

# HCRJ

**MARCH 2018** 

### **HOUSTON CONGREGATION FOR REFORM JUDAISM**



#### Purim & Passover: Two Models for Human Redemption

This year, Purim and Passover both fall in the month of March, which invites a rare opportunity to discuss these holidays together in the same bulletin article. It is interesting to note that the proximity of these holidays on the Jewish calendar was very deliberate from the start. Amidst a long discussion concerning the celebration of Purim, the Talmud argues (Megillah 6b) that it is preferable to juxtapose the redemption story found in the Book of Esther with the redemption story found in of the Book of Exodus.

In other words, our sages sought to conceptually link the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt and the salvation of the Jewish people from the genocidal designs of Haman by placing the celebrations of each of these events in close proximity on the Jewish calendar. Knowing what we know about each of these biblical stories and how we celebrate them, it would be natural to question why the sages structured the calendar to ensure such proximity.

As we consider Passover and Purim, the mood and celebration of each could not be more different. Passover is a Torah-based holiday whose fundamental observances are rooted in Torah law; Purim is a rabbinic holiday whose laws and customs are grounded in the rabbinic tradition. Passover is a week-long festival that demands tremendous preparation and an ongoing focus on the meaning and value of the themes of the season; Purim is a single day of fun and folly.

Theologically, these two holidays present us with very different messages as well. God is everpresent in the story of the Exodus, while the Book of Esther is the only book in the entire Bible that does mention God at all. Furthermore, each story presents a very different kind of path to redemption. The redemption celebrated on Passover is completely passive, as the miracles of the burning bush, the ten plagues, and the splitting of the sea constitute the primary forces that lead to our salvation as a people.

In stark contrast, the redemption which takes place in the story of Purim is a human endeavor led by Esther and Mordechai, who take full control of their own destiny and the destiny of the Jewish people. In this less "mythical" version of salvation, Esther and Mordechai utilized their wisdom, ingenuity and knowledge of human nature to shape the outcome of Jewish history.

Thus, in their narrative recounting and ritual observances, Passover and Purim reflect two very different models of salvation. One comes from a power beyond us. The other comes from a power within us.

Both of these concepts of salvation and redemption are core to who are as Jews. Each provides a model for faith and action and leads to the sense of renewal associated with the coming of spring.

#### **March Calendar**

1	5:45 PM	Adult Beginning Hebrew Reading Class
2	6:00 PM 6:15 PM 7:15 PM	Tot Shabbat Family Shabbat Dinner Family Shabbat Services/Purim Roundup
4	9:00 AM 9:30 AM 10:00 AM	Religious School Family Breakfast Religious School Parenting Program with Rabbi Gross
5	9:00 AM 10:00 AM	Golf Tournament Senior Chai Yoga
7	10:00 AM 1:00 PM 7:00 PM	Senior Chai Mah Jong Senior Chai Watercolor Class Marriage and Merlot
8	5:45 PM	Adult Beginning Hebrew Reading Class
9	7:15 PM	Mostly Music Shabbat Services
11	9:30 AM 10:30 AM 7:00 PM	Religious School Book Discussion: <i>To Look a Nazi in the Eye</i> Jews of Greece Presentation
12	10:00 AM	Senior Chai Yoga
13	11:30 AM	Knitzvah Group
14	10:00 AM	Senior Chai Mah Jong
15	10:00 AM	Undies for Everyone Social Action Project
16	7:15 PM	Shabbat Services
18	10:45 AM	The Beacon Social Action Project
19	10:00 AM	Senior Chai Yoga
21	10:00 AM	Senior Chai Mah Jong Class
23	7:15 PM	Shabbat Services
25	9:30 AM 11:30 AM	Religious School Bark Mitzvah
26	10:00 AM	Senior Chai Yoga
27	11:30 AM	Knitzvah Group
28	10:00 AM 10:30 AM	Senior Chai Mah Jong Interest Group with Rabbi Gross
30	6:00 PM	HCRJ Passover Seder

#### Family Shabbat March 2 at 6:15PM

Menu: Chili, vegetables, Mac n cheese, nuggets



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



#### **For Our Tots:**

Tot Shabbat Services on March 2 at 6:00PM. Join us for Shabbat fun.

