

# Congregation Beth Mordecai

224 High Street, Perth Amboy NJ 08861

Office - 732-442-1373

Rabbi - 732-442-2431

March 2014

OfficeBethMordecai@gmail.com

## SERVICES

Please see  
page 5 for  
events and  
service times.

### Officers of Beth Mordecai

President  
-Norman Silverstein

Vice-President  
-Alan Roy

Treasurer  
-Matt Richter

Secretary  
-Scott Gursky

Executive Director  
-Elliot Rubin

Like Us  
On  
Facebook

# It's Here !

## “Homecoming Weekend”

March 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**Schmooze ! Eat ! Reconnect !  
Reminisce ! Celebrate Purim !**

# *It's still not too late!*

*Don't miss the boat.*

*Sign up NOW at*  
[www.BethMordecai.org](http://www.BethMordecai.org)

or call the office **NOW...732-442-1373**

# The Healthy Growth of our Minyan

## By Rabbi Ari Y. Saks



A few months after my first High Holidays at Beth Mordecai in 2012, I was sitting with our (now) President Norman Silverstein to talk about what was happening in the synagogue. The meeting occurred in the middle of the week after another failure to make a *minyan*[1] on Saturday morning. As we talked about some of our successes like the Pep Rally, Shabbat by the Sea, the High Holidays, and the Installation, Norman also made a critical point about our *minyan*. He said that the health of our community is only as strong as our weekly *minyan* because that's where we spend the most amount of

time together. At the time, I was hesitant to agree. I've seen many independent *minyanim* in New York and Israel thrive on a once a month basis and how some of these *minyanim* struggled when they went to a weekly schedule because of the added time commitment. Could we get people in our community to make that much of a regular commitment? Or should the health of our community be based on the success of our special services and unique events that entice people to come on a less intense schedule?

Fast forward almost 15 months and I still believe that special services and unique events (like our upcoming Homecoming Weekend on March 14-16) do more to bring our community together than regular *minyanim*. Yet, as I've seen the weekly ebb and flow of our community through the prism of our weekly Shabbat *minyanim*, I've also realized that Norman was right: the health of our community *is* dependent upon the success of our weekly *minyanim*, and I'm happy to report that nearly 15 months since that conversation, **our *minyan*'s growth[2] is healthy.**

Continued on page 12

1—Quorum of 10 post bar/bat mitzvah Jewish people needed to say all of the prayers in the service, including the Mourner's *Kaddish*.

2—There are many different ways to quantify and qualify "growth." For the purpose of this article though, I will only be focusing on attendance figures.

## Irena Sendler—The Woman Who Did Not Stand By



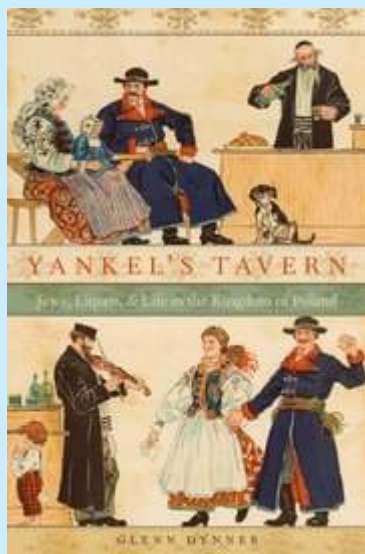
Please click on the link below to read the article

<http://www.thejidf.org/2014/02/irena-sendler-woman-that-did-not-stand.html>

**Beth Mordecai is pleased to announce that we have a new “Caring Committee” that will do out reach to those who cannot get out, are ill at home, or in the hospital and would like some help, or an ear to speak to.**

**Please call the committee chairperson if you would like to contact us. See page 7 mission statement. Sherry Weber at 908-756-7854.**

## A short history of Polish Jewish tavern keeping



Please click on the link below to read the article

<http://blog.oup.com/2014/01/jewish-polish-tavernkeeping/>

## SHEVCHENKO MONUMENTS

Granite – Cemetery Inscriptions – Bronze  
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Perth Amboy NJ 08861

