

OR EMET

MINNESOTA CONGREGATION FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

HIGH HOLIDAYS PROGRAMS



September 26	Rosh Hashana Service	7:30 PM
October 5	Kol Nidre Service	7:30 PM
October 6	Day Yom Kippur Service	3:30 PM

**All services are at the Minneapolis Sabes Jewish Community Center
4330 Cedar Lake Rd. in St. Louis Park**

October 6	Break the Fast	5:30 PM
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**Home of Harold Londer and Jan Withers
2120 Spruce Trail in Golden Valley**

Non-Members are welcome.

There is no charge for any *Or Emet* Holiday Event.

Where is my light? My light is in me. Where is my hope? My hope is in me. Where is my strength? My strength is in me. And in you. - Rabbi Sherwin Wine

High Holidays at Of Emet

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4330 Cedar Lake Rd. in St. Louis Park

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No charge for High Holidays Events

We Affirm

The world is a natural place governed by natural laws, discoverable by rational means.

Human beings possess the power and the responsibility to shape their own lives independent of supernatural power.

We identify with the history, culture and fate of the Jewish people and have the right to claim our traditions, choosing what is relevant to our lives today.

Freedom and dignity for the Jewish people go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of every human being.

We actively support the principle of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and believe human beings possess the responsibility to work toward making the world a better place.

Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur

Many Jewish holidays have their origins as cyclical harvest or planting festivals. The sequence of holidays at the start of the winter planting season in the Middle East – Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot – occur at the most anxious moment for a primitive agricultural people: would the winter rains come? Group survival was at stake. Ritual suffering was apt behavior in this context. A ram's horn sounded to maintain anxiety. The *Yamin ha-Noraim*, the Days of Terror.

Originally, Yom Kippur probably preceded Rosh Hashana. Sacred places were purified so that the rituals could safely proceed. In Torah, Yom Kippur follows Rosh Hashana and is the single day when the high priest would utter the name of Yahweh and enter the Holy of Holies to confront Yahweh face to face through incense smoke to ask forgiveness for the sins of the community and beg for reconciliation.

But why celebrate the New Year on the 1st day of Tishri, the seventh month? The New Year was probably originally celebrated in the spring. Passover is described in Leviticus as occurring on the 14th day of the *first* month. The change, if there was one, is found later in the same chapter:

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you will have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing horns, a holy gathering . . . Also the tenth day of the month is the Day of Atonement [*Yom ha-Kippurim*]; it shall be a holy gathering, and you will afflict your souls, and make a fire offering to YHWH. (Lev. 23:23-27)

A 10-day period followed by a day of self-affliction became the tradition. Tradition took differing paths over Jewish history, and the singing of the *Kol Nidre* text ("All my vows") eventually came to be the emotional center of the Ashkenazic tradition.

Humanistic Jews are no less emotionally connected to the High Holiday cycle. It takes, however, creativity and innovation to celebrate Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur humanistically, as Rabbi Adam Chalom has said. Rabbi Chalom points out four major themes of our observance:

1. The High Holidays are a powerful way to connect with Jewish life and one of the strongest public signs of Jewish identity.
2. They are an opportunity to reflect on our actions of the previous year and to resolve better conduct for the year to come.
3. Celebrating a *Jewish* New Year in addition to the January New Year shows commitment to Jewish identity.
4. The *shofar*, the *Kol Nidre* melody and other High Holiday symbols connect us powerfully to our past.

Humanistic Jews have turned from the concept of being judged by a supernatural cosmos to a commitment to judging ourselves and making good our obligations to others. Because of the power of tradition to sustain both memory and conviction, our humanistic High Holidays reinforce our connection to being Jewish and celebrate ourselves at the same time.

The *Illuminator* welcomes:

Letters to the editor; essays; poems; humor; announcements of Bar/Bat Mitzpahs, weddings, graduations, anniversaries, etc.; articles; photographs (black and white), if relevant to an article; and appropriate paid advertisements.

Published quarterly, upon a schedule that is entirely at the whim of the editor.