### CANCELLED: PURIM PASTRY PAIRINGS

All K-5 Families: an evening of free babysitting! Saturday, April 15, 6:00 to 11:00PM

Who: Boys and Girls, Grades K-5

What: Babysitting! Movies! Games! Snacks!

Where: HCRJ

**Cost:** Donations only—all donation go to HCRJ's Good Works Fund **Chaperoned by:** Dolph Simon







HCRJ Annual Fundraiser Donations			
Name	<u></u>		
Phone Email			
I would like to make a donation in the amount of:	<del> </del>		
Payments can be made at www.hcrj.org/hcrjopen. You may also send a check made payable to HCRJ to 801 Bering Drive, Houston, TX 77057. Thank you in advance for your support.			
l To sign up to play, please visit www	.hcrj.org/hcrjopen		

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

#### **Honors and Memorials Fund**

For Havdallah in Pajamas

From Mike and Gary Nathanson

In memory of John Biro

From Mort and Jean Fefer

In honor of a speedy recovery for Miriam Graber

From Rochelle Sinderbrand

In memory of Bertha Mayerhofer

From Stephen and Lila Shaine

In memory of Morris Lewis, III

From Julia Miller

In memory of Helen Schwartz

From Sylvia Brauer

In honor of Mort Fefer's 90th Birthday

From Maryellen McSweeney

From Harriet and Mike Katzeff

From JoAnn and Mikal Innerarity

From Pearl Goldman

From Marcia and Bill Chaffin

In honor of a speedy recovery for Isabel Schnadig

From Pearl Goldman

In honor of Len and Ellie Chaikind's 60th anniversary

From Maryellen McSweeney

From JoAnn and Mikal Innerarity

In honor of Fran Brochstein's Award

From JoAnn and Mikal Innerarity

In honor of Irv Levine's 80th Birthday

From Miriam and Allan Graber

In honor of Dr. Leon Daly's 80th Birthday

From Miriam and Allan Graber

#### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of Mort Fefer's 90th Birthday

From Bob and Johnita Lebow

#### **Senior Chai**

From Nancy Darsky

#### **Arrangements**

In honor of Dee Dee Dochen and Mike Kahn's birthdays

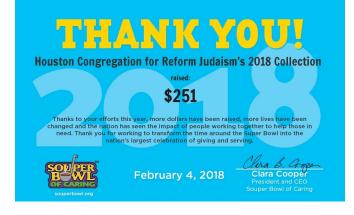
From Kitty Kahn

Sponsored the March Family Shabbat in honor of their 48th Wedding Anniversary

From Mike and Gary Nathanson

#### **Sponsored an Oneg**

From Larry and Kaki Buck
From Ted and Maria Johnson



#### **Welcome New members**

Shahzad Sadruddin Jacob and Erin Slosburg Dena Marks Sokolow Monica Wendel Brett and Rene Zamore

#### **Brag and Boasts**



Mazel Tov to Barbara Maidenberg, mother of Hilary Kamin, who will celebrate her 70th birthday on March 29.



Mazel Tov to Andy Edison on his appointment as a United States Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of Texas (Galveston Division)

## 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—\$\_

#### **March Oneg Sponsorships**

March 2: Available to sponsor

**March 9:** Sponsored by Kitty Kahn in honor of Mike Kahn and Dee Dee Dochen's birthdays and also

sponsored by Larry and Kaki Buck

March 16: Sponsored by Barbara Maidenberg in

honor of her 70th birthday

March 23: Available to sponsor March 30: Available to sponsor

Our heartfelt condolences...

To the family of Larry Aron, brother of Don Aron, and his wife, Sue Sue, who passed away on Monday, February 19.

