

JEWISH ST. LOUIS

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B'nai Amoona

Everyone was dressed to make a mess at the Early Childhood Center's annual messy morning. Children got messy with paint, sand, water all on the theme of going green to improve the environment in their own backyards and in Israel. Messy morning and raffle chairs were: Joyce Fisher, Jennifer Lotsoff, Ruth Raskas, Nadine Spitz and Diana Wood.

B'nai El Congregation

The congregation's Fourth Annual Trivia Night and Silent Auction was a resounding success. The sold-out event was bigger and better than ever. Nancy Goodman chaired the event and Howard Balzar was the emcee for the evening.

Beth Hamedrosh Hagodol Sha'arei Chesed

The recent scholar-in-residence program featured Rabbi Naftoli Elzas, Rosh Yeshiva of Marbeh Torah in B'nai Brak, Israel. He spoke on a variety of topics at several venues including his keynote lecture on the secret to being free held at the synagogue. There was also a home group discussion hosted by Diane and Scott Andrew.

Central Reform Congregation

The advocacy and leadership series continued on Wednesday evenings. Recent guest speakers included: Martin Rafanan from the National Conference for Community and Justice, Alison Gee from Planned Parenthood and a public hearing about a proposed ballot initiative to severely limit affirmative action.

Crown Center for Senior Living

Dining program chef Jon Rubin gave a cooking demonstration to the "LChaim" group on how to make *challah*. Wearing aprons and with floured boards ready, residents Rosalie Grosman, Bernard Himeles, Bobbie Kaplan, Charles Moskowitz, Sandy Trentmann, Frances Turner and Lola Umstead learned how to measure and add ingredients, knead the dough, and create the *challah* braids. Rubin uses the same recipe to bake fresh rolls daily for center's kosher meals, served five nights a week. The "LChaim" group, generously funded by the Kahn Foundation of Temple Israel, is facilitated by Florence Schachter, Director of Social Services.

JF&CS WINGS Program



TAKING FLIGHT On Dec. 6, WINGS, a program of Jewish Family & Children's Service, celebrated Hanukkah with Rabbi Neil Rose at Congregation B'nai Amoona. The Solomon Schechter Children's Choir entertained guests and everyone took home Hanukkah gifts. WINGS offers comprehensive assistance to adults and families living with mental illness.

H.F. Epstein Hebrew Academy

The Washington University My Sci Investigation Station van visited the school. Over the summer teachers Sondra Altrogge, Liz Collins and Roz Hirschhorn took a science course at the Missouri Botanical Gardens and then taught the MySci curriculum for over two months before the investigation station's visit. Students enjoyed the opportunity to explore parts of a tree and its life cycle and they studied live plant and animal specimens. Students were also able to walk through a replica of a Missouri cave which featured stalactites, stalagmites, animals, insects and rocks.

St. Louis Rabbinical Assoc./CAJE/JCC

It was a great day of learning at the Annual Super Sunday of Jewish Learning. The keynote speaker was Rabbi Deborah Waxman of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College who spoke on "Jewish Peoplehood Among American Jews." Eight area rabbis taught on a variety of topics.

Saul Brodsky Jewish Community Library

Library director Barbara Raznick reported there are many new books and DVDs at the library. New books include: *Israel Through My Lens: Sixty Years as a Photojournalist*; *Shared Stages: Ten American Dramas of Blacks & Jews*; and *Snapshots and Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice*. New on DVD include *A Mighty Heart*, the film based on *Wall Street Journal* reporter Danny Pearl's life and death

and *The Couple* which was shown at last year's Jewish Film Festival.

Shaare Emeth

"From Kabbalah to the Big Bang: Ancient Wisdom and Contemporary Spirituality" was the topic of the Fred and Elsie Deutsch scholar-in-residence weekend with Dr. Daniel Matt one of the world's leading scholars of Kabbalah and the *Zohar*. Participants had the opportunity to explore many topics from the development of Kabbalah and the concept of *Shekhinah*, to the mystical meaning of Torah and the challenge of discovering God in the material world.

