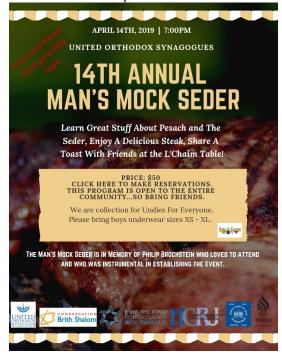


Annual Pancake Breakfast May 19, 9:00AM

Join us for our 4th Annual Pancake Breakfast followed by the Annual Meeting as we celebrate the



We need you for a quorum. Every vote counts. Every idea matters. Our community depends on the vision of its membership.







ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Honors and Memorials Fund

In memory of Shirley Sirota

From Knitzvah Group

From Madeleine and Michael Appel

From Bob and Johnita Lebow

From Ellie and Len Chaikind

From Fanet Soifer

From Donna Siegel

In memory of Michael Chaikind

From Ellie and Len Chaikind

In honor of Leslie Lerner's 50th Birthday

From Marvin and Ann Lerner

In memory of Harriet Bern

From Fran Podell

In memory of Dr. Herb Fred

From Bob and Johnita Lebow

In memory of Morris Schultz, Bennett "Buddy" Kalmans, Sam Spain, Judy Chesner, Myra Kaplan, Maury Magids, Kristin Gavrilla, Babe Lerner, Hilda Frank, Rita Kaplan, A. Pat Samuels and Lester H. Smith

From Allan and Miriam Graber

In memory of Sherman Robinson

From Charlotte and Kathy Robinson

In honor of the 50th anniversary of Dr. and Mrs. Edward Hurwitz

From Rochelle Skibell and Family

In honor of Justin Deutsch's birthday

From Melinda Neumann and Gale Paschkes

Special Music Fund

In honor of Michael Kahn's 60th birthday

From Julie and Chip Oudin

From Paul and Fredi Franks

From Ellen Brodsky Gaber

From Susan and Stephen Bishop

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

From Harriet and Bruce Spain

From Theresa Velez

In honor of Mike and Gary Nathanson's 49th anniversary

From Mel and Nancy Gross

In honor of the marriage of Ryan Holliday and Mary Catherine Jackson

From Rabbi Dan and Loren Gordon

In memory of Betty Sapsowitz

From Bruce and Laura Shelby

General Operating Fund

From Ted and Maria Johnson

Oneg Sponsorship

From Ted and Maria Johnson

In appreciation of HCRJ's culture of philanthropy

From Marc and Betsy Levinson

In honor of their 50th anniversary

From Patti and Ed Hurwitz

Family Shabbat/Breakfast Sponsorship

In honor of Coby McElroy's birthday

From Gary and Michael Nathanson

In honor of Gary Nathanson's birthday

From Gary and Michael Nathanson

Torah Tots

In honor of Carol Danek's birthday and the 41st anniversary of Mel and Nancy Gross

From Gary and Michael Nathanson

Sabbath Oneg Sponsorships 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 contact the temple at least two weeks prior to the event. Thank you for your ongoing support of HCRJ.

- □ Sabbath Oneg —\$100.00
- □ Religious School Breakfast—\$100.00
- □ Family Shabbat Dinner —\$150.00
- □ Contribution to Arrangements Fund

April Oneg Sponsorships

April 5: Sponsored by Marc and Betsy Levinson in honor of

HCRJ's culture of philanthropy

April 12: Sponsored by the Brinker Family in honor of Sloan

Brinker's Bat Mitzvah

Brag and Boast

Mazel Tov to Sloan Brinker, daughter of Dr. Mark and Newie Brinker, who will become a Bat Mitzvah on



HCRJ religious school students on the Confirmation retreat at the Landa Ranch in Schulenberg, TX



Boomer's and Friends Group at Kasra Persian Grill on March 23.

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ROASTED PERFECTION

The Blessings of a Perfect Brew

At every event and celebration we have at HCRJ, coffee is served. It is the single most popular beverage we have, and because of the incredible generosity of Avi Katz, one of Houston's premier coffee roasters, every cup of coffee we serve is delicious. Avi provides HCRJ with premium coffee free of charge as a gift from his heart. It is a gift that blesses us every time we gather. Here is a little information about the coffee we so enjoy!

Katz Coffee is globally conscious company. Katz is part of a "fair trade" movement, which purchases premium goods directly from farmers at a pre-determined fair price. So Katz Coffee is not only delicious, it's a mitzvah to

drink it! Katz Coffee also seeks to give back to the community in every way it can, weaving a taste of philanthropy into every cup. HCRJ has been the recipient of Avi Katz's generosity! Thank you Avi and to the entire Katz Coffee organization for the blessings of a perfect brew.