To the family of Steven Turkish, father of Andrew Turkish, who passed away on February 15,

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



## HCRJ Passover Seder Friday, March 30 at 6:00PM

HCRJ's annual first night Passover Seder is planned for Friday, March 30. 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 <a href="http://hcrj.org/event/hcrjpassoverseder/">http://hcrj.org/event/hcrjpassoverseder/</a>





at dibphd@gmail.com or

Justin at admin@hcrj.org

## Bark Mitzvah 2018 @ Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism

Sunday, March 25th, 11:30 a.m. 801 Bering Dr., Houston 77057



Free and Open to the Community

Pet vendors: groomers, trainers, specialty treat shops, pet adoptions, vets and more!
Food Trucks: hot dogs, burgers, chili, tacos, shaved ice, ice cream, drinks 4 more available for purchase
Bark Mitzvah Service led by Rabbi Steve Gross
Music with MAXED OUT DJ

Give-aways (register by 3/7 for a free chew toy) and raffles



Bark Mitzvah 2018 is sponsored by Mark Kariel & Al Risher and Melinda Neumann

#### **Social Action Spring Break**

Looking for something to do during Spring Break? Make it a Social Action Spring Break with HCRJ!

Undies for Everyone Thursday, March 15 10:00AM to 12:00PM 4019 South Braeswood Blvd.



Join us for a midday, midweek project at Undies for Everyone, an organization that collects and distributes underwear directly into the hands of Houston students and others in need. Undies for Everyone enhances the selfesteem, dignity, hygiene and success of Houston disadvantaged students by providing them underwear. Our volunteer responsibilities will include organizing and packing. This is a project for all ages.

## The Beacon Sunday, March 18, 10:45AM to 2:00PM

Volunteer with us during the weekend at The Beacon. The Beacon is a non-profit organization that serves the Houston homeless community through daily services, civil legal aid, counseling and mentoring and access to housing. The mission of The Beacon is to provide essential and next-step services to restore hope and end homelessness in Houston. Last year alone, it served more than 8,500 homeless men and women in Houston. Our responsibilities volunteering at The Beacon Day Center will include serving on the lunch line, helping in the dining room, assisting in the washing, drying and folding clothes, handing out hygiene items and greeting and checking in clients. This is a project for ages 13+.

To sign up for these projects, please contact Justin at 713-782-4162 or <a href="mailto:admin@hcrj.org">admin@hcrj.org</a>.

#### Join us for the SPRING



Coffee & Conversation

Saturday, April 21 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 admin@hcrj.org to reserve a spot to show your special car

HCRJ's Cars, Coffee & Conversation is sponsored by:





#### Shabbat On-the-Go Sunday, March 4 at 10:00AM

Don't let your busy lives get in the way of Shabbat with your family! Join us for our next parenting series program as Rabbi Gross will present on how you can embrace Shabbat in a quick and easy way. To sign up for this program, please contact Justin at 713-782-4162 or <a href="mailto:admin@hcrj.org">admin@hcrj.org</a>.



#### March 9: Mostly Music Got Shabbat with Mike Kahn and Dee Dee Dochen

Magnificent harmonies and an engaging presence on the bima are at the core of what Dee Dee Dochen and Mike Kahn bring to a Sabbath worship experience. They have been singing as a duet in a variety of worship settings throughout Houston for years, and this Sabbath they will bless us as well. This Sabbath service will be mostly music.

#### Calling All 6th-8th Graders!

Sunday, March 25



Join us at the Bark Mitzvah on Sunday, March 25th. In the morning we will bake PUPPY treats and then host a booth selling our goodies to all the cute and fuzzy puppies we encounter. Be prepared to get LOTS of love and attention that day.

Plan to bake during class and host the table until 2pm! Shifts available upon request. Please RSVP to Michelle who will provide a list of baking supplies needed. All proceeds will be donated to the 7th grade good works fund at HCRJ. Rsvp to Michelle at <a href="mailto:hcri.org">hcri.org</a>.

#### **Interest Group**

#### Wednesday, March 28 at 10:30 AM

Join us for a special interest group with Rabbi Steve Gross. First Rabbi Gross will be focusing on Passover and how to prepare for it. He will then be discussing his recent trips to Abu Dabhi and Morocco. Learn about his adventures across the globe in an effort to find peace and friendship between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Come early for bagels and coffee and bring a friend. Sign up with Justin at 713-782-4162 or admin@hcrj.org.

13TH ANNUAL (THE BAR MITZVAH!!!)

