



# The Voice

Founded 1906

Congregation Ahavath Israel  
A Liberal Conservative Synagogue

Affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

October 2009

On the web at <http://ahavathisraelkingston.org>

Elul-Tishri 5769

## Message from the Rabbi



### *Succot: a little booth that teaches us about holiness*

Succot (festival of booths) is a fascinating holiday. Much of our tradition believes that succot is the ultimate holiday. In fact, our liturgy sometimes refers to it simply as “holiday.” The succah (booth) itself has many fascinating laws. It must be a certain height, it must be temporary, you must be able to see the stars but only a little bit. It can only have so many permanent walls. The list goes on, the mishnah even has some fun describing building a succah on the back of a camel or on top of another succah. (the lower one is invalidated.) However, I would like to focus on one obscure mention of the fact that Jews should go into succot (booths) precisely when it was time for rain. What a peculiar demand? The rationalist in me wants to explain this command as practical. When is it that

you need your succot out in the fields? Precisely, when it is not raining and you can do your harvesting. The rabbis simply meant that we should wait to be able to bring the succot close to our homes.

*Continued on page 4*

## Message from the President

During the 2004 Presidential Campaign, one of Joe Lieberman’s campaign stops was Long Island. As he always did while he was on the road, Lieberman went to Shabbat Services with his family at the local synagogue. After services, while standing with the synagogue president greeting people, someone asked if he was a bissel meshugah – a little crazy – to run for President. Senator Lieberman responded “You don’t have to be crazy to run for President of the United States, but you absolutely have to be crazy to be a shul president”.

Having been president for close to 2 ½ years now, I can truly appreciate Senator Lieberman’s remark. At times, especially at board meetings, I am reminded of the story of the Yeshiva University rowing team. A few years ago, Yeshiva University decided to field a rowing team. Unfortunately, they lost race after race. Even though they practiced and practiced for hours every day, they never managed to come in any better than dead last.

*Continued on page 4*

# Congregation Ahavath Israel

On the web at  
<http://ahavathisraelkingston.org>

100 Lucas Avenue  
P.O. Box 3063  
Kingston, NY 12402-3063  
Telephone: 338-4409  
Email: [Ahavath israel sec1@juno.com](mailto:Ahavath israel sec1@juno.com)

## Congregation Officers and Staff

President. . . . . Jerry Weiss  
Email: [president@aikny.org](mailto:president@aikny.org)  
1<sup>st</sup> V.P.. . . . . Rebecca Balzac  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP. . . . . Rhona Schiffres  
Treasurer. . . . . Susan Hirsch  
Financial Sec'y . . . . . Howie Liefer  
Recording Sec'y . . . . . Daniel Rafkind  
Office Sec'y . . . . . Mary Lessner  
Sisterhood Pres. . . . . Candace Belles

## The Voice

Editor: . . . . . Susan Rafkind  
Email: [sfracf@gmail.com](mailto:sfracf@gmail.com)

## Sponsor a Shabbat Luncheon

Have a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion? Why not sponsor a Shabbat luncheon? We hope to have a monthly Shabbat luncheon. If you have a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion, please consider becoming a sponsor. Call the office at 845-338-4490 or Arlene Cohen at 845-339-8413 or 845-389-2342 (cell) or [gcohen@hvc.rr.com](mailto:gcohen@hvc.rr.com) for information.

Sign up for Goodsearch. Go to:  
<http://www.goodsearch.com> ; Sign up for the charity Congregation Ahavath Israel and every time you use Goodsearch as your search engine you help make money for the synagogue.

The Voice is currently accepting advertisements. Please contact Susan Rafkind at [sfracf@gmail.com](mailto:sfracf@gmail.com) for rates and details.

## Schedule of Weekly Services

### Shabbat Services

Friday 7:30 pm  
Saturday 9:30 am  
Sunday Minyan 9:00 am



### Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday  
10:00-3:00

## Cell Phones and Services

When attending synagogue on Shabbat or festivals, please remember we are Shomer Shabbat and therefore the use of cell phones is prohibited. Please make sure they are turned off or on silent during services. Also be aware that calls should not be made to the Synagogue from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday night on Shabbat and including sundown to sundown on certain festivals. Check the calendar in each issue of The Voice and on our website for candle-lighting and end times.