Join us for the SPRING



Coffee & Conversation

Saturday, April 6 from 10 am to 12 noon

Car detailing demo at 11 am **HCRJ Parking Lot**

801 Bering, Houston, TX

FREE and open to the entire community! RSVP to Justin@hcrj.org to reserve a spot to show your special car

Cars, Coffee & Conversation is sponsored by:











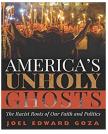




The Leben Family have donated a Little Free Library to HCRJ in honor of their son's Scott and Brett's B'nai Mitzvah. A Little Free Library is a free book exchange. The library is located in the garden just outside of the entryway.

Book Discussion

America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics By Joel Goza Sunday, May 5 at 2:30pm



Join us for our next book discussion in May at HCRJ! Writer, preacher and activist, the Reverend Joel Goza, will be with us to discuss his recently-released book, America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics.

This book examines the DNA of the ideologies that shape our nation, ideologies that are as American as apple pie but that too often justify and perpetuate racist ideas and racial inequalities. MLK challenged us to investigate the "ideational roots of race hate" and

Ghosts does just that. This book explores a philosophical "trinity"—Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Adam Smith—whose works collectively helped to institutionalize, imagine, and ingrain racist ideologies into the hearts and minds of the American people.

Join us for an inspiring afternoon with Rev. Goza as we explore ways to nurture our hopes and desires for a faith and politics marked by mercy, justice, and equity. In addition to being an inspiring speaker and brilliant thinker, Rev. Goza is a very dear friend of Rabbi Gross.

Copies of the book are \$25 and will be available for purchase from the temple office starting on Wednesday, April 3.



Please join us for a progressive dinner on May 4. Travel to one home for appetizers and then to the next for dinner, meeting two different groups of HCRJ congregants. Our evening will conclude with dessert at the temple. No cost to attend. Adults only. Attire is casual chic.

Sign up to participate at: www.hcrj.org/events/progressivedinner

The success of this event is dependent on finding families to host dinner or appetizers throughout the city. For more information and to sign up as a host, visit:

www.hcrj.org/events/progressivedinnerhost



The Senior Chai program is dedicated to enriching the lives of those 60 and above. Your input is valuable to us in shaping a calendar of events that meet your interests, so please send any programming ideas to hcrj@hcrj.org. This program is underwritten by the Barg and Shelby families in memory of David & Mozelle Barg and Robert & Esther Shelby. Please RSVP for all Senior Chai programs to Melissa Wolfson at hcrj@hcrj.org.

Yoga Class

Mondays, 10:00AM to 11:15AM, No cost to attend

Taught by Suzy Shapiro, a certified yoga instructor, this class will focus on strength and stamina, balance and flexibility, and a new sense of well-being.



Mah Jongg

Wednesdays,10:00AM to 12:00PM, No cost to attend

Join us for a weekly game of mah jongg! Coffee and light snacks are served. Instruction provided on request.

60+ Men's Group

April 2 at 12:00, Lunch will be served, no cost to attend

Men 60+ are invited for lunch and conversation. A significant volume of recent literature has made us aware that close friendships often contribute to a happier more fulfilling life. Led by Jay Schaffer, the hope of this group is to create an environment where men can freely express themselves and close friendships are formed. As in Vegas, our creedo will be "what's said in the men's group, stays in the men's group?!

Watercolor Wednesdays

Wednesdays, May 1-June 5, 1:00PM to 3:00PM

Artist Noelle Shawa will start teaching another series of our watercolor class on Wednesday, May 1. This 6-week class is suitable for those who have never painted before and for those who have some

experience.

Israeli Dancing

Interest Group

Wednesday, April 17 at 10:30AM

Join us as Hadas Levy presents: "Israel's Soundtrack"! We'll discover the stories of Israel's history through her music and songs following the timeline from 1948 to nowadays and explore how Israeli music and society has changed along the years. Hadas is the new Israeli Shlicha (emissary) for the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston. Hadas was born in Haifa, Israel, and grew up in a small town in Yzrael Valley. She served the IDF as an educational officer in the Lebanon border, teaching the soldiers about the importance and meaning of IDF's mission in the northern border, along with Israel's history. After finishing her BA in education and Israel state studies, and working for non-profits in Israel, Hadas decided to move to Houston in the hope that she will deepen the connections between Israel and The Houston Jewish Community. Please RSVP to Justin at 713-782-4162 or Justin@hcri.org.

