

## Plenty of Hanukkah fun at RCOS



*There was plenty of Hanukkah fun at the synagogue this year, including our annual Latkes & Vodkas pairing and a fun party in advance of the first night.*

## From the Rabbi's Study

# Freezing for a good cause

Like many people, I don't enjoy being cold. As I have gotten older, I find that the cold bothers me more. My hands

### Rabbi Brian Michelson

start to numb, and my toes feel like they will never warm up again. It is a terrible feeling. However, on Saturday, Feb. 22, I will get cold on purpose.

That Saturday, the Coldest Night of the Year sponsors a five-mile walk to raise money for the New Journey Community Outreach Program. NJCO provides free lunches in the city four days a week and a food pantry on the fifth. The Temple has been working with New Journey in its various forms for over 30 years. I often volunteered to help prepare and serve lunch on days when the Temple provided volunteers. It was a powerful

moment to serve people what might be their only complete meal for the day. It was a reminder of how lucky I am and how close many of us are to living with food insecurity. "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

I want to invite you to join us for the walk or support the walkers from our team. Appropriately, I chose the name "RCOS-Frozen Chosen." As of this writing, our team has five members, and we are the highest-grossing team. Holly and I are among the top five fundraisers for the event, but I know we can do so much more. To donate, please visit <https://cnoy.w-ith.me/Rabbi-Brian> or scan the QR code in the accompanying ad. If you would like to join us for the walk, you can visit the same page, but click on the "View Team Page" button, and it will take you to a page where



the invitation to walk will be in the upper right-hand corner.

I know that there are many good causes, including RCOS,

that are asking for money. I hope you will respect my desire to get cold for charity and support me and our team in this vital endeavor.

**Thank you to members who have generously donated to the Security Fund. We have received over 50 positive responses to the letter from the Rabbi and president regarding the need for every member to support our security fund.**

### Greater Temple Fund

In honor of Estelle Cardone's special birthday  
Sandee & Neal Nevitt

In honor of Margot Gompertz's special birthday

Joan & David Rosenfeld

A donation has been received from

Esther Bratt  
Rita Galovic  
Rosalye Yashek

### Arthur Hammel Fund

A donation has been received from

Dena & Victor Hammel

### Jeraldine Kozloff Music Fund

In memory of Harriet Baskin  
Carrie & Stephen Latman  
Yvonne & Emanuel Wittels  
Susan G. Wachs  
Judith Keppley  
Mindy & Richard Small

A donation was received from  
Dr. Neil Hoffman

## HOUSE COMMITTEE SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The House Committee is seeking one or two volunteers to join its ranks. The committee oversees the physical plant of the Temple. Committee members normally have some experience with facilities management, construction management and/or maintenance activities. Members may be asked to render opinions on proper resolution of current building issues, solicit bids and administer contracts for small maintenance or improvement projects or perform some hands-on work with the aid of our custodian. The committee meets bi-monthly, most frequently on Zoom. Assignments vary widely but average about 1 or 2 hours per month. If you have some interest in keeping our Temple a valued asset to the congregation and a showpiece to the community, please contact Jim Harrison at 484 769 5858 or Treasurer@ohebsholom.org.



# How can we build on growing membership trend?

By **Deborah Montanino**  
Membership Committee

*The first of four monthly articles from the Membership Committee*

Over the past 18 months, we have welcomed 21 new members/families to RCOS, bringing our current total to 200 families. There are many reasons our new members have joined us — they recently moved to the area, they started a family and want their children to have a Jewish education, they recently completed their conversion process, or they simply wanted to reconnect with their Jewish “roots.” (I would like to think it’s because of my outstanding skills as chair of the Membership Committee, but I’m

afraid that’s not it!)

According to a 2024 Jewish Federation of North America report:

- Jewish life in America is changing at a rapid pace.
- Events [10/7 attacks, war in Gaza, rising antisemitism, and campus protests] have fueled an explosion in Jewish belonging and communal participation.
- Jews are feeling more invested in their identity and community and looking for ways to connect.
- Of the 83% of Jews who were “only somewhat,” “not very” or “not at all engaged” prior to 10/7, 40% are now showing up in larger numbers in Jewish life.

The surge of individuals includes every age demographic.