732-442-1286 fax 732-697-0418

## *Flynn and Son*

*Memorial Home, Inc.*

319 Amboy Ave. Metuchen  
Brendan J. Flynn Jr. Mgr.  
NJ Lic No. 4105

23 Ford Ave. Edison-Fords  
420-424 East Ave. Perth Amboy  
Brendan J. Flynn Mgr.  
NJ Lic. No 2958  
James J. Flynn Mgr NJ Lic No 4152

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Our Bulletin**

# Happy Birthday

March



Janet Lipman

Daniel M. Goldman

Ann Preminger

Louis Sher

Phyllis Rosen

Allen Weingarten

Bob Krentar

Gloria Rubin



**Book Reading to Kids  
By Rabbi Saks  
at Barnes & Noble  
March 9th at 10 am**

JCC OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
CONGREGATION NEVE SHALOM  
CONGREGATION BETH MORDECAI  
PRESENT....

**PURIM CARNIVAL  
EXTRAVAGANZA!**





at the  
JCC OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
1775 Oak Tree Rd., Edison  
SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2014  
12 noon-3 pm

☺ LIVE REPTILE SHOW      ☺ Face Painting  
☺ InFlatable Bounce      ☺ Swimming

*Two prize tickets if you come in costume!  
Food Available for Purchase*

**Free Admission—  
Free Games**

For more information or TO VOLUNTEER,  
call Jennine at 732-999-3232 ext. 622



# Services and Events

## March

Saturday, March 1 -- Family Shabbat **11 am**

**Friday, March 14 -- Sunday, March 16 --**

## Homecoming Weekend

Sunday, March 16 – Community Purim

Carnival Mar 16 12-3pm

## April

Friday, April 4 -- Family Shabbat **6:30 pm**

Saturday, April 12 – Cantorial Showcase

Tuesday night, April 15 – BM Communal Seder

Monday, April 21 -- Yizkor

## May

Saturday, May 3 -- Family Shabbat **11am**

Saturday, May 31 -- Cantorial Showcase + Scholar

**See page 11 for last minute updates**



## What's on our Facebook page?

([www.facebook.com/CongregationBethMordecai](http://www.facebook.com/CongregationBethMordecai))

### KIDZ KORNER

(Sundays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays @ 2 pm)

### JEWISH CURRENT

EVENTS UPDATE (Mondays & Wednesdays @ 2 pm)

### BLAST FROM THE PAST

(Wednesdays and Thursdays @ 5 pm)

### RABBI'S JOURNAL (Daily)

### ONLINE PARASHAH

CLASS (Fridays @ 12:30 pm)

**PLUS** Israeli news, interesting articles, fun videos, communal conversations, advertisements and much, much more!

*Our Facebook page: Your daily source to connect with your Jewish Home for the Soul!*

**Volunteers Needed for office help and to make phone calls for the Homecoming. Please contact our office if you can help out. Thank you,**

# Here are some opportunities to donate to Beth Mordecai:

- Rabbi Discretionary Fund
- Programming Fund
- Temple Fund
- Sisterhood Tribute Fund
- Sponsor Shabbat evening Oneg 50.00
- Sponsor Shabbat morning Kiddush 100.00
- Memorial Tablet 300.00
- Memorial Plaque 1200.00

Please use form to mail a donation.

Send to:

Address:

In Honor Of/In Memory Of/Other

Name & address of contributor:

Amount of Gift:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate to which fund you are donating:

- Friday night Oneg \$50
- Shabbat morning Kiddush \$100
- Programming Fund
- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- Sisterhood Tribute Fund
- Temple Fund
- Memorial Tablet \$300
- Memorial Plaque \$1200

Please send this form with a check to:  
**Congregation Beth Mordecai**  
**224 High Street**  
**Perth Amboy, NJ 08861**

To donate on line with Paypal, click below.

<http://bethmordecai.org/donate/>

## Friday Candle Lighting Times – March

Mar 7 5:37 pm

Mar 14 6:45 pm

Mar 21 6:52 pm

Mar 28 7:00 pm



## Perth Amboy Time

For your zip code times please click link below.  
[Hebc.com](http://www.hebc.com)

<http://www.hebc.com/hebc/?v=1;geo=zip;zip=08861;m=72;vis=on;month=6;year=2013;nh=on;nx=on;s=on;c=on;mf=on;ss=on;tz=-5;dst=usa>

If there is some Nuus that you would like us to know about please send an email to the office.

