

March 2009

Volume 34, Number 3

Adar/Nisan 5769

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

**Community**

*By Marvin Levin, OC Co-President*

“Separate not thyself from the congregation” – Hillel, as cited in *Pirke Avot*

The other day I participated in a phone conference with Rabbi Dan Rabishaw, Regional Director of the Great Lakes Council of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), and other presidents of small congregations in the region. These congregations ranged from Rochester, Minnesota - home of the Mayo Clinic - on the north to Peoria, Illinois – home of Caterpillar Industries – on the south.

The main topic of this conference call was the current economy and how URJ can help its member congregations, and the congregations help their congregants, in dealing with the effects of the economy. We were asked, “Does your congregation have any programs that deal with this issue?” I commented that we didn’t have any formal programs or outreach, but that we informally have attempted to be supportive of people we know who have lost their jobs. Robin stated she believes that Rabbi Edwards has used his Discretionary Fund for support although we, naturally, don’t know any of the details. I observed that unlike most of the small congregations which are in

small towns, Or Chadash in some sense is a small fish in a large pond: that Chicago is very unlike a town such as Peoria where a single industry supports the bulk of the townspeople.

Other participants were in general agreement with us: Nobody had any formal programs in place. These were some of the comments we heard: “Out donations are down.” “There has definitely been an increase in members asking for dues adjustment.” “We know we’ve lost members because they were too embarrassed – or too proud – to ask for an adjustment.” Rabbi Dan observed that when people are under heavy stress, such as after 9/11, those are the times when they look to religion most; and those are the times when they need the support of their community most. We have an obligation to be there for them as much as we can.

So I’d like to make it very clear that the professional and the lay leadership of Congregation Or Chadash wants to be able to

**Pres. Article...Cont’d Pg. 2**

### **Pres. Article...Cont'd**

support all of our members if they need help, not only now but at all times. Our membership application says, "It is our custom that no one be turned away from membership for financial reasons. If you require consideration please contact one of the co-presidents for a confidential conversation." Those are not meant to be idle words. We have members who regularly make an extra donation so that someone can attend the Gala who might otherwise not afford it. We offer scholarships for our education classes. We strive to ensure that nobody who wants to attend our Passover Seder would ever be turned away.

On the front of every newsletter you'll see the words "Our People, Our Community, Our Synagogue." Last August (was it only such a short time ago?) was when we started using that slogan. I wrote about it in a column in the September '08 newsletter. I said, "It encapsulates in a single phrase much of what makes Or Chadash a special place" and "I felt something special at Or Chadash. It was a warm and welcoming place." What I didn't say – and didn't really recognize at that time – was how much Or Chadash is a **caring** community. I've seen members supporting one another when there was illness or death or other difficult times. We've helped people when they needed to move and we participate in food distribution and serving at soup kitchens. We've rejoiced with them at the birth of a child (or children!). We're not a collection of individuals who just happen to be Jewish and – for most of us – to be gay. We interact. We connect. We share.

I suddenly realized that this is the next-to-last president's column I'll be writing. I'm sure that in two months my column will reflect upon the two years of being co-president. Until then, may you go from strength to strength.

### **And We Are Still Collecting Personal Hygiene Items**

If you have personal hygiene items and non perishable 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.

### **Shabbat Services 101**

On **Friday March 20** come to services a little earlier and learn why we do what we do. The Rabbi's article on the last page gives you a "free sample," but you really should hear this in person. We will begin at **7:15 pm** in our chapel followed by services as usual at 8 pm, but after this introduction you may see our service in a "New Light."

### **Maot Chitim Passover Food Delivery** *By Mindy Stillman, OC Social Action Chair*

**Sunday morning (time TBA)  
April 5<sup>th</sup>**  
2111 N Halsted

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.

### **Welcome Our New Members**

Darryn Weinstein  
Amanda Rostkowski

### **Join us at the Theater** *By Mindy Stillman, OC Social Action Chair*

**Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> 8:00pm**  
Silk Road Theater Project  
Pierce Hall at The Historic Chicago Temple Building  
77 W Washington, lower level

Midwest Premiere  
*Pangs of the Messiah* by Motti Lerner

Set in 2012 amidst the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians, *Pangs of the Messiah* is an apocalyptic yet fiercely humane drama about eight West Bank Jewish settlers pitted against an Israel they feel betrayed by. The play focuses on a religious family that finds itself torn between fighting to stay in their settlement and obeying their government's decision to dismantle it. Left hanging in the balance is the legacy of their beliefs.