Among Jews who are not members of synagogues, 37% say they would be open to joining one now.

This surge of interest in Jewish belonging is a positive trend. Building a strong and engaged Jewish community is critical, so the Membership Committee will continue to foster strong connections with current members as well as grow our membership base. Our role at RCOS is to attract new members and engage current ones through outreach, networking, and social events. We sponsor several events throughout the year including: two or three Happy Hours, the

Spring + Fall Musical Shabbats, the Spring + Fall Speaker Series, and the New Member/Teacher Appreciation Shabbat. We also publish the Membership Directory annually to help members stay connected.

Are there other things we could be doing to help foster stronger connections? We welcome your input! Please reach out to me at [membership@ohebsholom.org](mailto:membership@ohebsholom.org), or 571-239-8168, or any other committee member: Cindy Chronister, Lynn Driben, Sandy Fishman, Margo Levin, Grechen Platt, and Tracy Weiss.

Finally, is anyone interested in joining the Membership Committee? We are always looking for new members so let us know.

## Thank you

**Thank you to the following for ushering in November and December:**

Marty Beckerman

Jeri Deisinger

Lynn Driben

Jill Haas

Margo Levin

Esther Shanahan

Sue Weisberg

### REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM

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Brian I. Michelson, Rabbi

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**Rabbi Brian Michelson:**

[rabbi@ohebsholom.org](mailto:rabbi@ohebsholom.org)

**Kandyce Clark, administrative secretary:**

[temple.office@ohebsholom.org](mailto:temple.office@ohebsholom.org)

**Beth Bruck, bookkeeper:**

[bookkeeper@ohebsholom.org](mailto:bookkeeper@ohebsholom.org)

**James Rowe, webmaster:**

[jamesrowe@outlook.com](mailto:jamesrowe@outlook.com)

## About our bulletin

**Editor:** Mark Nemirow ([marknem@aol.com](mailto:marknem@aol.com)  
or 610-334-8438)

*Please contact the Temple office for information on advertising and sponsorship opportunities.*

**Deadline for February issue is Jan. 5**

## *Perpetual Memorials*

**Feb. 1-8**  
 William Bash  
 Valena R. Cohen  
 Julia Ehrlich  
 Natalie Folkman  
 Hattie Horowitz  
 Ernest E. Israel  
 Nathan Marcus  
 Susie Marcus  
 Leon Reidenberg, MD  
 Irving Steinberg

**Feb. 9-15**  
 David Grotta  
 Mildred H. Lurio  
 Ruth Y. Ruttenberg  
 Goldie Schachter  
 Ella Weitzman

**Feb. 16-22**  
 Hannah Bash  
 Rebecca Bash  
 Ralph Brok  
 Ruth Brok  
 Emanuel B. Friedman  
 Thelma Garfinkle  
 Isaac Goldsmith  
 Irwin Kins  
 Abram B. Luria  
 Meyer Lurio  
 Jimmy Mendelsohn  
 Jacob H. Miller  
 Leonard Schiff, Jr.  
 Virginia Smith Sinaink  
 Fred Stein

**Feb. 23-28**  
 Rudolf Abrams  
 Sylvia R. Ball  
 Doris Brok  
 Belle Edelstein  
 Harry Edelstein  
 Stanley Folkman  
 Eugene Friedman  
 Ruth Harrison  
 Carrye L. Loewenstein  
 Lawrence Schlanger  
 Samuel L. Shaffer  
 Louise Wiener

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

Susan & William Weiser Feb. 12

Cathy & Whitney Sanders Feb. 21

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Frantz Peretz Feb. 1  
 John Incledon Feb. 5  
 Ellen Mitnick Feb. 5  
 Howard Saidman Feb. 6  
 Adam Spiegel Feb. 6  
 Paul Mitnick Feb. 7  
 Michael Pardo Feb. 7

Richard Tomlinson Feb. 8  
 Neal Nevitt Feb. 9  
 Ronald Strieb Feb. 9  
 Brian Chartock Feb. 10  
 Norman Winston Feb. 11  
 Jeri Diesinger Feb. 13  
 Susan Weiser Feb. 15