Even though your own observance may not be the same as the synagogue, please make sure that no synagogue business is conducted on Shabbat (ie: shopping for synagogue functions, phone calls or emails to synagogue members regarding synagogue business, etc.).

If you have specific questions please, please see any Ritual Committee Member.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.



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Made*

We are grateful to Jerry Weiss for contributing a sponsorship for the weekend of October 30 with our new student Rabbi, Jason Fruithandler. Furthermore, we acknowledge Cy Gruberg, Trudi Melamed, Bernie and Lisa King-Smith and Susan Rafkind for their recent donations to sponsor weekends with our new student Rabbi, Jason Fruithandler. Jason's outgoing nature and spirited attitude continues to make a positive impression with our congregants and with the students in our Religious School. Additional sponsorships are still available and we welcome your continued support.

For more information on sponsoring a weekend, please contact Susan Rafkind at [sfrank@gmail.com](mailto:sfrank@gmail.com).

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*Pre-Election Brunch Changed to Dinner*

The Pre-Election Brunch which was scheduled for Sunday, October 25 has been rescheduled and the event will now merge with the Annual Sisterhood Brisket Dinner on Friday evening, October 30. County-wide and local candidates will be joining us along with invited elected officials in a meet and greet event. All are welcome to attend the service at 6:15 pm followed by the dinner at 7:30 pm. Pre-paid tickets are \$18.00 per adult, \$9.00 per child 12 and under. Please make your reservations before October 16.

*Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Observance*

You are invited to an observance of Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan which will be held on the evening of Sunday, October 18 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the synagogue. It will be sponsored by Sisterhood Ahavath Israel and will include ritual candle lighting, and blessings. A study session will focus on the first woman rabbi in modern history who was ordained in 1935 in Berlin, Germany. Refreshments will be served. Please call Candy Belles at 331 - 8711 to reserve your place.

The Ahavath Israel Board would like to invite anyone with the skills to participate in services by leading, reading Torah, Haftorah or presenting a D'Var to contact the Synagogue office.

*A Thank You Note*

A note of appreciation is definitely in order. On behalf of the congregation, I would like to express thanks to the women of our Sisterhood, under the leadership of Candy Belles, who donated \$1000 this summer to the synagogue. It is difficult to raise money these days (don't we all know that!) so this year's Sisterhood contribution is especially appreciated. The women who are actively involved in Sisterhood work very hard on behalf of all of us so I am happy for this opportunity to acknowledge their accomplishments.

Susan Hirsch, Congregation Treasurer

*Torah Throw Price Reduced*

Torah Throws are still available and the price for each throw is now reduced to \$50.00. The Torah Throws make great Chanukkah, wedding, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, or graduation gifts. We have a limited supply so please call the office soon at 338-4409 to reserve your Torah Throw and to participate in this unique fundraiser.

## *Jewish Senior Group*

Young at Heart senior group continues to meet the third Thursday of the month at Temple Emanuel at 1:30 pm. Please note that this is our new meeting time. Dessert and coffee and tea are served, and each month we feature an interesting program. September's feature is a talk by a Master Gardener on fall planting in a home or apartment. This is a free event.

Eileen Lubart

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### *Ahavath Israel Chorale is Revived*

Congregation Ahavath Israel has once again been blessed with the fine sounds of our choir, now called "Shir Joy", thanks to the leadership of Susan Rafkind. Rehearsals have begun and will continue weekly. Our first outing was on Kol Nidre, when the Chorale sang two prayers during the service. In the future, we will include traditional prayers, prayers with new melodies, and modern Israeli songs. If you or someone you know in the congregation loves to sing, please contact director, Susan Rafkind.

