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The monthly publication for the
community of

**Or Chadash,
The Congregation of
New Light**

In Chicago

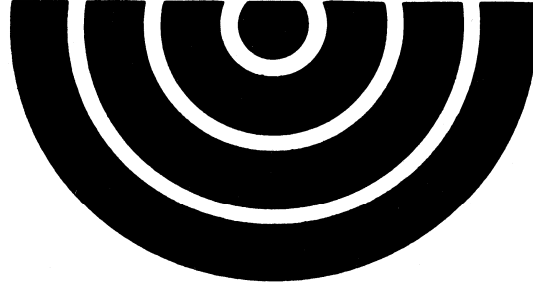
Our People,

Our Community,

Our Synagogue

**Come Add
Your Light
To Ours!**

ק ה י ל ת א ו ר ח ד ש
CONGREGATION OR CHADASH
CONGREGATION OF NEW LIGHT



The New Light

What do you do for Passover?

By Robin Sampliner, OC Co-President

Even though there are basic “rules” for celebrating Passover, there are probably as many “interpretations” of those rules as there are Jews in the world.

It all starts with preparations for the holiday. Do you clean out your cupboards of all wheat products? Fill a box with pasta, Cheerios, crackers and cookies? Do you store those items off your property, and buy it back for a buck after the holiday is over? Do you lug the Seder plates, pots and pans up from the basement? You certainly must go to the grocery store to stock up on matzo, matzo meal, chicken for dinner and soup, vegis, macaroons and those jelly candies. And of course you will need plenty of Manischewitz wine.

There are some among us that look forward to these tasks. It’s a time to clean out the cabinets, start fresh after the holiday, and separate out this time of year from the rest of the year. Others look at it as a hassle and chore. What is on the list of foods to eat and not eat? Where are we going to store

the chumitz? Take out and then pack up the special dishes, pots and pans.

I have to admit that I tried cleaning out our kitchen cabinets one Pesach when I was a teenager and active in BBG. But I’ll tell you it only lasted one year. No one else in the house got behind me and the ritual was short lived.

My fun comes with preparation for the Seder. Granted I am not the one that cooks for days and is in the kitchen cleaning up afterwards, I always happen to be a guest at someone else’s house or my mother did the work. But I loved setting the table for the Seder. I got out the special plates, my mother’s best china, the kind that is kept in special covers with doilies in between each dish. I polished the hammered silver water pitcher that I loved. The Seder plate came out, fancy crystal (the kids didn’t get the fancy

Pres. Article...Cont’d Pg. 2

stuff), silver serving dishes, butter dishes, it seemed like everything came out of the dining room cabinets for Pesach. We weren't a particularly observant family, but Passover is always a special holiday with lots of preparation.

Like I said, I have never been the one to cook the whole Seder meal, but I sure like eating all the food! Actually, I used to make the charoset, yum. So it's time for the Seder. But it's not time to eat yet. What haggadah did your family use? We used the Maxwell House haggadah, or was it Betty Crocker? Whoever wrote it isn't important, but it included all the important parts; the story of Passover, the songs, the plagues, and of course the four questions. And eventually came some food. But don't fill up on too much parsley dipped in salt water! How hot was the horseradish? Did you go for the freshly made white stuff, or the tamer red kind? When I moved to Chicago, I started going to a second night Seder with my sister's family at the home of friends of hers. I always sat across from one of their sons and made him laugh (or he thought I was crazy), with the face I made as I tortured myself with really HOT horseradish on matzo. But man, it was good. And don't forget the big bowl of hard boiled eggs. You'd think the farmers would tell their hens to step up production of eggs due to the fact that Easter and Passover are so close together, so the grocery store wouldn't run out!

And then comes the meal. Yum (again). Gefilte fish, matzo ball soup, and my mother's brisket (hers is the best). And Jell-O. And a really dense nut cake that always fell when we took it out of the spring form pan. But that's ok

because we would just fill in the void with more frosting and whipped cream. Can you tell I liked my mother's cooking?!