## MAN'S MOCK SEDER

MARCH 25TH @ 7PMJUST

For details contact Rabbi Gross at rabbigross@hcrj.org



The Senior Chai program is dedicated to enriching the lives of those 60 and above. As Senior Chai enters its third year, we are excited to continue offering a variety of social, educational and recreational activities to the community. Through the generosity of the Shelby and Barg families all programs are offered at minimal or no cost. Keep your eyes open this year for concerts, a senior safety fair, movies, art classes, trips, speakers and more. 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.

#### 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. Please sign up with Melissa Wolfson at hcrj@hcrj.org if you would like to attend.

#### Mah Jongg

#### Wednesdays from 10:00AM to 12:00PM No cost to attend.

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

#### **Pastels Art Class**

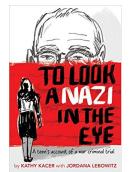
#### Wednesdays, March 28—May 2, 1:00 to 3:00PM No cost to attend.

Art teacher, Noelle Shawa, is returning to teach a class on drawing with pastels. The class is for all skill levels. Explore how to create luminous and rich color works of art with a variety of techniques.

RSVP required to Melissa Wolfson at 713-782-4162 or hcri@hcri.org. Space is limited.

## Book Discussion: To Look a Nazi in the Eye: A Teen's Account of a War Criminal Trial Sunday, March 11 at 10:30AM

Join us in March for our next book discussion! We will discuss *To Look a Nazi in the Eye: A Teen's Account of a War Criminal Trial* by Kathy Kacer and Jordana Lebowitz. This is the true story of nineteen-year-old Jordana Lebowitz's time at the trial of Oskar Groening, known as the bookkeeper of Auschwitz, a man charged with being complicit in the death of more than 300,000 Jews. A granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, Jordana attended the trial. She realized that by witnessing history she gained the knowledge and legitimacy to be able to stand in the footsteps of the survivors.



To Look a Nazi in the Eye can be purchased on Amazon. Jordana Lebowitz will lead our discussion on Skype. A light breakfast will be provided. Please contact Justin at 713-782-4162 or <a href="mailto:admin@hcri.org">admin@hcri.org</a> to sign up.

## "The Story of Jews in Greece: a Journey of Tradition, Glory and Struggle for Survival" Sunday, March 11 at 6:00PM



AJC Houston Region (American Jewish Committee), Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism, and the Hellenic Professional Society of Texas, under the auspices of the Consulate of Greece in Houston, invite you to a seminar by Dr. Peter Stavrianides on "The Story of Jews in Greece: a Journey of Tradition, Glory and Struggle for Survival" on Sunday evening, March 11. During his presentation, Dr. Peter Stavrianidis will cover the historical background of the Greek Jews (both Romaniote and Sephardic) and their struggle for survival throughout the demographic and territorial changes that have occurred in this very complex region of the

Balkans - especially with the emergence of the Modern Greek state and the horrific carnage of the Holocaust. Dr. Stavrianidis has done extensive research on the history of the Greek Jewry. Besides being a successful entrepreneur, running his family business as a 4th generation jeweler/gemologist, Dr. Stavrianidis is also an educator teaching college level courses as an adjunct professor. His research includes studies on attitudes and behaviors on the inter-generational integration of immigrants in the American Social landscape and the evolution of America into a multicultural society in the 21st century.

To attend, please contact Justin at 713-782-4162 or admin@hcrj.org.

#### **ANNIVERSARIES**

3/3 Marc & Betsy Levinson 3/5 Lance & Carol Kassab 3/10 Mike & Lauren Eagle 3/10 Roy & Lisa Sheinbaum 3/11 Jonathan & Sara Wilson 3/17 Mark & Newie Brinker 3/20 Mark & Laura Rosenfield 3/22 Norman & Andrea Steel 3/24 Efisio & Lori Farris