Parents Night Out: Babysitting Event at HCRJ

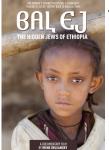
Saturday, April 6, 6:00PM to 10:00PM Fee: Donations only, all funds will go to HCRJ's Good Works Fund



The 7th Grade class of HCRJ is offering babysitting to give you a night out on Saturday, April 6. They are performing a class mitzvah project to benefit the Montrose Grace Place, a homeless retreat for 13 - 21 year-old

youths. Help them help our city and take 4 hours off for dinner and a movie or some well deserved quite time!

We will play games, watch movies, eat ice cream, and celebrate kid time! Great fun is guaranteed for all! Please call Dolph Simon, 7th grade teacher, with questions, 713.259.9607



Film Screening: Bal Ej: The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia

Sunday, April 14 at 2:00PM

Join us for our April film screening at HCRJ! Following a hundred-year-old account of the prominent Jewish Polish scholar Jacque Faitlovich, the film-maker travels to discover and explore a sect of secret Jews in Ethiopia. Named Bal Ej, craftsmen, for their artisan skills, they have been persecuted by their Orthodox Christian neighbors who slandered them as evil-eyed and hyena-people and have been deprived of the basic rights such as ownership of land, the reason for adopting crafts such as pottery, weaving and iron smithery. Fearing persecutions, they appear Christians outwardly, and practice Judaism in strict secrecy. The synagogues are hidden deep in the mountains and had never before been visited by strangers. Some of their ancient traditions trace back to biblical times and have been completely forgotten by the rest of the world. Bal Ej: The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia lifts the curtains of hundreds of years and reveals the history, customs and culture of this remarkable community to the world.

Following the screening, the film's director, Irene Orleansky, will join us live from Israel via Skype. Born in Ukraine in a family of holocaust survivors from Poland and grown up in Russia, Irene is an Israeli musician, producer, ethnographer and film maker. Irene dedicated the last few years to exploring culture, music and traditions of remote Jewish communities in Asia and Africa.



HCRJ Passover Seder Friday, April 19 at 6:00PM

HCRJ's annual first night Passover Seder is planned for Friday, April 19. The Seder is open to HCRJ members and their families. Please register early to ensure your spot. Space is limited.

Reservations and payment can be made online at http://hcrj.org/event/hcrjpassoverseder/

Upcoming Social Action Projects

Heights Interfaith Ministries

Saturday, April 27, 9:00AM to 12:00PM

Join us for our April Social Action project! We'll be volunteering at Heights Interfaith Ministries, a food pantry which provides generous and nutritious meals to families in all zip codes of Houston. It is a "Client Choice" Pantry. Heights Interfaith Ministries clients choose their own food. Meat, eggs, produce and toiletries are provided with each order.

HCRJ volunteers will help HIM clients select their groceries in the food pantry,



Ministries

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston Operation IMpact

Saturday, May 4, 11am

Do you want to make an *impact*? Then, volunteer with us at Operation IMpact! This is a special project to help prepare homebound seniors across our community for Hurricane Season. We'll meet at HCRJ, and then head out to deliver five days' worth of shelf-stable meals and bottled water, as well as emergency information and supplies, to Meals on Wheels clients, some of the most vulnerable members of our community. This will ensure they are prepared in case IM's regular deliveries are interrupted by a storm. This



For Spring Break, many of our students attended a Kids' Meals social action project. As shown below, the students found the project to be rewarding and fun. We are so proud of those who attended!

It was hard work but I feel happy. ~Richard Kabin
I helped to save children by giving them food. ~Riley Garcia
It felt good to help these kids in need. ~Aiden Gross
Helping many people with just a small portion of our time.
~Robby Salomon

Nice working with and nice meeting Mr. Mills (HCRJ congregant) and nice knowing the packets will help lots of kids. $^{\sim}$ Jake Schnur

Fun to see all of us come together to make a difference, this is what it's all about! ~Justin Deutsch

Refreshing way to begin the morning and to watch our students teamwork to help our city! ~Fran Brochstein