But alas, don't forget the afikomen. Who would find it this year? Was it well hidden? I swear I never caught on that, when my father left the table during dinner, that's when he was hiding the matzo. What would the prize be? A silver coin or a bill? No matter who found the matzo, all the kids would go away with something in their pocket.

Not to be a buzz kill, but the clean up came next. And that seemed to last for days too. There were always things that couldn't go in the dishwasher and had to be washed and dried by hand. And the china had to be packed up with the doilies and special cover again. Take out the leaves from the dining room table. And swear that you're going to hire someone next year to help with the dishes (my mother caught onto that one and it sure made things easier for her).

We didn't necessarily follow all of the rituals of Passover preparation, and our Seder seemed to get shorter and shorter every year, but we had our own rituals. And that's what makes the holiday special when you celebrate it with family and friends.

And We Are Still Collecting Personal Hygiene Items

If you have personal hygiene items and nonperishable food we are collecting them for Care For Real, Edgewater's food pantry.

It's a great time to bring in all of those hotel soaps and shampoos that are taking up space in your homes! Drop them off in the box on our table before services.

Or Chadash Goes to NYC

*By Bill Wahler,
OC Vice President*

Congregation Or Chadash is planning a weekend trip to New York City. The trip is scheduled for the weekend of **August 14-16, 2009**. The highlights of the weekend would include Shabbat services at Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, NYC's GLBT synagogue, on Friday night, a Saturday visit to the NYC Tenement Museum, a Broadway show of your choice, and a visit to the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

We have booked a block of rooms at The Union Square Inn, 209 East 14th Street, NYC. The hotel is convenient to everything and you can check out their website at www.unionsquareinn.com. We have great rates at the Inn. A single is \$129, a room for two with one queen bed is \$149 and a room for two with two double beds is \$169. Those rates are per night and do not include the NYC taxes. Travel is on your own, as are all meals.

We will be planning a group Shabbat dinner and a Saturday evening pre-theatre dinner.

We have a limited number of rooms available so please reserve your space now. **The deadline for signing up is June 30.**

If you are interested in going to NYC with Or Chadash please contact **Bill Wahler at 847-321-0155** or wwahler@aol.com.

Calling all Current and Potential Service Leaders!!!

This year's Service Leaders Workshop series is in April. There are three sections:

April 12 at 11:00 AM – The structure and flow of the Service,

April 19 at 11:00 AM - How to understand the Parasha and write a D'var Torah,

April 26 at 2:00 PM. – Understanding the music and chants of the service.

You do not have to become a service leader to attend any of these sessions. It is your opportunity to understand the service and learn more. (It's the Jewish way – we never stop learning – oy.) We encourage all new and former service leaders to join us. If you missed any in the past, please fill in your knowledge or come for a refresher and help guide the new or potential service leaders. It is important to attend as many as possible. Even if you will never sing a note, everyone who leads services should attend Judith's section on music, to understand the relationship between the parts of the service. If you have never led a service, attending does not commit you to leading, but offers you the opportunity to learn and when you feel ready you would partner with an experienced service leader first. The series will be co- led by Rabbi Edwards, Judith Golden and Carol Goldbaum.

Don't be shy! RSVP today, so we can prepare enough materials. office@OrChadash.org.

Save the Date: **Sunday May 31** will be the **Service Leaders Brunch** with Cantor David Reinwald.

No April Dine-around

We are **not** having a dine-around in April due to the observance of Passover. This, however, does not deter the monthly Jewish history/information item.

Once again NPR presented a very interesting radio documentary on the 1947 Exodus to Palestine as part of the **Third Coast International Audio Festival (TCIAF)**. The fictionalized version of this story was in the Leon Uris book/Otto Preminger movie *Exodus*. This, however, is the true story of "Big Bill" Millman, Frank Levine, and Nat Nadler. Before there was an Israel, these three men and nearly 40 others climbed aboard a rusted American ferryboat and set out from Philadelphia to transport thousands of Jewish holocaust survivors past the British blockade of Palestine. Other ships had tried it. But their ship, which would come to be known as the *Exodus 1947*, was the one that helped shape the political landscape of the Middle East for the foreseeable future.