	YARZEITS
3/1	Fred Soifer
3/1	Mary Malloy
3/1	Ruth Rosen
3/1	Carl Herman
3/2	Roslyn Elterman
3/2	William Plotkin
3/3	Ruth Klaus
3/4	Morris Butkin
3/5	Don Rosenfield
3/6	Raymond Smith
3/7	Deedie Butler
3/8	Jerry Kamin
3/8	Sara Toubin
3/10	Mittie Tartakov
3/11	Eva Gordon
3/11	Rica Penn
3/11	Mildred Kantor
3/11	Frank Stokes
3/14	Edward Glantz
3/16	Michael Chaikind
3/19	Kenneth Berretta
3/20	Jimmy Deutser
3/21	James Blinkoff
3/21	Samuel Meyrowitz
3/22	Salome Krinsky
3/22	Israel Helfgott
3/24	Evelyn Klitzner
3/26	Ronald Turk
3/26	Sam Brochstein
3/28	Aaron Rose
3/28	Hyman Hurwitz
3/29	Martin Debrovner
3/29	Jean Utay

3/30 Larry Pfeffer

3/30 Bob Lipshutz

Margaret Rosenthall

3/31

	BIRTHDAYS
3/2	Amber Hoffman
3/3	Alan Brochstein
3/5	Linda Schaeffer
3/5	Cathy Dante
3/6	Joan Levy
3/7	Lee Herman
3/8	Debbie Goldman
3/8	Brett Zamore
3/8	Stephen Shain
3/9	Fran C. Brochsteir
3/9	Ellen Shohet
3/11	JoAnn Innerarity
3/12	Margaret Krohn
3/12	Lance Kassab
3/13	Harriette Bearden
3/14	Hannah Melcer

#### **KIDS' BIRTHDAYS**

3/27 Joshua & Melissa Tabin 3/30 Richard & Melissa Hudson

3/30 Chad & Anat Shaw

3/1 Kyra Rubinstein 3/1 Jake Shaper 3/2 Sloane Andrews 3/3 Dylan Alexander 3/4 Camille Andrews 3/7 Eli Zamore 3/7 Elijah Mogil 3/10 Alex Frankfort 3/10 Olivia Frankfort 3/11 Gavin Greenberg 3/12 Alex Renfrow 3/17 Jack Avedesian 3/18 Harrison Rosenthal 3/18 Trudy Jacobs 3/19 Ella Shaw 3/20 Jacob Cosgrove 3/20 Dylan Kamin 3/21 Brooke Appelbaum 3/22 Kalli Poche 3/22 Tavi Poche 3/22 Scott Hurwitz 3/22 Lilly Sline 3/22 Alexandra Weathers 3/23 Amy Shohet 3/23 Cooper Braverman 3/23 Isabel Perkins 3/26 Sienna Wendel

Eleanor Spain

3/30 Layla Salomon

3/27

n 3/14 Tracy Householder 3/15 Malorie Barbee 3/15 Ruth Schlanger 3/16 Cheryl Fielkow 3/16 Steven Hecht 3/18 Erica Frankel 3/18 Doris Bernard 3/19 Robert Lait 3/20 Susan Rachlin 3/20 Susan Brochstein 3/20 Norman Loewenstern 3/21 Michael Kahn 3/22 Carol Danek 3/22 Edward Schreiber 3/23 Ryan O'Malley 3/23 Gayle Tonn 3/24 Lori Farris 3/24 Michael Lawch 3/25 Ted Wedel 3/25 Michael Le Burkien 3/25 Elliott Polunsky 3/26 Ken Cohen 3/26 Sarah Pearcy 3/27 Scott Wenderfer 3/27 Michelle Renfrow 3/28 Moise Levy 3/28 Donna Siegel 3/29 Adelle Shaw 3/29 Laura Frank 3/30 Ellen Slosburg 3/30 Erika Frankfort 3/31 Jacob Slosburg

3/31 Gary Muslin



You are invited to join HCRJ for our monthly

March 2, 2018
Dinner 6:15 pm
Sabbath Services 7:15 pm

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

**Hilary Kamin,** Director of Education hilaryk@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

March Family Shabbat Menu

Chili, vegetables, Mac n cheese, nuggets

Bruce Shelby, President

Adam Weinstein, Vice President

Evelyn Lazear, Secretary

Dan Fleckman, Treasurer

Julie Barry, Past President

Jaime Perkins, Membership Chair

**Rochelle Sinderbrand,** Bookkeeper rochelles@hcrj.org

Mailing Address: 801 Bering Drive, Houston TX 77057 Telephone: 713-782-4162 Fax: 713-782-4167 Website: www.HCRJ.org

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