We want to hear from you.

[OfficeBethMordecai@gmail.com](mailto:OfficeBethMordecai@gmail.com)

# **Caring Committee Mission Statement**

**The purpose of Beth Mordecai's Caring Committee is to reach out to members of our community in times of need. We believe that this is what it means to be part of a caring Jewish congregation and community. We want to offer friendship, comfort and companionship especially at times when it is most needed. We want people to know we are a family in our Jewish Home for the Soul.**

## **Ways in which we can help:**

**We will do our best to provide rides to the synagogue when needed.**

**We will help to organize a minyan when a family is sitting shiva.**

**We will pick up a few items at the grocery store, or pick up a prescription for people who are homebound.**

**We will make phone calls to people we are unable to visit.**

**We will try to arrange visits to people who are hospitalized, in a nursing home or a rehab facility especially during Jewish holidays.**

**We will try and make brief visits to people who are homebound so we can chat and possibly share a cup of tea or coffee. We are not professional healthcare aids or medical professionals and as such cannot provide care in a professional manner, but we do want to offer our friendship and compassion when it is most needed.**

## **How you can help us accomplish our mission:**

**We welcome any members of our congregation who feel that they would like to join us and help us to reach out to others in our community when needed. Please don't hesitate to call us if you think we can be of assistance.**

**Contact: Sherry Weber 908-451-9708**

**Rabbi Ari Saks: 732-442-1373 [ari.saks@gmail.com](mailto:ari.saks@gmail.com)**





***Return of a small Torah to Beth Mordecai that was loaned out seven years ago to another synagogue. Norm Rosen (L) and Lou Sher (R) made the trip to pick it up and return it to Beth Mordecai.***





# In Loving Memory We Remember...

## IN MEMORY OF

Ervine Pollack  
Max August  
Lilloian Miriam Katz  
David Cutler  
Shulamith Duvdevani  
Rose Kessler  
Anna Greenspan  
Benjamin Fink  
Abraham Grove  
Tamara Zborovsky  
Sarah Freiberg  
Dr. Albert Klein  
Bernard Schulhaus  
Sarah Schulhaus  
Peppy Kluff  
Lelia Binder  
Mort Kossowsky  
Reuben Levinson  
Dora D. Kelsey  
Samuel Epstein  
Esther Mattes  
Jean K. Jacobson  
Abraham Grossman  
Joyce Yaffe  
Philip Graber  
Stanley & Leonard Monsky  
Victoria Goldstein  
Gershon Robinson  
Morris Goldfarb  
Nancy Metzendorf  
Dinah Gorelick  
paypal donation  
Daniel Zelbo  
Julius Selinger  
Jon Shevell  
Minnie Sturm  
Isidor Gast  
Bella Reiser  
Jeanette Klein  
Florence Zimmerman

## BY

Arky, Robert  
August, Dorothy & Cheryl  
Brown, Sandra & Richard  
Cutler, Martin & Paula  
Duvdevani, Avi & Marsha  
Goldstein, Irene & Marty  
Greenspan, Barbara  
Greenspan, Barbara  
Grove, Martin & Marjorie  
Karlin, Sergey & Leah  
Kaufman, Howard & Marian  
Klein, Robert B & Elaine  
Klein\*, Ethel  
Klein\*, Ethel  
Kluff, Jean C  
Korbman, E. Harry & Shirley  
Kossowsky, Joan  
Levinson, Shirley  
Levinson, Shirley  
Lyons, Elyse  
Mattes, Alvin & Lillian  
Messing, Norma Jacobson  
Miller, Seymour & Arlene  
Miller, Ila & Patrick  
Mitzman, Selma  
Monsky, William & Roslyn  
Robinson, Fredda  
Robinson, Fredda  
Rosengarten, Barry  
Rosengarten, Barry  
Roy, Alan & Vardi  
Roy, Alan & Vardi  
Scheps, Lorraine  
Selinger, Helen  
Shevell\*, Mike  
Siegel, Alan & Louise  
Walker, Judith & Stanley  
Weber, Sherry  
Wurtzel, Les & Judy  
Zimmerman, Nate



# The President's Jewish Half Brother

Click on the link below to read the Times of Israel's article.