In honor of Passover and the original Exodus check this out at

<http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/re-sound.asp>

ONEG SPONSORSHIP

Celebrate a birthday, graduation or anniversary, or honor/memorialize a loved one with an oneg sponsorship. Please contact the Or Chadash office at office@orchadash.org to make arrangements and pick a date. Thank you!

Or Chadash To Host World Congress Board Meeting

By *Bill Wahler*,
OC Vice President

On **June 25 and 26**, Or Chadash will be hosting the annual board meeting of the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews. Delegates from GLBT groups from around the world have been invited. Many of the delegates are expected to stay after the board meeting and join us for Pride Shabbat and also march with us on June 28 in the Pride Parade.

Some of these delegates will be needing home hospitality during their stay in Chicago. If you have room to host anyone either for the time of the board meeting or for Pride Weekend or both please contact **Bill Wahler at 847-321-0155** or wwahler@aol.com.

If you would like further information on the World Congress please go to their website, www.glbtejews.org.

Congregation Or Chadash

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Chicago IL 60660
(773) 271-2148

Email: Office@OrChadash.org
Website: www.OrChadash.org

Rabbi: Laurence Edwards
Cantorial Soloist: Judith Golden

Co-Presidents:
Marvin Levin and Robin Sampliner
Executive VP: Bill Wahler
Treasurer: Rick Greenthal
Webmaster: Marvin Levin

Rabbi Edwards is available by appointment and can be reached via email:
RabbiEdwards@orchadash.org or
phone (773) 326-1490

Or Chadash has a Mussar Group *By Beth Snyder*

Or Chadash has started a Mussar study group that meets once a month on a Sunday, usually in the early afternoon, at Temple Emanuel in the library. Mussar is a Jewish practice founded by a 19th-century rabbi, Israel Salanter. It emphasizes ethical conduct, living a more conscientious life, and an increased awareness of one's responsibilities toward oneself and others. In the Mussar practice, one focuses on soul traits (such as equanimity and patience) through meditation, journaling, and other means to help modify one's behavior and reactions. These exercises help one become more self-aware, content, and able to better contribute to one's immediate environment and community. The OC group is working with Alan Morinis's book, *Everyday Holiness*. This group is still open. If you are interested in joining, please contact **Stephanie Friedman** at office@OrChadash.org.

A Truly Magical Evening *By Bill Wahler,* *OC Vice President*

Gala 2009 was held at the East Bank Club on Saturday, March 14 (Erev The Ides of March). Seventy people enjoyed a lavish buffet, dancing to the music of The Dick Elliot Orchestra and the magic and mindreading act of Danny Orleans and Jan Rose. Danny roamed the crowd during the cocktail hour, mystifying everyone with his card tricks and sleight of hand.

Howard Wax and Rob Pooley presented Or Chadash with a check for \$5000 matching funds raised during the year to meet their challenge. Rich Bender and Howard Wax unveiled the winner of the Or Chadash t-shirt contest and

introduced the creator, Kat Ramsey. After a Havdalah service led by Rabbi Larry Edwards and cantorial soloist Judith Golden there was the presentation of our honoree, Susan Jacobson. Susan received a gift and spoke some words of thanks to those in attendance. After a champagne toast to Susan we were entertained by Danny and Jan and then more dancing.

Throughout the evening the attendees had the opportunity to bid on items at our silent auction and the bidding was, to say the least, spirited.

Some photos are in this newsletter, but please visit our website, www.OrChadash.org, to view more.

SA: Silent Auction = Successful Adventure *By Marvin Levin, OC Co-President*

A major fundraising activity every year has been the silent auction during our annual Gala. This year the auction raised over \$4400 for Or Chadash. The single item which had the most bids was a beautiful hand bound book of Judith Golden's Rosh Chodesh poems which she created especially for the auction.

I want to thank Bill Wahler for organizing a wonderful evening and working with me. Special thanks go to David Miller who put together the Auction Book. This is not an easy task and David has graciously performed this role for several years.

