



The Shofar

Congregation Beth Ahavah @ Rodeph Shalom Newsletter

A GLBT synagogue welcoming people of all gender and sexual identities since 1975

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



Happy Purim everyone. BA’s eleventh annual Purim Spiel went off superbly. And did we have a great crowd! I was so happy to have the support of my family and friends. And looking around at the audience, I could tell that so many other members of the cast had their friends and family as well.

The evening began with delicious hors d’oeuvres followed by introductions from Rabbi Jill Maderer and Cantor Jamie Murley and an abbreviated Megillah reading by three individuals including our own Ruth Schacter.

The spiel was based on the story and music of Bye Bye Birdie. “Bye Bye Purim” presented music that was catchy but admittedly very hard to learn. Timing was everything in getting the lyrics right on target. And the lyrics were very funny! We had the usual cast of characters with the wonderful additions of Cantorial Soloist Jody Kidwell as Queen Vashti, and Roy Newman as one of the Jewish girls decked out in a Blond Annie type wig, poodle skirt, and saddle shoes. Roy, nice legs! If you missed it, make sure you plan to be there next year.

This Purim was a signature event for BA. It was planned and executed in cooperation with RS. It drew the best of both congregations and as a result brought in over 150 people. I would like to say that it was a better event than ever before because of the opportunity to work with RS. It was a very positive experience. Likewise, I know RS felt the same about working with us. I would like to see us plan more events like this where by we can do events together as a whole versus separate congregations. It serves all of us in our best interests.

B’Shalom,
Jeff Strauss



Shabbat Services Friday 8:00 PM

Join us for a rabbi or lay led BA style service each month preceded by dinner and followed by an oneg & shmoozing.

March 12th

Dinner - 6:00 PM

Sazon Restaurant & Cafe
941 Spring Garden St,
Philadelphia
(215) 763-2500,

www.sazonrestaurant.com
Call Jeff Strauss to let him know you are coming, (215) 880-5251.

BA Board

Meeting

March 24th

Tuesday @ 7:00 PM

All BA members welcome



BIRTHDAYS



Jocelyn Block
March 8

Sue Levy Elwell
March 11

Robert Rose
March 15

Howard Childs
March 18

Jack Butler
March 19

Yahrzeits



Fred Strauss
March 17, 2000
10 Adar/February 24
Beloved father of
Jeff Strauss

Debbie Ehrlich Murphy
March 10, 1982
15 Adar/March 1
Beloved sister of
Phyllis Ehrlich

Nancy Belardo
March 18, 1991
3 Nissan/March 18
Beloved mother of
Jake Belarado

Ida Finn
March 20, 1916
15 Adar/March 1
Beloved grandmother of
Larry Finn

Karen Andrews
March 23, 2008
16 Adar/March 2
Beloved friend of
Jocelyn Block

LIMMUDPHILLY: A Panoramic Jewish Learningfest

Saturday night, March 6th
Sunday, March 7th
at the Gershman Y



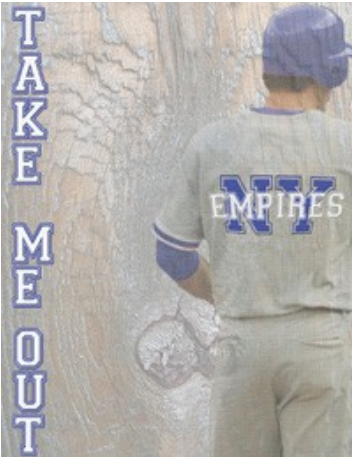
There's still time to register!

LimmudPhilly is a community-wide Jewish learningfest--designed to enhance and deepen your connection to Judaism. Last year 650 people came to this event, and we are expecting even more this year! This is Jewish learning in the broadest sense you can imagine! Over 75 scholars, artists, and educators will present the vast landscape of Jewish history, text, art, culture, and life through a variety of dynamic learning approaches including lectures, workshops, performance, and more! This unique Jewish communal experience will engage new learners as well as seasoned ones in an open environment inspired by wisdom, enthusiasm, and a love of learning. In addition, there are great opportunities to meet new people, connect with old friends, shop a craft marketplace and bookstore, connect with community service organizations and find out about many more happenings coming up in the Philly Jewish community!

Some of this year's highlights include a performance by world renowned Jewish gospel singer Joshua Nelson; the comedy stylings of Joel Chasnoff; a talk with Ruth Messinger, the National Director of the American Jewish World Service; and a Saturday night wine reception with live music. **And these are only a few of the 90 sessions that will happen over two days.** Check out the **WHOLE SCHEDULE BY CLICKING [here](#)**.

