



HAZAK

September/October 2007 ✦ Tishrei 5768

Volume 4 ✦ Number 1

Newsletter of the Tri-State Region of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs



Tri-State Well Represented at the Biennial

CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

By David J. Edwards

The Tri-State Region was well represented at the convention, with attendees including Brian and Barbara Cynamon; Dave and Mary Dawn Edwards; Stephen and Arlene Neustein and daughter Michelle; and Ira and Beth Ungar. Ira chaired the Program Fair and also demonstrated his programs for Hagbah Training and Build-a-Pair. Stephen was recognized as the Tri-State Ma'asim Tovim awardee. Stephen also ran programs on "Shofer Lessons for Beginners" and Visitations. Both Beth El and Beth Shalom won Quality Club awards, while Tree of Life met the requirements for the international level of the Award. Honors were given to Ira for Gabbai on Thursday Shacharit service, to both Stephen and Brian for Saturday morning Torah readings and to Dave for leading the Ma'ariv service Saturday night.

Continued on page 4

Inside This Issue

FJMC Convention – Page 1

President's Message – Page 2

Change is the

Only Constant – Page 5

Installation Dinner – Page 1

Tri-State Region

News and Notes – Page 7

TRI-STATE REGION Club Presidents

Adat Shalom
Dr. Stephen Miller

Beth El Congregation of South Hills
Warren Sufrin and Bob Hodes
(co-Presidents)

Beth Shalom
Larry Savitz

New Light
Dan Stein

Tree of Life
Larry Cohen

TRI-STATE Regional Officers

President: Dr. David J. Edwards

Executive Vice-President:
Aaron Bernhardt

Vice-Presidents:
Dr. Stephen Miller
Warren Sufrin
Bob Hodes
Dan Stein
Larry Cohen

Recording Secretary:
Mark Frisch

Editor, Hazak:
Dr. David J. Edwards
and Dr. Mark Frisch

Art Director/Design, Hazak:
Scott Fingal, Behar-Fingal
www.behar-fingal.com

Treasurer: Marc Schermer

Adviser:
Dr. Ira Ungar
(Immediate Past -President)

Spiritual Leader:
Rabbi Stephen Listfield

(PAST) PRESIDENT'S Report

Ira J. Ungar, MD

I have recently completed my tenure as Regional President for the Tri-State Region. It was a busy time for me, growing and learning. I wish I could say I achieved all I set out to, but that is rarely the case.

We have recently hosted, June 3, 2007, a successful Installation, Man of the Year, and Ma'asim Tovim program, hosted at Tree of Life. Kudos to the men who put the program together and those deserved Honorees. Our first regional tribute book was wonderfully produced by Marc Schermer as the powerhouse behind this first attempt. We could not have asked for a better product. It was a smashing success, allowing friends, family, and our Men's Clubs to voice their appreciation for the meaningful work that our Men's Club leaders and Men of the Year put forth towards making a difference in Jewish Men's lives.

What has happened over the last two years? One of the greatest achievements in the past 2 years has been primarily Stephen Neustein's effort at renewing the Men's Club at Adat Shalom. This club has been like a Phoenix, rising from the ashes with the help of Dr. Stephen Miller, Marc Schermer, and Paul Robbins.

this program teaches men, women, and our youth the proper techniques to perform the ritual lifting of the Torah. A model lifting TORAH with adjustable weights was created and allows for training without fear of dropping. For those interested, there is short instructional video hosted on YOUTUBE, the internet video site, about this program, it's worth a watch.

A pet project of mine, since I like to toot my own horn, is the Presidential Tallit Program. Each of our club and regional presidents, both current and past, have the opportunity to own and wear a custom designed Tallit, with the Region's color, Goldberg Green. This Tallit not only acknowledges the hard work and commitment of our presidents, but helps others identify these leaders they can approach and ask about Men's club. It helps to establish a lineage of committed men to the cause of "Involving Jewish Men in Jewish Life".



Incoming President of the Tri-State Region, Dave Edwards (center), stands besides his wife, Mary Dawn and Dr. Ira Ungar with a special hand-made tallit for Regional Presidents and Past Presidents.

"THESE LEADERS WILL WEAR THIS TALLIT WITH HONOR AND DISTINCTION"

Our clubs have each mounted Men's Club Shabbat programs, World Wide Wrap programs, and other successful educational programs.

The Build A Pair program developed at Beth El Men's Club has become an internationally recognized program, as part of the WWW - for which our Steve N. was the international chairman, to teach our youth about the significance and practice of wearing Tefillin in Jewish Life, with over 1200 students participating last year. This program won a Gold TORCH award at the last international convention.

Beth Shalom also won a Torch Award in 2005 for its innovative Health Fair, a yearly program offering guidance to promote better health to its community. This Tri-State Regional Newsletter, the HAZAK, has been produced on 4 occasions in the past 3 years, to great accolades to all who have seen it. Each time the national organization sees it, the want to know who is responsible, trying to recruit them for the national Newsletter. Thanks to Dave Edwards, Mark Frisch, and Scott Fingal - especially for making that happen.