Many thanks to the following members who solicited or collected donations, contributed items or worked to set up the auction room and check people out at the end of the evening: Dan Amati, Rich

Bender, Susan Boone, Carla Censer, Tom Conroy, Irwin Drobny, Rabbi Larry Edwards, Judith Golden, Rick Greenthal, Yehuda Jacobi, Susan Jacobson, Reuben Lewy, Gary Liss, Ethel Meyer, David Miller, Rob Pooley, Robin Sampliner, Norman Sandfield, Matt Santori-Griffith, Mike Simon, Beth Snyder, Mindy Stillman, Morris Stroz, Bill Wahler, Stephen Weiser and Lynn Young. [If I left out a name here, please let me know so I can credit you in next month's newsletter.]

A list of businesses that kindly gave donations is included in this newsletter. Please think of them when shopping or eating out.

Thanks for the Donations

Donations to the Wax/Pooley Challenge grant from Carol Goldbaum, Susan Boone & Rabbi Larry Edwards, and Steve Weiser & Andrew Deppe.

Donations to cover the T-Shirt Design Contest Prize from Rich Bender and Bill Wahler.

A donation from Mike Simon and Yehuda Jacobi in memory of Annette & Joe Simon. A donation from Steven Joachim and Steve Neeley in memory of Sarah Putter. A general donation from Shayna Plaut in appreciation of Or Chadash.

And a special Thank You to Howard Wax and Rob Pooley for the Wax/Pooley Grant itself!

Why is This Night More Boring Than all the Other Nights?

By Dave Fried, OC Member

Until I was 25, I thought *Seder* was Hebrew for "very long wait to eat." The Pesach performed as a young child and the ones I observe today almost seem like two different holidays. The Passover Seder then, was always emceed by our grandpa. A real curmudgeon. Once we were seated, out would come the tattered Hagaddah and it was lock down for the next few hours. There was no singing, rejoicing, or bathroom breaks. A long monotone string of muttered prayers. It may have been in Yiddish, it may have been in English, nobody knew. I always wanted my Pac Man to be allowed to read the four questions (what, you didn't know? Pac Man is a Sephardic Jew.) but no.. Not at our Seder table.

Looking back now as an adult - I can see how his reading the story of Passover can still sting. The story can be a hard pill to swallow reading a joyous story of Jewish liberation, when memories of *Shoah* are still so fresh in his mind. Celebrating a tragic irony. I wasn't able to make this connection as a kid, all I could think of was "man this is boring..." So maybe my grampa just wanted to plow through things, not think too much about it. Or maybe the food wasn't ready and he was just killing time until the brisket was done. I'll never know.

After the meal, we would search all over the house looking for the

afikomen. Trying to win ten dollars, to come away with something to show for the evening. Growing frustrated with us tearing the house apart, they eventually just started hiding it under the dirty laundry. At the crossroads of some easy money and picking through our grandparents' dirty underwear ... the easy money won out. My sister would promise to split the bounty with me if I stuck my hand into the hamper. "Aren't you glad we're Jewish?" I'd joke.

Oh how far I have come. Like many things I do now, I do on my own terms. I am Jewish on my own terms, and I am Queer on my own terms. There is a feeling of wholeness when attending a Queer Seder. It's like a beer buzz, but in my heart. While we drink (and do we ever!) and retell the story of Exodus, we also reinterpret it as well. Of those -- Jewish or not, queer or not -- who are still struggling and resisting for freedom and sovereignty. It would be short sighted of us to think that our liberation is the only one this story is referring to. The story of Passover needs to be retold in the context of struggle and solidarity -- and not simply an ancient end result.

Editor's note: I am glad to be able to include an article by one of our members. Anyone may submit an article. Please email your submission to office@OrChadash.org. We welcome personal stories, book reviews, movie reviews, etc.

Welcome Returning Members

Kat Ramsey
Debrah Goodman

Or Chadash Passover Seder

By Susan Jacobson,
OC Membership Chair

The Or Chadash Annual Community Seder will be on **Thursday April 9th**, the second night of Passover. Rabbi Larry Edwards will lead the Seder, along with cantorial soloist Judith Golden.

This year, we will again hold the Seder at the East Bank Club located at 500 N. Kingsbury. The cost for members and their guests will be \$55; for non-members the cost will be \$65. Parking at the East Bank Club is \$5.75.

