



בנין

NEWS FROM THE JEA FOR ITS MEMBERS

DECEMBER, 2008 / KISLEV, 5769

JEA CONFERENCE 2009... Register Now!

**57TH ANNUAL JEA CONFERENCE
SUN - WED, JANUARY 25-28, 2009
CHAPARRAL SUITES HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA**

**FOLLOW US TO THE DESERT!
EXPLORE ECO-JUDAISM... RENEW YOUR SPIRIT**

Some Conference highlights:

- * **Keynote Speaker: Dr. Bradley Shavit Artson**
- * **Featured Speakers:**
Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Rabbi Jerome Epstein, Rabbi Edward Feinstein, Dr. Barry Holtz, Bill Kaplan, Rami Wernik
- * **Featured Entertainer: Josh Nelson**
- * **In-depth Study Sessions and Torah L'Shma**
- * **Visit to the Desert Botanical Garden – Chihuly Glass Exhibit**
- * **Sunday Afternoon Tour of the Heard Museum**
- * **Fully Integrated Program for Early Childhood Educators**
- * **Additional Topics and Presenters:**
Hillel Zaremba – CAMERA, Crypto-Jews, Jane Shapiro and the JTS Mitzvah Initiative, BabaGaNewz, Rabbi Moshe Edelman – USCJ, Mitchell Smilowitz – Joint Retirement Board, Josh Lake – COEJL and much more!
- * **Professional Networking and Program Exchange**
- * **Sunday Morning Yom Iyun for Greater Phoenix Area Teachers**
- * **Sunday Afternoon Jewish Family Festival**
- * **Vendor and Supply Marketplace**

Our full Conference brochure and registration form are available on our website www.jewisheducators.org.

Early Bird Registration Deadline Extended: December 12, 2008

INTRODUCING... OUR NEW LOGO

It was time for an update, so this past summer we worked closely with graphic artist Murray Brenman of New Jersey to come up with a new look. A number of designs were considered before the design on the cover was selected. The board liked the more compact design, retaining the look of the *magen david* and the addition of the open book, a key part of our identity as Jewish educators. The new design also emphasizes our JEA initials. We hope you like it! Watch for more new materials with the new logo in the year ahead. And a very special thank you to Cantor Larry Brandspiegel for his help in making this happen!

MEMBERSHIP DUES

JEA counts upon membership dues in order to carry out our important work. A billing statement was recently sent to those who have not yet paid their dues for the 2008-09 school year. If you have not yet paid your dues, please follow-up with your school or synagogue and submit them for payment now. Please call the JEA office if you have any questions about your membership category or dues calculation.

BRACHA CARDS

JEA has a beautiful series of Bracha Cards available to mark special occasions or remember loved ones. By purchasing Bracha Cards, you help support the important work of the JEA. Order your Bracha Cards today from the JEA office.

JEA MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

An updated 2008-09 JEA Membership Directory is now available. Please contact the JEA office. We can provide you with either an electronic version or a hard copy.

THE PLACEMENT SEASON BEGINS

December marks the traditional beginning of the placement season. Deciding to look for a new position is often a difficult and emotional decision. JEA is here to help guide you through the process and evaluate the choices before you. Applications for Placement are available on our website www.JewishEducators.org. Even before you make the decision to apply for Placement, we invite you to speak with our Executive Director, Eddie Edelstein. All such conversations are strictly confidential. You can reach Eddie at the JEA office 516 569-2537 or placement@jewisheducators.org.