Solomon Schechter Day School

Teachers Suzanne Sloane and Sue Steiner reported the kindergarten students recently celebrated being in school for 100 days. The morning was spent participating in activities working with the number 100 including: making a 100-day hat, rolling a die 100 times to see which number appeared most, special exercises in their physical education class, a special snack and learning to say the number 100 in Hebrew.

Temple Emanuel

Members Bob Rosen, Debra Shatoff and Susan Warshaw recently led a panel discussion on the book *Nineteen Minutes*. Member Laura Fowler, history professor and archivist at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville honored presidents' weekend and provided insights into how the founding fathers of the United States were influenced by Jewish values.

Temple Israel

Deutsch Early Childhood Center director Gloria Lieberman said the first Mommy Matters class took place with several new babies and their moms in attendance. The class was planned by Cheri Rich, Emily Wallis and Kim Wallis. The class included a baby and mom exercise, additional interactive activities, socializing time and nutritious snacks for everyone.

Torah Prep School

Both schools welcomed Rosh Chodesh Adar I in their own unique ways. The 2nd-5th grade boys had an assembly and heard some great stories from Rabbi Avraham Bromberg. The 6th-8th grade girls had a delicious breakfast prepared by Sora Frank and Nechama Weiss and then enjoyed ice cream races. Bracha Elefant arranged the morning of fun activities.

United Hebrew Congregation

Chairman of the St. Louis Jewish Council of Boy Scouts of America Earl Binder helped present the awards at the Jewish Boy Scout Shabbat Service recently held at the synagogue. The Maccabee Award presented to Tiger Cub Scouts ages 7-8 is the first religious award that a Jewish scout can earn. It was given to Grant Fox, Aaron Ginsparg and Brian Wasserman. The Ner Tamid Award presented to Boy Scouts, Venturers and Explorers, ages 11-17 indicates the scout's love of Judaism through study and inclusion of Jewish values in their scouting life, as well as in everyday life. It was awarded to Michael Sobelman.

RABBINIC TIDBITS

EXCERPTS FROM SYNAGOGUE BULLETINS

Rabbi Heschel taught that the beginning of faith is awe and wonder. Miracles inspire both. They cause us to celebrate and give thanks. Their essence fills us with hope and joy. They draw us closer to God."

— RABBI JOHN FRANKEN
TEMPLE ISRAEL

How strange it is that we are free to do almost anything we want, and yet it is actually harder to keep Shabbat — it is harder to live a rich and serious Jewish life when doing Jewish conflicts with doing American. It's not that we have to choose to do one or the other. It's that we want to do both. And those two rhythms are often incompatible. So what do we do? We dare not make all Jewish observance secondary to the demands of our secular lives. But it is unreasonable (and undesirable) to expect any of us to re-ghettoize ourselves. Our lives are necessarily a balancing act. But there are places in which we can tip the balance in favor of Jewish observance. The place that we control the most is our home. Our homes can be more joyously Jewish — in our homes we can eat Jewish and we can celebrate Jewish. Friday nights can be a Shabbat family meal — if this is a consistent practice, we create a rhythm of Shabbat in our lives and in the lives of our children. Not, Shabbat when convenient; rather, Shabbat every week. I know of no other way to establish this most basic rhythm of Jewish life."

— RABBI MARK FASMAN
SHAARE ZEDEK

Iremember hearing a story about a man who was stranded on an island (not a reference to *LOST*). Every day he would wake in the morning to curse G-d for deserting him. At the end of his ritual cursing he would shudder to think of the day that he lost his belief in cursing G-d. No matter how bad it would get, he always maintained a relationship. In all of the relationships that matter, we need to maintain our commitment to face each other. Even when things get bad and we might put strain on the relationship, we have to maintain our commitment to face and embrace the hardest issues. It is easy to look someone in the eyes when you are in love. You test the endurance of your relationships if you can face them in the eye when times are tough."

— RABBI AVI KATZ ORLOW
ST. LOUIS HILLEL