William Weiser Feb. 19  
 Deborah Cooper Feb. 23  
 Pam Charendoff Feb. 25  
 Ilene Weizer Feb. 26  
 George Viener Feb. 27  
 David Walker Feb. 27  
 Martin Jacobson Feb. 28

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# February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> 9:30 AM Religious School	<b>27</b> 12 PM Torah Study 7 PM Board Meeting	<b>28</b> 3:30 PM Hebrew School	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7:45 PM 4th & 5th Grade Service	<b>1</b> 10 AM Haftarah Study Group
<b>2</b> 9:30 AM Religious School 1 PM Cookie Decorating Event	<b>3</b> 12 PM Torah Study 7 PM Security Committee Meeting	<b>4</b> 1.1 AM Lunch & Learn @ The Highlands 3:30 PM Hebrew School	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 6 PM GAN Service w/ Cantor Stuart Binder and Dinner to Follow	<b>8</b> 10 AM Tot Shabbat w/ Cantor Stuart Binder
<b>9</b> 9:30 AM Religious School	<b>10</b> 12 PM Torah Study 7 PM Executive Committee Meeting	<b>11</b> 3:30 PM Hebrew School	<b>12</b> 7 PM Joint Tu B'Shevat Seder	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:45 PM Shabbat Service	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> NO Religious School	<b>17</b> President's Day OFFICE CLOSED	<b>18</b> NO Hebrew School	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7 PM Balis Committee Meeting	<b>21</b> 6 PM Shabbat Service	<b>22</b> 10 AM Learner's Service 5 PM Coldest Night of the Year Event
<b>23</b> 9:30 AM Religious School	<b>24</b> 12 PM Torah Study 7 PM Board Meeting	<b>25</b> 3:30 PM Hebrew School	<b>26</b> 7 PM Membership Committee Meeting	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 6 PM Community Shabbat and Dinner w/ Cantor Stuart Binder	<b>1</b> 10 AM Haftarah Study Group

# Liefer-Fein scholarship application deadline is Feb. 1

By Steven Levine

Feb. 1 is the deadline to submit applications to the Liefer-Fein Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee for 2025-2026 academic year awards.

The application form is available at [ohebsholom.org](http://ohebsholom.org). Completed applications will need to be returned by Feb. 1 to

qualify for consideration. Applications will be reviewed and interviews held between February and April. Scholarship winners will be announced May 1.

The Liefer-Fein Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1971 by Nathan and Allerta Fein and has been supplemented by a major donation

from Joseph Liefer.

The income from this fund is used to provide scholarships for higher education to children of members of our congregation in good standing.

The awards are based on academic achievement, need, and character. The size of the scholarship(s) is dependent on the

income from the fund.

The Liefer-Fein Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee is composed of Steven Levine, Chair, Pat Frankel, Rabbi Brian Michelson, Bruce Cohen, Holly Michelson, and Scott Davis.

Contact Steven Levine at [levkom2@verizon.net](mailto:levkom2@verizon.net) or 484-332-8726 with questions.

# Purim Spiel tradition continues this March

By Vicki Haller Graff

A decade ago, Michael Pardo began a beloved Oheb Sholom tradition: the musical Purim spiel. I know I am not alone as someone who looked forward to learning the musical theme of each spiel, from the Beatles, to Disney, to Rogers and Hammerstein. Mike's clever lyrics and silly characterizations transported us to Shushan each year with comedy and a lot of heart.

Though Mike Pardo moved to a new community, I'm honored to carry this tradition forward. It just wouldn't be Purim without it!

To that end, I'm pleased to announce the 2025 Oheb

Sholom Purim Spiel: "A Spiel on the Roof!"

A spiel on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But here, in our little village of Wyomissing, you might say every one of us is a fiddler on the roof trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple spiel without breaking his neck.

From Anatevka of "Fiddler on the Roof" to Shushan of the Book of Esther, our people struggled and also found joy. We faced those in power who wanted to kill us all and, as Tevye would say, "on the other hand," stood together in celebration and sadness to stand up for our community. There were also a few headstrong women,

men looking for beautiful wives, and very important secrets. We are pairing two very Jewish stories. What's not to like!?


As always, keeping with tradition, our spiel will have a musical theme, will be performed by congregants and friends, and will be very silly. All ages are welcome in the audience.