The deadline for receipt of reservations is **Friday, April 3rd**. Please use the reservation form enclosed in this newsletter, or download the form from our website. You can also send an email to office@OrChadash.org.

A limited number of scholarships will be available for members to attend the Seder. If you would like to be considered for a scholarship, please let us know. Contact **Susan Jacobson** at membership@OrChadash.org.

Maot Chitim Passover Food Delivery

By Mindy Stillman,
OC Social Action Chair

**Sunday Morning 9:45 AM sharp,
April 5th, 2111 N Halsted
Bring your hand cart or wagon if
you have one.**

Maot Chitim refers to the custom of gathering wheat to provide the poor with the makings of matzo for Passover. Today, Maot Chitim of Greater Chicago provides over 5000 full seder meals to feed over 12,000 Jews in need in the Chicagoland area. Join Or Chadash as we fulfill this mitzvah by delivering packages in the 2111 N. Halsted building

Cycles of Our Lives

Happy Birthday

March 28 Steve Joachim
April 8 Daniel J. Amati
April 14 Jennifer J. Mercer
April 16 Laurel Grauer
April 16 Franklin D. Nussbaum
April 18 Diana Klein

Happy Anniversary

April 24 Catherine Harvey
and Diana Klein

Thanks for the Oneg....

Friday, April 3: Oneg sponsored by Daniel Amati in honor of his birthday

Saturday, April 4: Lunch still available for sponsorship

Friday, April 10: Oneg sponsored by Bill Wahler in honor of his father, Karel Wahler's 90th birthday

Friday, April 17: Oneg sponsored by Frank Nussbaum in honor of his birthday

Friday, April 24: Oneg still available for sponsorship

April Service Schedule

April 3: Bill Wahler, Beth Snyder and Judith Golden, 8 p.m.

April 4: Saturday morning Shabbat service, 10 a.m. A light lunch follows.

April 10: Torah Service, with Rabbi Edwards, 8 p.m.

April 17: Shabbat Service: Reuben Lewy, Yakov Neiditch, and Judith Golden, 8 p.m.

April 24: Shabbat Service with Rabbi Edwards, 8 p.m. A potluck dinner precedes the service at 7 p.m.



Walk with Israel at the 2009 Israel Solidarity

On **Sunday May 3**, the City of Chicago will celebrate the 38th annual Israel Solidarity Day featuring community walks throughout the city. Or Chadash will participate in the City Walk, a 6K walk along the Chicago lakefront. Registration for the walk will begin at 9:00 am, at the Anshe Emet Day School Field, 3751 N. Broadway. Kickoff for the walk will be at 10:30, returning to Anshe Emet at noon where there will be food and entertainment.

You can register by going to the Jewish United Fund website http://www.juf.org/walk/part_reg.aspx?l=1

Or Chadash will meet at the Anshe Emet field (look for the Or Chadash Pride Flag!) We will walk together, and then maybe gather at a nearby restaurant for lunch. Let's have a good turnout to show our support for Israel at this time.

Date: Sunday May 3

**Time: Registration 9 AM;
Walk 10:30-noon**

**Place: Anshe Emet Day School
field, 3751 N. Broadway**

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle AND Help Those in Need

*By Robin Sampliner,
OC Co-President*

As part of the social action project for the Great Lakes Council Biennial we are asking our members to collect gently worn hearing aids and eyeglasses that will be used to fulfill the increased demand from clinics in our region. The fragile economy and the health care crisis have contributed to a shortfall of these so called "elective" items. Now we have a way to help reduce the gap. Please bring your gently used eyeglasses and hearing aids to the collection box and we will forward them on to BR Group Foundation where they will be sold to service centers to be recycled as spare parts. All the money received will be used to purchase new hearing aids and make financial contributions to organizations in our region whose mission is to distribute hearing aids and eyeglasses to those in need.

Thank You Bill!!

Thank you Bill Wahler for all of your hard work in putting together and pulling off a wonderful gala! We all had fun, ate plenty, and tried to drink to make the bar bill higher! I still can't figure out the magic tricks performed by your cousin. He's very tricky.