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### *Rabbi's message continued from page 1*

I believe, though, that there is a deeper meaning and one that teaches us a lesson about making our lives holy. The point of a succah here is to take a regular thing and make it important, better, holy. The succah was used by all farmers and therefore all peoples in order to do a harvest. By moving the succah to the home, and by sitting in it when it is not necessary we elevate the practice to that of a sacred practice. This is a common theme throughout Judaism. The seder takes a meal and makes a holy meal, the Hanukah menorah takes a lamp and reminds us of a miracle. The message of these ritual objects is to teach us that we have a responsibility to find the regular things in our lives and elevate them to something sacred and holy. When we sit in a succah, we are reminding ourselves that every item and action has the opportunity to be infused with God. I wish each of

you the opportunity to make a regular part of your lives holy.

Shanah tova, Chag sameach,  
Student Rabbi Jason Fruithandler

Sisterhood is looking for someone who loves to shop and has some free time to revitalize the Gift Shop. Call Chris Kowalenko at 338-8612.
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### *President's message continued from page 1*

Finally, the team decided to send Morris Fishbein, its captain, to spy on Harvard, the perennial championship team. So Morris schlepped off to Cambridge and hid in the bushes next to the Charles River, where he carefully watched the Harvard team at its daily practices. After a week, Morris returned to Yeshiva. "Well, I figured out their secret", he announces. "What? Tell us! Tell us!", his teammates shout. "We should have only one guy yelling. The other eight should row."

Actually, I am honored to have been able to serve you as president. While these last 2 ½ years have had their ups and downs, the ups definitely outweighed the downs. Although I have a few more gray hairs than when I took office, I feel good about my time in office. As I promised when re-elected in June, I will be stepping down by the end of the year and turning the reins over to my 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Rebecca Balzac.

When Rebecca takes over, you will immediately notice two changes: The new president is a heck of a lot better looking than the old one, and fewer bad jokes from the bimah.

In any event, this speech is supposed to be about the state of the synagogue. If I had to sum up the state of the synagogue in one sentence, it would be, "We're doing pretty well, especially compared to a year ago."

Let's look at where we were a year ago. Our rabbi had just left us on short notice, we had a large deficit, membership was shrinking and vitality was at an all time low.

In my High Holiday speech last year, I announced that we had begun talks with Temple Emanuel about possibly joining forces. A lot of you were probably wondering where we would be the following holiday season, and wondering if, in fact, there would even be a Congregation Ahavath Israel. Well folks, after determining that a merger would not be in our financial interests, we terminated the talks with Temple, and to quote Mike Greenberg from ESPN's Mike and Mike in the Morning, "We're back, and better than ever!"

In any event, the talks with Temple seem to have had some very positive effects. It seems to have brought us closer together and it also seems to have created a spark somewhere within us. Since the talks ended, the atmosphere at Ahavath Israel has been much more positive. The whole situation has brought us closer as a congregation. A year ago I said that we were in danger of disappearing in 3-5 years. Well, I am happy to report that, to borrow the words of Mark Twain, The reports of our death have been exaggerated.

We have put together a new leadership team that is energetic and eager to move forward. The best part about our new leaders is that they actually volunteered! When was the last time that happened? In the spring of 2007, I was drafted by then president, Marsha Weiss. We were at lunch with a friend and talk got around to the shul and the fact that there was nobody to assume the presidency. Marsha matter-of-fact asked me, "What are you doing the next two years?" After I finally agreed, we had a heck of a time filling the two VP slots. Since I had never served as an officer and would need all the help I could get, Marsha agreed to stay on as a VP. After much begging, Dan Rafkind agreed to join the team. I

am truly grateful for their service during my first term. In any event, Rebecca Balzac and Rhona Schiffres actually approached me and asked to be considered by the nominating committee. Since neither had been officers before, and had only been board members for a short period of time, I agreed to stay on for a while so they could get their feet wet and there would be a smooth transition. After working with them over the past few months, I can honestly say that the shul is in good hands. The only problem is that when they step up, Rebecca to president and Rhona to 1<sup>st</sup> VP, we will have an open VP slot to fill. I hope we don't have to go begging again.