<file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Temple/Desktop/Nuus%202014/No.%20we're%20not%20a%20normal%20family,%20says%20Obama's%20Jewish%20half-brother%20%20%20The%20Times%20of%20Israel.htm>

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## General Donations

*We appreciate the generous donations made to our synagogue by the following people.*

*Hannah Rose Adams*

*Mike Shevell*

# New Events for March

## Ask the Rabbi

On Wednesday, Rabbi Saks, at 12:10 pm in the food court at Menlo Park Mall in Edison will answer any and all questions from everyone. March 5. Other dates to follow.



## Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat

In honor of the anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah Torah portion, Rabbi Saks invites all members to share the stories from their bar and bat mitzvahs.

**Learning with the Rabbi**  
Every Thursday, Rabbi Saks, at 9:00 am will be in the Woodbridge Panera across from WEGMANS. Stop by and learn with him.

Get Mitzvah Points, we need Oneg and Kiddush Sponsors.  
Please contact our office for further details.

## Continued from page 2

Because of the size of our community, I've been able to get a good handle on how often we get a *minyan* and who comes on Friday night and Saturday morning. Around the time of my conversation with Norman, and continuing for a good half of my first year, I would estimate that we managed to get a *minyan* nearly 50-70% of the time. Fridays were generally our strongest *minyan*, though sometimes we did not hit the required 10 people, and we often struggled with Saturday mornings even though there was **always a delicious Kiddush lunch** to follow!

Yet, this is no longer the case. Using some hard data I've collected since last May, I am pleased to let you know that over the last two and a half months, we have achieved a *minyan* in 13 of our 14 regular *minyanim* on both Fridays and Saturdays (93% success rate) and we have averaged just over *14 people per minyan!*<sup>[3]</sup> Clearly this is a change from those early days when we were struggling to get 10 for a *minyan*, and it's even a change from June 2013 till these past High Holidays when we only achieved a *minyan* 56% of the time. What's even more impressive is that when it comes to attendance, 4 out of the top 10 *minyanim* over the past two years have occurred during these past two and a half months (two of which numbered in the 20s). And if we exclude the special weekday *minyanim* we arranged for shiva or for yahrtzeit, then the number jumps from 4 to 7 out of the top 10 *minyanim* for attendance.

That doesn't mean that there isn't room to grow. Only a handful of our members attend both Friday and Saturday services together on a regular basis (and two of them live in my home!). This has two effects – the first is that it puts an extra burden on all of the regulars who attend at least once a month to attend

3—This number does not include the times we had to cancel because of the snow or special services like White Out Friday Night, Family Shabbat, or Parashah Study because the purpose is to judge how we're doing on achieving a *minyan* on a weekly basis as opposed to special occasions.



frequently to make sure we have a *minyan*. If we use the special Shabbat by the Sea service in August as a benchmark<sup>[4]</sup> for the number of people we *could* draw to services, 21 of the 54 attendees come on a regular basis of at least once a month. As such, you can see that if we need around 20 people per weekend to make sure we have a *minyan* for both Friday and Saturday, there isn't a lot of room to spare. So while we're not expecting everyone to come every week, we believe that if more people who come only on occasion will become a regular attendee, our *minyanim* will be healthier and our communal bonds will be tighter.

This leads to the second effect of not having much crossover from Friday night to Saturday morning. If you only come at one particular time of the weekend, you will get only get half the snapshot of what our community looks like on a weekly basis. And since many of our regular attendees are some of the most active participants in our community, you won't be able to see *just how active and tight-knit of a community we're becoming*. So if you come on a Friday night, check out our Torah reading and discussions on Saturday mornings. If you mostly enjoy Saturday mornings, see the kind of spirituality we're cultivating on Friday nights.

There is much room to grow to build our *minyan* to the level it needs to be in order to be foundation for our community's health. Yet, even while there is much room to grow, there is so much we've already accomplished to make our *minyanim* healthy. So what do you say...won't you join us for *minyan*?

<sup>4</sup>—This service can be used as a benchmark because it had the highest attendance (54) of any service we've run outside the High Holidays and the first Cantor Showcase last March and it included many kinds of shul goers including people who come on a regular basis, people who come on occasion or only to special services, and people who are new to the community.