Dues:	Individuals	\$175
(due Jan. 1)	Families	\$240

www.oremnet.org

Cofounder and Past-President:
Harold Londer

Executive Committee

President	Vice President
Mike Persellin 763-535-2226 mperse@spacestar.com	Phillip Griffin philgriffin1st@cs.com

Treasurer

Steve Oremland
1350 Waterford Dr.
Golden Valley, MN 55422
sloreml@aol.co

At-Large:	Suzanna Gorodisher Amy Stubenhaus
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Education

Reuben Lubka
rlubka@mn.rr.com
612-377-4302

Social Action

Allan Malkis
d.wanner@comcast.net

Administrator and Web Page

Nancy Holden
715-426-6664
d.n.holden@comcast.net

Newsletter:

Mike Persellin
Box 22513
Robbinsdale, MN 55422
763-535-2226
mperse@spacestar.com

CONGREGATION

Annual Meeting Summary

The Annual Meeting was held on June 1 on a lawn and patio at the University of Minnesota. We made a commitment to hold next year's meeting at a handicap-accessible location (though if we had not forgotten the key for Hillel, it would not have been an issue). Members broke into four small groups for discussion on education, High Holidays, programming/Shabbat, and social action. The outline of the 2003-2004 curriculum for our cultural school focuses on social justice activities for older kids, age-appropriate lesson plans, playing to the individual strengths of our teachers, distinguishing Judaism from Zionism, and generally implementing a rounded Humanistic Jewish education.

The budget was reviewed. Reuben Lubka reported that donations and fund raising were very good this year (three times higher than in the past). The fundraising letter brought in approximately \$1,000.

Changes to the by-laws affecting the terms of officers and At Large members of the Executive Committee and clarifying who may vote in elections were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Election of members of the Executive Committee was as follows: Mike Persellin, President; Phil Griffin, Vice-President; Susan Herman, Treasurer; Amy Stubenhaus, At Large (2-year term). Suzanna Gorodisher is serving the second year of a term as At Large member.

Or Emet Committees

Contact

Programming	Janet Mayer	jmayer@unique-software.com
Education	Reuben Lubka	rlubka@mn.rr.com
High Holidays	Faith Oremland	Outrageouslove@aol.com
Shabbat	Mike Persellin	mperse@spacestar.com
Social Action	Allan Malkis	d.wanner@comcast.net

Social Action Committee

Or Emet Social Action committee members attended several events sponsored by Jewish Community Action (JCA). A meeting for congregational social action leaders on May 28th brought together representatives of many local congregations, along with five *Or Emet* members. One of us attended the follow-up meeting providing training in conducting one-to-one interviews with congregation members.

A meeting of the Social Action Committee for Fall will be scheduled shortly and announced via email. Please email Allan Malkis at d.wanner@comcast.net if you would like to be on the circulation list.

JCA's annual *Hakriah* membership event and fundraiser will be held Sunday, November 9th in conjunction with the biennial national meeting of the UAHC at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Musical entertainment will precede the presentation of the newly renamed Wellstone Call to Justice Award to the Wellstone family.

Executive Committee

We have accepted with regret the resignation of Susan Herman from the positions of Treasurer and Editor of the newsletter. Susan had many good ideas and offered some good suggestions as to how to improve the operations of *Or Emet*. She took on these tasks with commendable zeal, and we thank her for her efforts.

Harriet Maza Visits *Or Emet* September 6-7

The *Or Emet* fall schedule begins with a weekend visit from Harriet Maza, Education Specialist with the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

On Saturday evening September 6, all *Or Emet* members and interested persons are invited to a potluck and social time beginning at 6:30 pm. at St. Martin's Table, St. Martin's Table, 2001 Riverside Ave. on the West Bank in Minneapolis. The restaurant is 6 blocks west of the Riverside exit off of I-94. Please bring a dish to share for the meal. Parents of students in our school should plan to arrive at 5 pm., for a Parents Orientation and discussion time with Harriet on the subject of a Humanistic Jewish education.

Future *Or Emet* Programs

The spirit of the *Or Emet* community is reflected in the diversity of its programming. Friday evening, Oct. 24, following a brief Shabbat service, *Or Emet* member Harry Greenberg's interactive theater company, River's Edge Playback Theater, will present an innovative and interactive program that engages audience members in the telling of personal stories, and then via improvisation developing these stories into plays. This and other Friday events will take place at the Sabes Jewish Community Center in St. Louis Park.

Adults and the *Or Emet* kids will join together in readings and the singing of traditional melodies at the Shabbat service on Friday evening, November 14. Member Carol Logan, a specialist in Russian language and culture, will present her slides and perceptions of the former Soviet Union on Friday, December 5. Russian visitors will discuss their impressions of their nation in transition.

Subsequent Friday evenings and Sunday mornings will feature the talented Ilya Gorodisher, a Russian émigré, writer and humorist. There will be discussions of interfaith marriage and "spiritual elderying." Writer and teacher Alan Miller will preside over a discussion of intercultural communication, as will Hafed Bouassida. Kojo Amegashie, who comes from Ghana, will share information about the Jews of Africa, and will speak of his Ewe tribe, which has a special affinity with Jewish culture. Shabbat dinners in homes will help to relieve winter blues.