There will be a discussion with the Artistic Director after the play.

Group discount is available if 10 or more people attend.

Please RSVP no later than March 15<sup>th</sup> to [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org).

### **Game Night A Rousing Success**

Twelve hardy souls braved the cold and the weekend snow for the Post Valentine's Day game night at Bill Wahler's. Fortified with lots of pizza and various liquid refreshments the pool sharks went at it, several board games were being played. I thought I saw Vanna White briefly during the Wheel of Fortune session. Even the bridge players found a place to play. Of course there was lots of socializing before, during, and after the games. It was almost midnight when the last soul departed. We were also treated to special sheets of blister packed M&M's compliments of Reuben Lewy.

## Mah-Jongg, Anyone?

Now that the Inauguration is over, are you looking for something to occupy your imagination? Your hopes? Your dreams? Do your dreams include playing mah-jongg with your frenemies and sipping spritzer? Here is your chance to live your dream and have some fun!

Or Chadash is forming a group to learn to play mah-jongg. We then plan to have regular dates to play. However, we are looking for a few things to get started:

1. Mah-jongg set(s)
2. Mah-jongg cards
3. The name of someone who might be willing to teach a bunch of gay people to play like killer Jewish ladies.
4. Folks who are interested in joining us!

If you have or are any of the above, please send Maryl Rosen an email at [Office@OrChadash.org](mailto:Office@OrChadash.org).

Once we get a core group, we'll move forward with some dates and times to get started. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

### Congregation Or Chadash

5959 N. Sheridan  
Chicago IL 60660  
(773) 271-2148

Email: [Office@OrChadash.org](mailto:Office@OrChadash.org)  
Website: [www.OrChadash.org](http://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](mailto:rabbiedwards@orchadash.org) or  
phone (773) 326-1490

## March Dine-around Mar 13

OK, no country history this month, just Jewish history. There was a good show on NPR the other day. It was on the BBC World Service show called *The Changing World*. The broadcast was called "Yiddish: Struggle for Survival."

At its height, Yiddish was the language of nearly two-thirds of the world's Jewish population. The Holocaust -- and assimilation -- brought Yiddish to the brink of extinction. But Yiddish is still alive in parts of New York City. In this documentary produced for the BBC World Service, Dennis Marks delves into the past, present, and future of the Yiddish language. You can hear a podcast of it at:

<http://thechangingworld.org>

Look for the title "Yiddish: Struggle for Survival" But now for food.

We are going to **Bananas Foster Cafe**, a new restaurant, so come try it with us. It is at **1147 W. Granville**

The menu has a little of everything; from pan fried chicken to quiche or poached salmon and everything in between and the prices are good.

We will be there at 6:15 on **March 13**

No reservations are needed, but try to arrive by 6 p.m. to ensure adequate seating. *Bete' Avon.*

### 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](mailto:office@orchadash.org) to make arrangements and pick a date. Thank you!

## Shushan meets Dragnet!

### PURIM IS HERE!

*By Carol Goldbaum,  
OC Ritual Chair*

Join us for the double feature on **Monday, March 9, 7:30PM.**

First show: Esther and Mordechai and the original reading of the Megillah Esther featuring Rabbi Larry Edwards as our narrator, Story written by G-d. Feature begins at 7:30PM

Second Show: Shushan Meets Dragnet: Produced & directed by Laurie Grauer; stage play written by Ken Green and Laurie Grauer featuring your usual cast of characters. 8:00PM or whenever the groggers stop in the first show.

Feast on Hamentashen extraordinaire following the performances.

**Come in costume**, don't be shy!! We will have a parade from the sanctuary to Dannenberg between shows.

## See us on Facebook

Or Chadash has joined the countless others on Facebook and we now have our own page. Events, photos and comments are posted. Come be a fan.