Another program developed this past year at Beth El, and currently submitted for TORCH award consideration, is the Hagbaha training program. Developed by our member Steven Cohen and his son Daniel, with the help of Rabbi Greenbaum,

These current/past leaders have chosen to be Tallit owners:

Regional Presidents:
Ben Forman
Brian Cynamon
Ira Ungar
Dave Edwards

Tri-State Region, along with Beth El and Tree of Life, hosted Rabbi Charles Simon for the first Pittsburgh Keruv (Outreach to the Intermarried) Summit in May 2007. The region's Conservative Rabbis met for a lunch discussion about the state of Keruv in Pittsburgh, and how to advance the cause. An evening dinner meeting hosted at Beth El, featured congregational representation from most synagogues. The presentation was timely, the discussion was lively.

For the future - in the paraphrased words of a beloved Past-President, "Ask not what Men's Club can do for you, ask what you can do for Men's Club."

If you are not currently active, please approach your leadership and offer your time and participation in programming. Become a program chairman - yes, it takes time, energy, and maybe a few dollars, but the results are so worthwhile. Consider joining us at Regional events, such as our yearly entertainment nite during Passover, to support our fundraising efforts.

Participate, simply showing up is half the battle and all the fun.

Finally, these two years would have been impossible without the help of my executive committee, David Edwards - Exec VP, Aaron Bernhardt - treasurer, and Mark Frisch, secretary, along with the guidance of the past presidents of Tri-State. Of course, without the support of my wife, nothing would have been possible.



Convention Images: (Upper Left) Dr. Ira Ungar holds the Torah scroll used to demonstrate his Hagbah training program in the Program Fair, as Brian Cynamon (right) looks on. Beth El won a Gold Torch award for this program. (Upper Right) Dr. Bob Braitman, International Immediate Past President of FJMC, and Stephen Neustein, who is receiving the Ma'asim Tovim award for Tri-State Region. (Bottom Right) Dr. Bob Braitman, International Immediate Past President of FJMC, and Dr. Ira Ungar, who is accepting the Gold Torch Award for Beth El Men's Club. (Bottom Left) Brian Cynamon, Dave Edwards, Ira Ungar and Stephen Neustein stand in front of the Tri-State banner at the FJMC International Convention.

FJMC Convention (continued)

The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs holds its international convention every two years. The ruach (spirit) and camaraderie at these conventions cannot be described but have to be experienced first hand. An amazing variety of activities and programming are included in every convention. Much is learned that can be carried back to strengthen each member's Men's Club.

The Convention this year may well have been the best of them all. Held July 11-15 at Indian Lakes Resort near Chicago, it provided fabulous speakers, including Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson,

Dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies; Rabbi Hayim Herring, Director of STAR Foundation; Dr. Ron Wolfson, author of *The Spirituality of Welcoming: How to Transform Your Congregation Into a Sacred Community*; and the former NFL referee, Jerry Markbreit. Seven of our greatest hazzanim performed together in an amazing cantorial concert: Hazzan Alberto Mizrahi (the "Jewish Pavarotti"); Hazzan David Propis; Hazzan Aaron Bensoussan, Hazzan Rebecca Carmi, Hazzan George Mordecai, Hazzan Alisa Pomerantz-Boro, and Hazzan Steven Stoehr. Hazzan Mizrahi also led some

of the Shabbat services as did Hazzanim Stoehr and Propis. Other programming included power breakfasts, program fair, regional cocktail parties, wine tasting, and a beautiful Havdalah service around the outdoor pool.

If you didn't attend this convention, you missed a great time and a great learning opportunity. Now would be a good time to begin planning to attend the next convention in 2009. Where has yet to be decided; Chicago will be hard to beat. Stay tuned.

CHANGE is the Only Constant

Rabbi Stephen Listfield, Spiritual Advisor, Tri-State Region, FJMC

Synagogues aren't what they used to be. Neither are Jews.

A new study, "The Continuity of Discontinuity," claims that young singles find little appeal in traditional synagogues. (In my view, the authors of the study re-invent, or re-discover, the wheel. The traditional synagogue has always been implacably family-oriented.) Young Jews who care about Judaism place strong resistance on "anything hierarchical, denominational, exclusionary or judgmental". (I'm not so sure how new this is, either.)

What is somewhat new, though, is this feature of the younger generation: They see traditional institutions as maintaining strong boundaries between Jews and non-Jews. Their own endeavors, in contrast, "value diversity, fluid identities, and permeable boundaries."

What this means, inter alia, is that the new generation of Jews aren't interested in denominational labels. Conservative, Reform, Orthodox – the pull and the power of those terms is waning. It means that the new generation is unimpressed by large institutions and imposing structures. They want more experimentation. They are feeling for ways to be Jewish in coffee houses and or at klezmer gatherings, and not primarily in synagogues. They want Judaism their way, not the way of their parents or their rabbis.