And because traditions

change and evolve, this year we are including younger members of our congregation. We have to plant seeds for spiels to come!



Please mark your calendar for Thursday, March 13, at 7 p.m. for Erev Purim.

Join us in the sanctuary to celebrate the endurance of the Jewish people through song and merriment! Right? Of course right!



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Spiel  
on the Roof





Thursday, March 13, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing

A spiel on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But here, in our little village of Wyomissing, you might say every one of us is a fiddler on the roof trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple spiel without breaking his neck.

Join us for this annual TRADITION!  
(But don't worry, we'll be in the sanctuary.)

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# Making a positive impact that can last

**By Holly Michelson**  
*Religious School Director*

Every month, I change the front bulletin board where everyone walks in. Some of the board stays the same and some of it, like the monthly calendar, the values being taught, and Hebrew birthdays change every month.

Recently, I was cleaning it up and swapped out the construction paper that was behind “Have you ever wanted to see what it would be like to read Hebrew without vowels?” On the blue paper that I changed out I could still read the original words. Parts of the paper had faded away, from time, the wind blowing in, the sun that shines in, whatever, but the shadow of the image remained.

We often, as parents, teachers, or anyone who is trying to make a difference don’t always get to see the outcomes, the future, the consequences, the successes.

Several years ago, I was visiting the congregation where I grew up, became Bat Mitzvah, Confirmed, taught in the Religious School, sang in the choir, and married Rabbi Michelson. A young woman came up to me



*The Religious School bulletin board has a lasting message.*

and introduced herself. She was so excited to see me. Her name didn’t sound familiar, so she explained that I was her kindergarten teacher in Religious School many, many years ago. She herself became a Jewish Educator and credits the seed of the idea coming from me. It had to have been at least 20 years ago and it was hard to believe that I really made a difference but she insisted that I did.

Unfortunately, I’ve also found myself in a position where someone was upset with me for an offer of help. I thought I was being helpful. They were offended that I



*Fourth- and fifth-graders take part in a trust walk.*

thought they needed that particular assistance. In that case, thankfully, I was able to apologize.

We all try to do our best. We don’t always get that chance. Never stop trying to make a positive impact. Be a good example. Say sorry when you need to. Hopefully you will be able to see the fruit of your labors or make amends if necessary. Our children watch us more carefully than we realize.

As Stephen Sondheim wrote in “Into the Woods,” children will listen.

Best comment from a child this month (and timely for this article): “I like Sundays now!”

### **Reminders:**

**Feb 7:** Gan leading services at 6 p.m. Dinner to follow. Remember to RSVP.

**Feb 16:** No school

**Feb 18:** No Hebrew this week

**Feb 28:** Community Shabbat Dinner

## Give these new members a warm welcome

### **Leamor Kahanov and Mitch Wasik**

Mitch and Leanir feel incredibly welcomed into Oheb Sholom. Here are some quick takes on us as new members:



1. We realized we have few pictures of us together in trying to find one for the newsletter.
2. We feel that if we made the effort to complete errands we need a treat like a coffee drink.
3. We love to travel - short or long trips.
4. We have two adult kids living on the East Coast (Yonah and Noam)
5. Reading is our 9th move to different communities in our 35 years together. From Arizona, San Francisco, Indiana, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
6. Leamor is an avid biker, and Mitch believes God only gives one a certain number of workouts and he used all his.
7. We enjoy game nights, especially trivia.
8. Service is important to us to support our communities.
9. Leamor works for Alvernia University and Mitch for St. Luke’s Hospital

**SAVE THE DATE**

# Mediterranean Nights

Join your friends at RCOS for an evening of music, fun, and great mediterranean cuisine!

**SATURDAY, APRIL 5 @ 6:30 pm**

Cocktails, Dinner, Music  
& Balis Volunteer Appreciation Award  
Presentation to Carol Cohn

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## COMMUNITY SHABBAT

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2025

**6:00 pm Shabbat Service**  
**6:45 pm Catered Kosher Dinner**

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**555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing**

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**\$118 Family of 5 or more**  
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Community Shabbat is an open event for our Berks County Jewish community to come together to celebrate. This annual event is planned in partnership with Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, Keshet Zion Synagogue, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, and Chabad Lubavitch of Reading