As for the Rabbi situation, we actually emerged in much better shape than when Rabbi Crystal left. Losing a rabbi, and knowing that you will be without one for possibly a year or more is tough, but we had been through it before, and survived. The toughest part is making sure that services, including Torah and Haftarah, are covered. Special thanks to Marsha, Bernie and Ellen are in order, as week after week, they stepped up and made sure that we had Torah readings and Haftarah fully covered. Many others read Torah and Haftarah, the list is too long and I may inadvertently miss someone, but these three were there just about every week.

Anyway, getting back to the Rabbi situation, a number of other positives came out of it. First of all, we found Rabbi Kolko, who has been a true blessing. Another positive is that we were able to step back and evaluate the situation, and realize that we were not in a position to hire a full-time Rabbi. Going to a part-time Rabbi would save about \$50,000 a year, basically wiping out our deficit. After an extensive search, our search committee recommended we hire a student Rabbi, and recommended Jason Fruithandler, a 4<sup>th</sup> year rabbinic student. Jason has already spent two weekends with us, and has really taken to the congregation, and we to him. I urge those of you

who haven't met him yet to join us for services when he is here. I guarantee you won't be disappointed. He'll next be here for Simchas Torah weekend. He will generally be with us two weekends a month, which will also give our Torah readers a big break.

As for finances, as I just said, our deficit has been just about wiped out. We project that our budget will be, for all intents and purposes, balanced. However, that assumes a certain level of donations and fundraising. Our fundraising committee has a number of events and projects planned, starting with a pre-election brisket dinner the Shabbos before the election. We are inviting all local and county candidates for office to join us and meet the public.

Some of our other projects include an evening of Chinese food and a movie on December 24, local merchant discount cards, a major Shelach Manos fundraiser, Chaifest 2010, and one biggie: a testimonial dinner and journal honoring a person who has been a good friend to the Jewish community. This year, we are honoring Bob Gaus from Simpson-Gaus Funeral home.

These projects require a lot of work. While we have a good fundraising committee, they can't do it without your help. Please consider volunteering to help on one or more of these projects. See me or Susan Rafkind, our fund raising chair.

As I see it, our biggest challenge in the coming years will be building up our membership. Membership has been steadily declining over the past 10 or so years. There are many reasons for this: the economy, the growth of the reform movement, the demographics of the region. It is a fact that this region is not growing. Families are not moving into the area, at least not at a significant rate. These problems are not unique to our synagogue. Throughout the country, conservative congregations in both rural and urban

areas are facing shrinking memberships. Many congregations are being forced to merge or close their doors altogether.

There is another reason, and one that we can do something about. For years, the Conservative movement appears to have chosen not to face a certain fact: that is that 50% of Jews marry out of the religion. Think about that; half of all Jewish adults marry out of our religion. I'm willing to bet that just about every one of us here today has at least one relative who married a non-Jew. In fact, I have at least half a dozen close relatives who have married out of our religion. The Conservative movement has been perceived as not being welcoming to inter-married families. I believe this is finally changing. I hope this is finally changing.

I was on a USCJ conference call a few months ago about using for-profit marketing techniques in a not-for profit organization. Throughout the power point presentation was the statement about being welcoming towards intermarried families. I was recently told that USCJ has a program geared toward intermarried families. In the coming weeks, I expect to sit down with our USCJ people and look into implementing this program. We must do everything we can, within the confines of USCJ Standards and Practices, if possible to reach out to intermarried families and be truly welcoming. If not, we will not grow, and will eventually close our doors, not because of economics, but because there's nobody left. The average age of our congregation is over 70. Our Talmud Torah is virtually non-existent. We need young families. They're out there. We have to let them know they are welcome.