LimmudPhilly is a program designed for all ages--so, bring your friends, your kids and grandkids, your parents, and your grandparents--all are welcome and encouraged to attend!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact LimmudPhilly at 267.235.4083, info@limmudphilly.org or through their [website](#).



The Tony Award Winning Play: "Take Me Out"

**Saturday, March 12th
8:00 PM**

"Take Me Out" is written by Richard Greenberg and directed by Daniel Student is set in the world of professional baseball. "Take Me Out" looks at what happens when the star player of a professional baseball team suddenly announces his

homosexuality and the ripple effect that it has on the entire team over the course of a season. For groups of 10 or more we can get the discounted price of \$10! So, please RSVP ASAP to: bethahvah@rodephsholam.org or leave a voice mail

message with your name and phone number at 215-923-2003.

**Plays & Players
Mainstage
1714 Delancey Place
Philadelphia, PA
215-735-0630**



Passover Shabbat

Friday, April 2nd



7:00 PM – Services in the BA Room, led by **Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell**

7:30 PM – Passover Style Dinner (includes chicken, salad, kugel, dessert, wine, matzo etc.) followed by:

Passover Teaching Discussion led by Rabbi Elwell

Cost is \$25 per person.

RSVP and payment must be received by March 25th.

Complete the coupon below to reserve your place.

BA@RS Passover Shabbat Service & Dinner ☆ April 2, 2010

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

No. of persons _____ X \$25.00 = _____ enclosed.

RSVP and payment must be received by March 25th.

Return check payable to Rodeph Shalom and mail to 615 N Broad, Philadelphia, PA.



Friday, April 30

Equality Forum Shabbat with Rodeph Shalom in main sanctuary. Guest speaker: Nurit Shein, Executive Director of Mazonni Center, Philadelphia

Wednesday, May 5

BA Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 16

Brunch & Theater "An Evening Without Woody Allen" at Plays and Players

Sunday, June 13

Philadelphia Gay Pride

June 2, 2010

Transgender in the Jewish Community: An Evening of Discussion with Noach Dzuma, editor of Balancing in the Mehitza

Invitation from Lee Rosenfield

I want to invite you to join me for a very special movie and discussion that is part of a weekend long program focusing on issues of homosexuality and Judaism.

Directed by student director, Chaim Elboun, the film depicts the struggle endured by an ultra-Orthodox yeshiva student who is forced to sublimate his homosexual tendencies in a society that is by and large intolerant. He ultimately comes to understand that to struggle is useless and accepts himself as a gay religious man and makes peace with his creator and himself.

“V’ahavta” mirrors the filmmaker’s own life. The significance of the title is something many will think about. The word “v’ahavta” means “and you shall love.” It is also the word that starts one of the prayers that religious Jews utter everyday, “And you shall love, the Lord, your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.

The movie is deeply personal and intimate. Reflecting on his decision to come out he says that midway through his studies he decided to

either leave the school or make the film. He further stresses the importance of bringing the topic of homosexuality up for discussion in an ultra-Orthodox society because the issue has not been discussed freely.

Rabbi Adam Feldman is the Spiritual Leader of the Princeton Jewish Center and a good friend of mine. He represents the very best that the rabbinate has to offer and is very gay-friendly.

I encourage you to join me for the weekend of festivities and specifically for this movie. Please invite your friends and family members to join you for what I promise will be a riveting evening.

Rabbi Steven Greenberg who is the Scholar in Residence for this weekend is a gay, orthodox rabbi who is a true pioneer for the Jewish community. Below is his bio:

Rabbi Steve Greenberg isn't afraid of a challenge. Known as an award-winning author, noted teacher, and religious iconoclast, Steve has broken boundaries and led the fight to make Orthodox Judaism more open and inclusive and accepting of homosexual members.

A Senior Teaching Fellow

at CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, Steve was featured in the acclaimed 2001 film Trembling Before G-d, about Orthodox gay Jews, and has appeared in over 500 post-screening community dialogues throughout the world. As educational coordinator for the film's outreach project, he arranged for screenings in Israel's religious school system, reaching over 2,000 principals, educators and school counselors. A popular speaker on issues of faith, sexuality, and tradition, Steve helped organize the first Orthodox Mental Health Conference on homosexuality, and has worked with numerous families in reconciliation.