If you think you are too old for Facebook, think again. As of January, more than 50% of Facebook users and 44% of MySpace users in the U.S. were over 35 years old, according to ComScore estimates. The single biggest age demographic in the U.S. on both Facebook and MySpace is now between 35 and 44. Indeed, Facebook says its fastest-growing demo is 55-plus.

## 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**, [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org).

## Your Support is Needed

By Mike Simon,  
Development Chair

I would like to remind our members again about a great opportunity that Howard Wax and Rob Pooley have offered to our Congregation. If you have not been able to make a contribution to the Wax-Pooley Challenge Grant before December 31, please do not worry because you are not too late to make that all important donation. The Congregation has until **March 14, 2009**, which is the date of our Gala, to receive your donation.

We are still not at our goal; **please folks, no donation is too small**. You will be doing a mitzvah for your Congregation. We need to meet our goal so that Congregation Or Chadash can remain a strong and

viable GLBT synagogue now and into the future.

This Congregation has become an important part of my life and hope it is an important part of your life. I know that it is not easy to give money these days, but please give whatever you can. To those generous souls who have donated already: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

Stay well and stay warm.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:membership@orchadash.org).

## Thanks for the donation!

General donation was received from Ethel Meyer.

## Our Mission

To provide a warm and affirming community where all Jews can feel welcome. To accomplish this mission, Or Chadash will:

**Remember** that it was founded as an answer to the prejudice that gay and lesbian Jews experienced in other synagogues;

**Strive** to ensure that no Jew experiences prejudice within our community;

**Maintain** affiliations with the Union for Reform Judaism and the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations;

**Build** strong ties within the greater Jewish community of the metropolitan Chicago area;

**Dedicate** itself to the basic obligations of Jewish life, including:

- **Respecting** the contributions of people of all generations
- **Sharing** the life-cycle events of its members
- **Celebrating** Shabbat and the holidays
- **Fostering** prayer with sincerity
- **Visiting** the sick
- **Comforting** the bereaved
- **Encouraging** the study of Torah

Congregation Or Chadash is a not-for-profit organization that is largely supported by contributions from its members and friends. Please remember us generously.

## Cycles of Our Lives

### Happy Birthday

March 1	Ethel Meyer
March 5	Howard I. Aronson
March 13	Jehuda Jacobi
March 18	Leah Neaderthal
March 22	Frances Nathanson
March 24	Sarah and Marcus Wax-Pooley
March 29	Susan Jacobson

### Happy Anniversary

There are no anniversaries this month

### Thanks for the Oneg....

*And belated thanks for February Onegs:*

**Friday, February 6:** Oneg sponsored by Barry Gleitman (no purpose requested)

**Friday, February 20:** Oneg sponsored by Lilli Kornblum in honor of her birthday

**Friday, March 6:** Oneg sponsored by Marshall Keltz in memory of Norman Cutler

**Saturday, March 7:** Lunch sponsored by Howard Aronson in honor of his birthday

**Friday, March 13:** Oneg sponsored by Marvin Levin in memory of his parents, Leonard and Celia Levin

**Friday, March 20:** Oneg sponsored by Bill Gates in celebration of his and his father's moves. And thanks to all for the support he received and rides to the south side during the moves

**Friday, March 27:** Oneg sponsored by Joel Fink and Rick Greenthal in honor of Morris Stroz

### March Service Schedule

**March 6:** Barry Weinstein and Judith Golden, 8 p.m.

**March 7:** Saturday morning Shabbat service, 10 a.m. A light lunch follows.

**March 13:** Torah Service, with Rabbi Edwards, 8 p.m.

**March 20:** Shabbat Service Rabbi Edwards, 8 p.m.

**March 27:** Shabbat service with Rabbi Cosnowsky, Carol Goldbaum, and Judith Golden, 8 p.m. A potluck dinner precedes the service at 7 p.m. Please bring a kosher style side dish (no pork or shellfish, no mixing of meat and milk) or dessert to share.

## GALA 2009 – A Magical Evening Time Is Running Out!!! By Bill Wahler, OC Vice President

The Gala is two weeks away. If you haven't sent in your response card to let us know you are coming, there is still time. You don't want to miss the social event of the season so **plan to be at the East Bank Club on March 14.**

We are still seeking donations for the Silent Auction. If you have not spoken to friends, family or passing strangers there are still a few more days to get that donation to us. Make the rounds of your neighborhood and see what donations you might get from local businesses.