Friends, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and my family, I want to wish all of you a happy and a healthy New Year and may you all be inscribed in the book of life

OCTOBER YAHRZEITS

“The Lord will guard your going out  
and your coming home, now and forever”

יהוה ישמר צאתך  
ובואך מעתה ועד עולם - Psalm 121

13 Tishri October 1	Tillie Shapiro Isaac Jennie Pauker Etta Leventhal	24 Tishri October 12	Ida Shulman Meshulem Glasner Eva Glasner Abraham Henry Lipgar
14 Tishri October 2	Reuben Leventhal	25 Tishri October 13	Sylvan Estroff Abram Gollup Nathan Gordon Sarah Netburn
15 Tishri October 3	Sarah Kahn Lillie Cutler William Zwick	26 Tishri October 14	Jennifer Pam Millens George B. Starkman Dora Gold
16 Tishri October 4	Irving Nathan Wilpan Dr. Albert Margolis	27 Tishri October 15	Steven Glenn Doyle Dorothy Spiegel Thomas Gruberg
17 Tishri October 5	Ralph Karsik Mary Upright	28 Tishri October 16	Abraham Wieselthier David Isaacson Rose Liepshutz
18 Tishri October 6	Pauline Stein Sadie Fabricant Naomi Kramer	29 Tishri October 17	Bessie Levy Tirsch Victor Snyder Elemer Pataky Abraham Weinstein
19 Tishri October 7	Irene Goldstein Jeanette Badian Sylvia Siller Forstate Wlademer Gorochowsky	30 Tishri October 18	Celia Berg Sylvia Starkman
20 Tishri October 8	Fern Arlene Anolick William Rappaport Mary Alcon Gollup	1 Cheshvan October 19	Marion Zwick
21 Tishri October 9	Paul Black Fannie Parnett Rose Cohen Joseph Gerstenzang		
22 Tishri October 10	Dr. Martin Friedland		

2 Cheshvan October 20	Nettie Hammer Murray M. Shantzis Ruth Vigden Shankman Isidore Motzkin Sam Weiss May G. Rice	8 Cheshvan October 26	Lena Peck Joel Steigman Louis Suckman Moses Ross Anna Replansky Samuel Zwick
3 Cheshvan October 21	Zara Blechman Allan Grinnell Abram Schulman	9 Cheshvan October 27	Albert Frank Rose Lichenstein
4 Cheshvan October 22	Chaim Alter Glasner Samuel Alcon Arthur Field Miriam Freed Mabel Lipton	10 Cheshvan October 28	Edith Lessick Rachel Marcus Ethel Kreppel
5 Cheshvan October 23	Norman Rice Morris Brossman Solomon Rosenthal Ada Esther Spiegeler	11 Cheshvan October 29	Herbert Nadan Rosa Salomon
7 Cheshvan October 25	Isadore Litsky	12 Cheshvan September 4	Jacob Nelson
		13 Cheshvan October 31	Gary Aaronson Dora Dolgins Joseph Avis