KIDS' BIRTHDAYS BIRTHDAYS YARZEITS 4/1 AJ Deutsch 4/3 Shirley Marks 4/1 Lenora Silberman 4/2 Daniel Marglous 4/4 Ann Lerner 4/1 Sally Nagel 4/2 Camil Ferguson 4/4 Todd Mogil 4/3 Mae Friedman 4/2 Leo Zamore 4/5 Dan Medford 4/3 Susan Weil 4/3 Samuel McGuire 4/5 Melinda Grunewald 4/3 Nathan Kantor 4/5 Ethan Pearcy 4/7 Melvin Gross 4/4 Paul Segal 4/5 Elliana Pearcy 4/11 Gary Nathanson 4/4 Cecile Ritzwoller 4/6 Sage Goldman 4/11 Martha Stelly 4/4 Phyllis Rossenblum Samuel Lieberman 4/12 Justin Deutsch 4/4 Philip Gary Lusky 4/10 Ari Zamore 4/13 Samuel Marazzo 4/6 Bernard Wise 4/11 Noah Hammerman 4/14 Lauren Eagle 4/6 Pamela Warner 4/12 Drew Beckelman 4/14 Larry Davis 4/7 Mildred Kent 4/13 Ben Newman 4/15 Madeline Podorzer 4/7 Marsha Solomon 4/16 Elliott Lazar 4/16 Michael Mills 4/8 Jake Mesinger 4/17 Nicole Deutsch 4/16 Steve Gross 4/10 Leonard Androphy 4/17 Ruth Abramczyk 4/17 Karen Jameson 4/11 Nettie More 4/17 Sara Deutsch 4/17 Michael Tucker 4/11 John Soifer Flint Goldman 4/17 4/19 Pearl Goldman 4/12 Dawn Gross 4/19 Joshua Sweetland 4/21 Mitchell Rubinstein 4/12 Sherman Robinson 4/20 Franklin Berko 4/14 Bernice Zoloto 4/23 Everett Crumley 4/20 Stephen Deutsch 4/23 Daniel Gollins 4/14 Sonia Simpson 4/21 Alexa Tabin 4/24 Larry Lipshultz 4/14 Nathan Roth 4/21 **Brandon Gomel** 4/15 Simon Frank 4/25 Bruce Shelby 4/21 Anna Sucec 4/26 David Wise 4/15 I.J. Shapiro 4/22 Benjamin Sweetland 4/26 Debra Hurwitz 4/15 Joe Polunsky 4/23 Abigail Lazar 4/26 Lesley Fox 4/16 Mildred Popper 4/26 Blake Jameson 4/27 Madeleine Appel 4/16 May Lefkowitz 4/27 Henry Kramer 4/27 Johnita Lebow 4/17 Mary Brochstein Thames Lerner 4/28 4/28 Marty Gross 4/18 Lynne Smith 4/28 Sloan Brinker 4/28 Joan Helfgott 4/18 Rosemarie Joseph 4/29 Brandon Kamin 4/29 Richard Hudson 4/18 Lester Baron 4/30 Joel Androphy **ANNIVERSARIES** 4/19 Henry Nelkin 4/19 Milton Lipschutz Brian & Cheryl Fielkow 4/19 Ann Nelkin **Memorial Plaques** 4/4 Ted Wedel & Julie Levin 4/19 Norton Nelkin and Bricks 4/4 Gordon & Lesley Fox 4/19 Florence Kamber 4/9 Brad & Deborah Sondock 4/20 Sam Botzman Remember your loved ones 4/10 David & Adriana Bain 4/20 Fannie Melcer with a plaque on the 4/12 Bruce & Laura Shelby 4/20 Morris Melcer Memorial Wall or purchase 4/12 Ronald & Randi Schramm 4/21 Rose Appelbaum a brick for the patio. 4/15 Alan & Fran C. Brochstein 4/21 Henry Shanoff Memorial Wall plaques can 4/18 Waju Syed & Laura Sheinkopf 4/22 Joseph Carton be purchased for \$500 and 4/20 Eric & Melanie Marglous 4/24 Lou Marks patio bricks for \$250. 4/24 Don & Anne Graubart 4/24 Andrea Rosenblum 4/25 Bettiruth Susholtz To purchase a plaque or 4/25 Dina Steinberg brick visit 4/25 Ralph Herman www.hcrj.org/ 4/26 Patricia Goss memorialplaques 4/26 Selma Muslin

4/27 John Higginbotham

4/27 David Gross4/27 Adrien Kahn4/28 Peggy Weiser4/30 Harry Graber



You are invited to join HCRJ for our monthly



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

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

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

Melissa Wolfson, Executive Director hcrj@hcrj.org

Fran C. Brochstein, Interim Director of Education fran@hcrj.org

Michael Mason, Director of Lifelong Learning mike@hcrj.org

Justin Deutsch, Program Coordinator admin@hcrj.org

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

Marna Meyer, High School Principal marna@hcrj.org

April Family Shabbat Menu

Roasted chicken, vegetables, salad, mac-n-cheese and chicken nuggets

Adam Weinstein, President

Adam Forman, Vice President

Jaime Perkins, Secretary

Debbie Barrash, Treasurer

Bruce Shelby, Past President

Rochelle Sinderbrand, Bookkeeper rochelles@hcrj.org

Jaime Perkins, Membership Chair

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Newsletter articles, suggestions for articles and corrections are welcome. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month.