If you have any questions call **Bill Wahler at 847-321-0155** or e-mail him at [Office@OrChadash.org](mailto:Office@OrChadash.org).

## 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.



### Come hear Rabbi Andrea Cosnowsky on Friday, March 27!

Rabbi Andrea Cosnowsky is Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Etz Chaim in Lombard since 2005 coming from Congregation Beth Adam in Loveland, Ohio. Born and raised in Ardsley, New York, Rabbi Cosnowsky earned her BA in English Literature at SUNY Empire State College. After college, she moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where she enjoyed a career as a professional singer-songwriter (country-western).

Rabbi Cosnowsky still writes music, though not professionally. After an exciting ten years of living her musical dream, she felt called to the rabbinate, and was ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati in 2004. "As a songwriter, I didn't get to see my impact on others. Being a rabbi allows me the privilege of being part of people's lives at critical moments. Whether those moments are joyous or sorrowful, it is always a privilege. I am blessed to be able to touch individual lives every day."

She and her partner, Jane, have a 5-year-old son, Jacob.

Rabbi Cosnowsky will offer the D'var Torah, tell a little of her story (and maybe share a song or two) at **Or Chadash Shabbat Services on March 27.**

*P'nei Shabbat N'kablak –*  
**Let Us Welcome the Sabbath!**  
*By Rabbi Laurence Edwards*

On a hilltop in Galilee perches the old town of Safed (Tzfat, in Hebrew). The first printing press in the Middle East was established here in 1578. On the very day I was born, Safed was the scene of a major battle of Israel's War of Independence. Today, tourists browse in its art galleries, and on Friday evenings melody drifts into the streets from its many old synagogues.

When we join together on Friday nights to sing *L'cha Dodi*, we are repeating words composed by Rabbi Solomon Ha-Levi Alkabetz, one of the circle of Kabbalists who gathered here during the century following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. At that time, Palestine was a province of the Ottoman Empire, whose Sultan welcomed the Jews forced to flee the territories controlled by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. The Jewish mystical tradition reached its fullest flowering here, and our most tangible inheritance of that time is the liturgy known as Kabbalat Shabbat, the psalms and songs with which we welcome the Sabbath Queen.

Solomon Alkabetz could not have imagined how many tunes would be created to accompany his mystical poem. He and his friends, including Rabbi Joseph Karo (author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Code of Jewish Law) and the young genius Rabbi Isaac Luria who, it was said, could look at a person's face and read their soul, were part of the most intense spiritual community Jews have known since Sinai. The exiles from Spain carried with them the Zohar, the mystical Book of Splendor, and settled here near the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai. Bar Yohai was said to be the author of the Zohar, which had survived underground and was miraculously "discovered" in Spain about the year 1300.

All of this is long ago and far away, and yet, when we kindle our Shabbat lights and rise to welcome the Shabbat Queen with the final verse of *L'cha Dodi*, we are gathering some of the sparks scattered around the Jewish world by that mystic circle from 16<sup>th</sup>-century Safed.

Do not let the prayers of our Friday nights be a secret code. Come early on **Friday, March 20 (at 7:15)** for a user-friendly tour of the Kabbalat Shabbat liturgy. The more we know, and the more directed our *kavannah* (intention), the more sparks we can raise together!

**Reflection for Rosh Chodesh Adar**  
*By Judith Golden*

Adar we journey  
 From horror to hilarity

Visiting the extremes  
 As we work to find our center

With Esther we learn to come out of hiding  
 To face the truth  
 Of who we are

Of our danger

Of our fear  
 Of the Haman within our own hearts  
 Of our obligation to act  
 Against the darkness that threatens  
 our aliveness  
 To risk choosing survival . . . and  
 wholeness

We learn to set aside our garment of heaviness  
 Laden with the knowledge of what was  
 And what might have been  
 To laugh at ourselves  
 Noisily overpowering the voices of deadness

As winter ends  
 Leaving us on the threshold of spring

We celebrate life  
 With abandon