Winner of the coveted Koret Book Award for Philosophy and Thought, Steve is the author of the groundbreaking book Wrestling with God & Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), which explores homosexuality and Jewish tradition. The Koret awards are the most prestigious in Jewish prose. The book was also selected as a finalist for the Lambda Literary Awards.

Steve is a founding member and educational advisor of the Open House in Jerusalem, an organization that advances the cause of social tolerance. A renowned speaker across the U.S.,



“V’Ahavata”

Saturday, March 20

7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

**Princeton
Jewish Center
435 Nassau Street
Princeton, NJ**

Greenberg has participated in forums at such leading institutions as Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government-Institute of Politics with Bishop Gene Robinson, and at the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco with Congressman Mark Leno.

A guest on numerous talk shows including NPR's "Fresh Air," Steve is a frequent commentator for the media and has published several articles on Jewish law and church and state issues. An expert scholar in Jewish texts and tradition, he is an often requested educator by communities.

Steve received his B.A. in philosophy from Yeshiva University and his rabbinical ordination from Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of the Jerusalem Fellows program, a two-year fellowship for senior Jewish educators sponsored by the Mandel Institute.

Please email me at lee.rosenfield@comcast.net if you plan to attend.



Gay Jewish Poetry Reading in Philadelphia

Join Nehirim at Giovanni's Room, the historic gay bookstore in Philadelphia, for a poetry performance by Nehirim's executive director, Jay Michaelson, and longtime faculty member Rabbi Jacob Staub.

Jay will read, shout, and declaim poetry from *Another Word for Sky*, his first collection of poetry. Like the author, the poems run the gamut: from Ashbery-like analytics to raucous queer mystical love poems, Ginsbergesque rants and fantasies to quiet reflections on the passage of time. A recent finalist for the Koret Young Writer on Jewish Themes Award, Michaelson has performed his work (often with drum and musical accompaniment) at CBGB, Burning Man, the Bowery Poetry Club, and dozens of university campuses around the country. His work will be complemented by some of Jacob Staub's queer midrash and exploration of the intersections between spiritual and romantic love. No advance tickets available; come early as the bookstore is small!

Sunday, March 21st
530-7:00 PM
Giovanni's Room
345 South 12th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107



Men: March 5-7

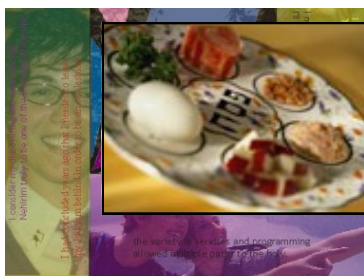
Isabella Freedman
 Retreat Center
 Falls Village, CT

www.nehirim.org

Email: info@nehirim.org

Phone: 347-677-3542

Women: March 12-14



Jewish/Gay Retreats for Men and Women

The First Annual **Nehirim Men's Retreat** is a weekend of community and spirituality for queer Jewish men. We are the nice Jewish boys your mother warned you about. We are sexual and spiritual, proud to be queer and proud to be Jewish. Our retreat is open to all self-identified men, and features

At the **Nehirim Women's Retreat** you will **Connect** with 100 lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer Jewish women: families and singles, students and seniors, frum and secular — there are people like you at Nehirim! (Children and non-Jewish partners welcome.)

workshops, pluralistic services, outdoor activities, and indoor activities.

Our presenters include playwright Dan Fishback, performance artist michai Lau-Lavie, and Israeli writer Gideon Litchfield. The retreat is at the Isabella Freedman Retreat Center, two hours

Daven and **learn** with scholars like Rabbi Jill Hammer & Professor Joy Ladin.

Nourish your body with delicious organic, kosher food.

Move with Jewish yoga innovator Myriam Klotz, and open your heart with Nehirim teachers Chani

from NYC, accessible by train. It costs \$220-400, with financial aid available.

Join us for a weekend of rejuvenation, community, and fun...

Explore and refresh your relationship to Judaism and Jewish community in a warm and respectful setting.

Getter, Becky Emet & Shoshana Jedwab, or just ...

Relax by the fireplace or in the hot tub, and take a walk in nature.

We are independent and nondenominational. Nehirim has run retreats like this for seven years.



We're on the web!
www.bethahavah.org

A MEMBER OF...



**CONGREGATION BETH AHAVAH
 @ RODEPH SHALOM**

615 North Broad Street
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Phone: **215.923.2003**
 Fax: 215.627.1313
 Email: bethahavah@rodephshalom.org

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