More challenging is the notion of diversity and fluid identities. I could hardly imagine myself a Jew today, a Buddhist tomorrow, a New Age something-or-other by Wednesday –

and then a Jew all over again in time for Shabbos. But this dizzying adventure does seem to be acceptable, even desirable, for the newer generation. How do you know what fits unless you try it on? Gotta keep changing all the time. Hence, the "Continuity of Discontinuity" – we continue due to ever new waves of discontinuities.

Most challenging of all, though, is this notion of breaking boundaries between Jews and non-Jews. There is indeed a young generation of Jews, but the

Men's Clubs have positioned themselves as a bridge between the old and the new. Faithful to the traditional forms, our clubs are nevertheless reaching out with new ideas in order to accommodate new constituencies.

I for one am intrigued by the continuity of discontinuity. New forms, even new definitions, will arise whether we like it or not. We survive because we adapt. But I don't reject (to coin my own term) the continuity of continuity. I do like the robust idea that a Jew is a Jew is a Jew. I do

like the tenacity and persistence that have characterized our people for almost 4,000 years. I am not keen to erase the "boundaries between Jews and non-Jews" in the name of diversity or fluidity.

Ultimately, some specifics might be new, but the challenge is an old one. And I ask you to partake in it: How do we preserve the institutions and



majority of them don't come from a generation of all Jewish family members. With intermarriage becoming more and more plausible, the very idea of being Jewish takes on new definitions in the minds of many young people.

Those of you who care about Jews being Jewish, and who care about the traditional Jewish forms of family and synagogue being preserved, might ask me what to do about this emerging phenomenon. How do I know? – I'm the spiritual advisor to our region, not a prophet. What I can say is that the Men's Clubs, under the national direction of my colleague Rabbi Chuck Simon, and in the hands of some local visionaries who are smart and energetic.

identities and commitments and religious inheritances in which we believe, even while we encourage – and join! – the efforts to forge new paths, to express ourselves in new ways; to be loyal to the past in ways that the past would not even recognize?

Who says it's easy to be a Jew?

Stephen Listfield
Rabbi, Tree of Life
Squirrel Hill

INSTALLATION Dinner

140 attend dinner at Tree of Life as new officers are installed, Club Men of the Year and Tri-State Ma'asim Tovim awardee are honored.

TRI-STATE CLUB NEWS AND NOTES



Man of the Year from Adat Shalom, Joe Sawdai (on the right) with Sonny Galanty, who presented him with a clock.



Man of the Year from Tree of Life, David Dinkin (right), with Larry Cohen, who presented the award.



Man of the Year from Beth El, Cliff Spungen



Rabbi Stephen Listfield of the Tree of Life Congregation was installed as the Tri-State spiritual advisor.



Man of the Year from Beth Shalom, Ira Frank



Man of the Year from New Light, Alan Sklan (right) with his wife Dassi and Cookie Danovitz



Dave Edwards, delivers some remarks after being installed as President of the Tri-State Region.



Ma'asim Tovim (Doer of Good Deeds) awardee, Stephen Neustein, Esq

THE NEW LIGHT MEN'S CLUB
The New Light Men's Club has completed another successful year. Our club is the smallest in the Tri-State Region but a very important one to the organization. Mazel Tov to Alan Sklan, our club man of the year.

BETH SHALOM MEN'S CLUB
Beth Shalom Men's Club had a fruitful and productive year with successful and varied programs. We served as ushers during the High Holidays and for Saturday morning services. We held a successful Health Fair providing flu shots, blood pressure tests and health information for the wider community. Our annual Sweepstakes dinner went well, with proceeds donated back to the synagogue. We participated in the World Wide Wrap. We held a Sports Luncheon that various local college and professional athletes attended. Aside from our congregants, also in attendance were some 300 special-needs sports fans.

Mazel Tov to Stephen Neustein, the recipient of the Regional Ma'asim Tovim award this year, and to Ira Frank, recipient of Beth Shalom Man of the Year award and our new synagogue president. Many thanks for their tireless efforts numerous accomplishments to Dr. Joseph Trompeter, our outgoing Men's Club President, and to Steve Schwartz, our outgoing Congregation President. We look forward to the new year with new programs and welcome broad participation of old and new members.

MAZEL TOV TO ALL!

KERUV Program



Rabbi Charles Simon, Executive Director of the FJMC (second from left), held a special program on Keruv (outreach to intermarried couples) at Beth El. Also pictured are Rabbi Alex Greenbaum of Beth El; Stephen Neustein, past president of Tri-State, and Dr. Ira Ungar, at the time, President of Tri-State.

TRI-STATE 4th Annual Entertainment Night



The Tri-State Region's Fourth Annual Entertainment Night featured Howard Elson (center), accompanied by jazz pianist, Bobby Cardillo, and vocalist, Joyce Levenson.

Federation of Jewish Men's
Club's- Tri-State Region
WWW.FJMC.ORG