SHOMREI HA'ARETZ – GUARDIANS OF THE LAND

JEA is pleased to partner with and support the work of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs and the important projects they are undertaking to protect the land and preserve the environment in a uniquely Jewish way. FJMC has developed eco-friendly Shabbat candles and a solar powered Ner Tamid installation. We urge you to look into teaching and actively using these materials in your school and synagogue. For more information, please visit the Federation of Jewish Men's Club website at www.fjmc.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

- December 12, 2008 – Deadline for Early Bird Conference Registration
- December 15, 2008 – Deadline for submissions for JEA Research and Development Awards
- December 31, 2008 – Deadline for Conference Ad Journal
- January 27-30, 2008 – JEA Annual Conference, Skokie, Illinois

JEA CONFERENCE SPONSORS

. One of the ways we seek to manage the costs of the Conference is by soliciting sponsors for different pieces of the program such as lunches, dinners, workshops, speakers, entertainment, coffee breaks, etc. Sponsors may be individuals, organizations, businesses or corporations. You would be surprised how many businesses support these type of events. Sometimes, all you have to do is ask.

We ask you to help support JEA by seeking and soliciting individuals and businesses to take part as sponsors. All sponsors will be prominently recognized and credited in our Program Book. Sponsor forms are included in this mailing and are also available for downloading from our website www.jewisheducators.org. Click on 'Conference.'

JEA JOURNAL AD BOOK

In association with our Conference, JEA publishes a Journal Ad Book. A detailed brochure detailing our honorees and an ad blank were sent to you recently. The Journal Ad Book is both an important fundraiser for JEA and an opportunity to pay tribute to those being honored and to all Jewish educators. Please support JEA by soliciting and placing ads in our Journal. An additional ad blank is included with this mailing.

JEA HONORS...

The Jewish Educators Assembly is especially proud to recognize and honor the following individuals for their outstanding dedication and unique contributions to the field of Jewish education. Award presentations will be made during the course of our Conference.

KETER TORAH AWARD – KAREN AND JAY BYCER

Exemplary Lay Leaders dedicated to the support of Synagogue and Jewish Communal Life, Jewish Education and the State of Israel

JEA / BEHRMAN HOUSE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

DR. LONNA PICKER

Past President, JEA
Outstanding Principal and Education Consultant

OR ZARUA AWARD – RABBI MARK J. BISMAN

Spiritual Leader, Har Zion Congregation
Scottsdale, Arizona

UNITED SYNAGOGUE BOOK SERVICE AWARD – RABBI ELLIOT N. DORFF

Rector, Sol and Anne Dorff Distinguished Service Professor in Philosophy
American Jewish University, Los Angeles

SPECIAL TRIBUTE – RABBI JEROME M. EPSTEIN

For his many years of devoted service as
Executive Vice President,
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

NEWS FROM THE JOINT RETIREMENT BOARD

In these challenging financial times, it is more important than ever to put away funds for retirement. While no investment is completely safe or guaranteed, the Joint Retirement Board of Conservative has a long history of carefully guiding and overseeing pension funds and annuities for Jewish professionals. If you are not familiar with the services offered by the JRB, please visit them at www.jrbcj.org. Here is an important update from the JRB.

DOES YOUR 403(b) PENSION PLAN MEET THE NEW REGS?

After 43 years, the IRS has revamped the 403(b) regulations, bringing these pension plans into the 21st century. But many of the changes must be implemented by January 2009, requiring a rigorous compliance program from plan sponsors. It is not an understatement to suggest that these changes are seismic, requiring a greater involvement by employers in a 403(b) plan, its documentation and operation.

If your school or synagogue provides pension plans to its employees a wide range of new responsibilities will fall upon them under the new 403(b) regs including the following:

- a) **PLAN DOCUMENT** – All 403(b) plans will be required to have a written plan document describing the basic provisions of the plan, including eligibility, benefits, limitations, investment alternatives, available contracts and accounts, time and form of distributions, and roles and responsibilities under the plan.
- b) **INFORMATION SHARING AGREEMENTS** – Contrary to past practice, employers will need to have an information-sharing agreement in place by January 1, 2009 for each provider approved by the plan.
- c) **COMPLIANCE INFORMATION** – Loans, hardship withdrawals and distributions must be coordinated by the employer under the new 403(b) regulations.