Because of your efforts, a lot of money was raised for the synagogue. Funds that will be used to sustain our programs, services and classes. And lots of people got to take home cool, interesting and pretty purchases from the silent auction.

Thank you again! Mazel Tov!
The Or Chadash Board
and Congregation

A Special Thanks to Gala Business Donors

The following businesses made donations to the Silent Auction at the 2009 Gala. We urge you to patronize them. Please support them as they supported us.

For those businesses marked with “*”, please mention that you “saw them” at the Or Chadash Gala.

***Absolute Health Improvement Center** (Jerold Kriston)
6957 W. North Avenue, Suite 205 708-383-6957

Ann Sather's (restaurant)
multiple locations

***Broadway Cellars** (restaurant - Geri Coleman-Foley)
5900 N. Broadway Avenue 773-944-1208

Calphalon
www.calphalon.com

Chicago History Museum
1601 N. Clark Street 312-799-2118

***Chicago PC Doc** (Mark Smith)
mark@chicagopcdoc.com 773-610-6660
http://chicagopcdoc.com/Home.html

***Communication Strategy** (Julie Paradise)
info@communicatestrategies.com 312-988-4060
www.communicatestrategies.com

***Court Theatre**
5535 S. Ellis 773-753-4472

East Bank Club
500 N. Kingsbury Street, Chicago 312-527-5800

***East-West Integrated Medicine, LLC**
David W. Miller, MD, Lac
www.eastwestintmed.com 773-960-8901

***Gay Mart Chicago**
3459 N. Halsted Street 773-929-4272

***Kopi Café**
5317 N. Clark Street 773-989-5674

***Lansky Career Consultants** (Judi Lansky)
100 N. La Salle Street, Suite 2207 312-444-1500

***Lulu's Dim Sum and Then Sum** (restaurant)
804 Davis Street, Evanston (847) 869-4343

***Mighty Maids/Mighty Men** (housecleaning)
773-472-7711

***Phillip Bernal Design** (interior design)
www.phillipbernaldesign.com 773-370-9499

***Remy Bumpo Theatre Company**
At the Greenhouse Theater, 2257 N. Lincoln Avenue
773-244-8119
847-675-1700

***Roosevelt Univerty: The Theatre Conservatory** (Joel Fink)
431 S. Wabash Avenue 312-341-3831

***Salon Roula** (haircut)
603 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 847-328-6110

***Service Is Us** (waiters/bartenders)
5347 N. Clark Street 773-784-2225

***Seven Ten Lanes** (bowling, pool, restaurant)
1055 E. 55th Street 773-347-2695

Sidetrack (bar)
3349 N. Halsted Street 773.477.9189

The Spertus Institute for Jewish Studies

***The Spertus Shop, Asher Library**
618 S. Michigan Avenue 312-322-1700

***Sugar Creek Lake House** (Philip Waitzman)
SCreekLakehouse@aol.com 312-316-1818

***Sweet Miss Giving's** (baked goods)
www.sweetmissgivings.com 312.255.8470

***Ta-Ze Olives and Olive Oil Shop**
520 N. Michigan Avenue
312-527-2576

***That Little Mexican Café**
1055 W. Bryn Mawr 773-769-1004
(also in Evanston)

Tommy Bahama (clothing and accessories)
www.TommyBahama.com 800-647-8688

Travel Priorities, Inc. (Morris Stroz)
3905 W. Howard, Skokie 847-675-4700

***Unabridged Books**
3251 N. Broadway Avenue 773-883-9119

***Uncommon Ground** (restaurant)
3800 N. Clark Street and 1401 W. Devon Avenue
www.uncommonground.com

***Wild Pansy Gift Shop / Gethsemane Garden Center**
5839 N. Clark Street 773-878-5915

***Wild Tree Café**
1100 Davis Street, Evanston 847-425-9691

***Women and Children First** (bookstore)
5233 N. Clark Street 773-769-9299

Purim Party Fun

Purim party was a great success. Our program in two acts began with Esther and Mordechai and the original reading of the Megillah Esther featuring Rabbi Larry Edwards, as our narrator, story written by G-d. It was followed by our production of *Shushan meets Dragnet!* produced and directed by Laurie Grauer; stage play written by Ken Green and Laurie Grauer, while not reviewed in the mainstream press, received a standing ovation by the audience. Then everyone feasted on Hamentaschen extraordinaire (made by Ethel Meyer) following the performance.