## OCTOBER DONATIONS

### Ahavath Israel General Fund

#### In memory of:

**Jane Aronson**

From: Ellen & Howie Leifer

**Arthur Melamed**

From: Martin Melamed

**Hyman Cutler, much missed husband & father**

From: Rose Cutler

Norm & Carol Aronson

**Sadie J. Gruberg**

From: Jack Gruberg

**Herman Helmrich**

From: Bill & Edna Helmrich

**Harriet Tannin**

From: Arlene & Harvey Kronick

Dr. & Mrs. Norman Burg

Bill & Edna Helmrich

### Get well wishes for a speedy recovery to Nathan Kalina

From: Margo & Joe Colen

#### In honor of:

**Joshua Helmrich who graduated Yale University - Good Luck**

From: Bill & Edna Helmrich

**Roz & Carl Lipton's lifetime of service to Ahavath Israel**

### Sylvia Starkman Fund

#### In memory of:

**Bess Smoller**

From: Alfred Smoller

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

#### In memory of:

**Jeanette Tilkin**

From: Mr. & Mrs. Seymour Feldman

**Beautification Fund**

**In memory of:**

**Harriet Tannin**

From: Albert Tannin

**Donations for Selichot & Break-the-fast**

Rosette Teitel

Helen Straus

Hugh Straus

Leone Straus

Gloria Sender

Susan & Steve Hirsch

Rhona & Jeremy Schiffres

Ellen Steinhart

Rebecca Balzac & Tim Cox

**Mitzvah Fund**

Dr. & Mrs. Henry Jacobs

Mr. & Mrs. Barney Millens

Susan Rafkind

**Kol Nidre Appeal**

Lynn & Ben Parsteck

**Dr. Mitchell Winston Fund**

**In memory of:**

**Florence Klein**

From: Mary Jane & Lou Klein

**Sisterhood Ahavath Israel Donations**

From: Margo Colen

**Kitchen Fund**

Rosette Teitel

**CONGREGATION AHAVATH ISRAEL**

**2009**

**Schedule of Additional Holiday Services**

**5770**

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<b>EREV SUKKOT</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>October 2</b>	Ma'ariv	7:30 p.m.
<b>SUKKOT : First Day</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>October 3</b>	Shaharit	9:30 a.m.
<b>SUKKOT : Second Day</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>October 4</b>	Shaharit	9:30 a.m.
<b>SH'MINI ATZERET</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>October 9</b>	Ma'ariv	7:30 p.m.
	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>October 10</b>	Shaharit	9:30 a.m. (Yizkor will be recited)
<b>SIMCHAT TORAH</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>October 10</b>	Ma'ariv	7:30 p.m. (bring the children – gala festival service!)
	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>October 11</b>	Shaharit	9:30 a.m.

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**RABBI JASON FRUITHANDLER'S SCHEDULE**

2009

- October 9-11 (Shemini Atzeret/ Simchat Torah)
- October 30- November 1
- November 13-15
- November 20-22
- December 11-13
- December 25-27

2010

- January 8-10
- January 22-24
- February 5-7
- February 26-27
- March 12-14
- April 5-6 (last 2 days of Pesach)
- April 23-25
- May 7-9
- May 18-20 (Shavuot)
- June 4-6
- June 18-20

**Shabbat Services**  
 Friday 7:30 pm  
 7:15 pm if dinner  
 Saturday 9:30 am

## *Congregation Ahavath Israel*

*October 2009*

*13<sup>th</sup> Tishrei - 13<sup>th</sup> Cheshvan 5770*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>10/18 6:30 pm</b> <b>Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Group</b>				1  13 Tishrei	2 <b>6:19 candles</b> Erev Sukkot  14 Tishrei	3 <b>7:21 Havdalah</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> day Sukkot  15 Tishrei
4 <b>7:19 Havdalah</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> day Sukkot  16 Tishrei	5  Chol HaMo'ed  17 Tishrei	6  Chol HaMo'ed  18 Tishrei	7  Chol HaMo'ed  19 Tishrei	8  Chol HaMo'ed  20 Tishrei	9 <b>6:08 candles</b> Hoshana Rabbah Chol HaMo'ed 21 Tishrei	10 <b>7:09 Havdalah</b> <b>Shmini Atzeret w/ Rabbi Fruithandler</b> 22 Tishrei
11 <b>7:07 Havdalah</b> <b>Simchat Torah w/ Rabbi Fruithandler</b> 23 Tishrei	12  24 Tishrei	13  25 Tishrei	14  26 Tishrei	15  27 Tishrei	16 <b>5:56 candles</b>  28 Tishrei	17 <b>6:58 Havdalah</b>  29 Tishrei
18 <b>Talmud Torah</b> <b>Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan</b> 30 Tishrei	19  <b>Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan</b> 1 Cheshvan	20  2 Cheshvan	21  3 Cheshvan	22  4 Cheshvan	23 <b>5:46 candles</b>  5 Cheshvan	24 <b>6:47 Havdalah</b>  6 Cheshvan
25  7 Cheshvan	26  8 Cheshvan	27  9 Cheshvan	28  10 Cheshvan	29  11 Cheshvan	30 <b>5:36 candles</b> <b>Sisterhood Brisket /Pre-election dinner</b> 12 Cheshvan	31 <b>6:37 Havdalah</b> <b>Services with Rabbi Fruithandler</b> 13 Cheshvan