You can assist your school or synagogue, which is affiliated with the Conservative Movement, to avoid the complex and costly compliance burden these new regulations will impose by suggesting that they adopt, at no cost, the Joint Retirement Board for Conservative Judaism 403(b) Retirement Plan (JRB) which is already in compliance with all of the new regulations. In addition, the JRB Plan offers an outstanding choice of retirement funds at greatly reduced fees to any employee of a congregation or an institution affiliated with Conservative Judaism.

Mitchell J. Smilowitz, CPA, the Chief Operating Officer of the Joint Retirement Board, will be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the new regulations and offering the JRB Plan to employees. He can be reached at (212) 947-2400 (Toll-Free at 1-888-JRB-FREE) or at mitchell.smilowitz@jrbcj.org.

Dr. Michael Halzel

JEA representative to the JRB

JEA FUND FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The JEA Fund for Educational Research and Development provides grants to JEA members to enable them to implement significant projects in the field of Jewish education. Types of programs that are considered for awards include curriculum projects, evaluation instruments, creative arts programs, enrichment programs, and the development of computer and audio-visual materials as well as research projects. Recent awards of \$1,000 each were made to Rabbi Stuart Light for the development of a spiraling Parshat HaShavua curriculum for the Day Schools and to Rebecca Starr for a leadership training program, *The ABC's of Ethical Leadership*.

Research grants will be judged chiefly by the following criteria:

1. Projected contribution of project to the field of Jewish education.
2. Replicability or usefulness of project beyond the home community.
3. Likelihood that funding to make this project possible would not be available from other sources.
4. Uniqueness of project.
5. Potential impact of project upon advancing the roles of educators and teachers, and the way in which they are perceived in the Jewish community.
6. The likelihood that the JEA funding will significantly contribute towards the realization of this project.

Applications for funding of projects to be implemented during the 2009-10 school year are now being accepted. They should be sent *in the form of a letter* and should describe in detail the project, suggest its importance to the field of Jewish education, state the amount of funding requested and how these funds will be used. *All letters must be received by **December 15th, 2008** and should be sent to:*

Marshall Kupchan, Chairman
JEA Research & Development Fund Committee
PO Box 413
Cedarhurst, NY 11516

BACK AGAIN IN 2010! JEA RETURNS TO ISRAEL FOR OUR 58TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE Depart US: February 7, 2010 Return US: February 12, 2010 (Optional Shabbat Add-on thru February 14)

Join with the leadership of the Jewish Educators Assembly for another outstanding Israel adventure. Our program will include the latest sites and places of interest, school visits, study at the Fuchsberg Center, involvement with Masorti families and congregations and a series of *chessed* projects. We are actively promoting a program to bring members of your faculty along with you for an experience that can deeply impact your school community.

We are working closely with The Israel Experience and expect to have a tentative itinerary and costs before the end of the year,

Save the dates and plan your funding *now!!!*

A Note on Funding: The current economic situation leaves us with uncertainty about airfare and other expenses. We are working hard to secure scholarship and subsidy funding for this Conference. Please note that individual communities often have funds available for educators to study in Israel. We urge you to start inquiring now into these opportunities in your home community.

IN THE JEA FAMILY

Mazal Tov:

Ivy and David Schreiber on the birth of their son

Belated best wishes to:

Mark and Elizabeth Casso on the marriage of their daughter

Jill and Steven Epstein on the marriage of their daughter

Cheryl and Alan Vogel on the marriage of their son

Nachamu, Nachamu Ami:

Yonina Schnee on the sudden and untimely passing of her husband.

Aliya Cheskis-Cotel on the sudden and untimely passing of her husband, Rabbi

Moshe Cotel.

Linda Weinroth on the passing of her mother.

We note with sadness the passing of Abe Yanover, a longtime JEA member and noted Jewish educator.

Refuah Shleimah – Get Well Wishes to:

Gloria Eiseman, who continues to make good progress in her recovery



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