Gala Photos

For more photos please visit www.OrChadash.org



The evening opened with a Havdalah service, Honoree Susan Jacobson, Cantorial Soloist Judith Golden and Rabbi Edwards



Kat Ramsey shows off her winning design

Gift Idea

Pride Week will be upon us shortly and what better way of showing your support for your people and your community than with our Pride Flag.



Prices start with a donation of \$30 and ordering details can be found at

www.OrChadash.org/flag.html

Coming Attractions

Sunday, June 28th: Pride Parade. We will have a 23' flat bed truck and I am looking for and decorate our float! It's never too early to plan ahead. If you would like to join the Pride Parade Committee, email the office (office@OrChadash.org) and let us know! All Pride parade participants will receive a complimentary brand new OC t-shirt! Let's show our OC Pride!

Capital – Social and Other By Rabbi Laurence Edwards

I want to bear witness once again to the hard work of the Or Chadash board. We are very fortunate to have members who are willing to step up and devote untold hours to the well-being and success of this congregation. Most recently, the work of Bill Wahler, Marvin Levin, and Robin Sampliner from the board, with help from David Miller, Matt Santori-Griffith and other volunteers produced a fabulous Gala. Even if you were not able to attend, you are a beneficiary.

This is all part of the “social capital” that continues to accrue to us.

The “Marketplace” column in the February 16 issue of *The Jerusalem Report* (www.jrep.com) emphasizes that, despite (or because of) the decline in the markets in Israel, there has been a noticeable strengthening of “social capital,” which the author defines as “a characteristic of society, such as trust, networks and community, that strengthen cooperation and mutual help and support.”

A longer article in the same issue calls attention to the challenges faced by the many NGOs in Israel. I have long been a modest but enthusiastic donor to the New Israel Fund (www.nif.org), which supports many of these organizations. Quite a few of them are struggling in the current economic climate to continue to provide client services and advocacy on behalf of the many different constituencies that comprise the Israeli social fabric: Ethiopian, Arab, Russian, GLBT, and so many more. Part of the struggle actually had to do with the relative strength of the shekel versus the dollar (now shifting back somewhat). Those organizations that depend on American funders for much of their budgets were receiving the same amount of dollars, but this translated into fewer shekels. And then, the meltdown of the American economy, and special situations like philanthropies that had funds invested with the likes of Bernie Madoff, found themselves unable to fulfill promises.

If you are able, I urge you to support New Israel Fund and other NGOs in Israel that are strapped for funds right now. The increase of “social capital” cannot completely make up for the loss of staff in these important organizations.

And speaking of social capital, I want to call your attention to the many programs run locally by the Jewish Child and Family Services <http://jcfs.org>. They are wide-ranging, and something there may well be of direct help if you are facing large, or small, challenges in these tough times.

Or Chadash is a small boat in a very large ocean, but if we keep pulling together we can keep it not only afloat, but thriving with social capital of concern, care, and joy.

Reflection for Rosh Chodesh Nisan By Judith Golden

Clinging to Mitzrayim
Comfortable with known boundaries
The coziness of limited choice
Feeling safe within oppressive beliefs

Resenting change
Time marching, others moving on
Not wanting to be left behind, alone
Life cannot be what it was

Viewing the path
Through narrow lenses blind to
possibility
Deaf to opportunity
Sealed off by fear

Stepping forward
Struggling with phantom chains
Gone long ago
Yet lingering still

Stepping forward
With heavy heart and labored breath
Leaving behind what was and what can
never be
Pushed by fear, and pulled by desire

Stepping forward
Reaching out for connection
With my guide, with my God
With the context of my being

Stepping forward
Realizing I am not alone
We are together
On a journey

Turning toward freedom
We will cross the sea without being
swallowed
To find and be our true selves
To understand and be a community
To love and serve Life.