On Friday evenings, the JCC will open doors at 7 p.m., arrival time is 7:15 pm., a brief Shabbat service will begin at 7:30. Sunday programs take place at 10-12 a.m. at Hillel House, University Avenue, while children's classes are in session elsewhere in the building. (Park free before 1 p.m. on University Avenue.) Naturally,

refreshments follow all *Or Emet* programs. For more information, contact Mike Persellin, 763-535-2226, mperse@spacestar.com, or call Jane Katz, 763-546-4225. There is no charge for attending any *Or Emet* program.

Adult Education at *Or Emet*

Our Adult Education program began last spring with the Philosophy of Humanism. We will offer an 8-week course in Jewish History on Tuesday evenings beginning in early January. The course will focus on important topics in ancient and modern Jewish History. There will be an emphasis on discussion. The course will be of interest to adults and mature teens, and will not presume an academic background in history. There will be no charge for the course; though a book such as the *Historical Atlas of the Jewish People* (Eli Barnavi) may be assigned. Members and non-members may attend. Allan Malkis and Mike Persellin will lead the course. For information: d.wanner@comcast.net and mperse@spacestar.com.

Our best wishes to **Evelyn Lessin**, who is suffering from back problems.

Our thanks to **Evelyn Lessin** and **Reuben Lubka**, who worked hard and conscientiously as members of the Executive Committee for several years.

Bon voyage to **Diane and Charlie Jacobson**, long time *Or Emet* members who have moved to Florida. We will miss them on Friday nights and at the International Film Festival.

Melnick/Dahlagers Triumph at State Fair

Or Emet's Melnick/Dahlagers, the First Family of Minnesota Crop Art, have again swept away all challengers by taking most of the major awards at the 2003 State Fair. Laura Melnick is Reserve Champion (best of bests) for her subversive "Curious George Searches for Weapons of Mass Destruction." Ari Dahlager, age 8, took Junior Best of Show for "Me and My Sister." Elana Dahlager has a blue ribbon for "Blah, Blah, Blah." Mark Dahlager was awarded a 3rd place for "My parents went to the Minnesota State Fair and all I got was this croppy t-shirt."

Harold Londer, co-founder and Past President of *Or Emet* will be speaking to the Minnesota Humanists Association on November 2. For information, please contact Harold or Phil Griffin.

SHJ

Phil Gould is New SHJ President

Phil Gould was installed as SHJ President at the May 2003 SHJ Executive Board meeting. Phil has been chair of SHJ's Ethical Concerns and Strategic Planning committees, as well as serving as Vice-President in 2002-2003. He is current president of Machar (Washington, D.C.) Congregation and is Director of the Defense Science Study Group at the Institute for Defense Analyses, a private, non-profit organization. Phil has been chairing a committee developing a strategic plan for SHJ. Among other planned projects, Phil will oversee an SHJ initiative to maintain a presence on college campuses. Other elected officers: Garrett Cohn - President-Elect; Lou Altman - Vice President; Ron Milan - Treasurer; and Deb Godden - Secretary.

2003 SHJ Conference and Board Meeting

SHJ's national conference, "Humanistic Judaism: Transforming Judaism for Our Times," was held in suburban Detroit May 2-4. The conference had been switched at the last moment from its scheduled location in Toronto due to the SARS scare. Even so, over 140 people attended from all over North America. Mike Persellin is *Or Emet's* delegate to the SHJ Board, which met on the two days previous to the conference. The conferences are always well-organized, with workshops on fund-raising, education, Holocaust literature, Jewish culture, publicity, and even on the eroticism of the "Song of Songs." Friday evening Shabbat included a tribute and retrospective of the career of Rabbi Sherwin Wine: "Humanistic Judaism: Forty Years Later." Rabbi Wine spoke humorously and movingly about his career, from his chaplaincy during the Korean War to leader of a reform congregation to the founding of the SHJ movement, and to the present. He was presented with a photo collage illustrating major events in his rabbinic life. The event also celebrated Rabbi Wine's 50th birthday and marked his retirement as chief rabbi of the Birmingham Temple. Rabbi Adam Chalom keyed the conference on Saturday morning with a talk on "The Next 40 Years for Humanistic Judaism." We were fortunate to have Dr. Egon Mayer, co-author of the "The American Jewish Identity Survey."

SHJ now has seven fully ordained rabbis, all of whom attended and led Shabbat and Havdalah services at the conference.

The Toronto congregation, under the leadership of Eva Goldfinger, spent two years planning the conference, only for it to be moved to Detroit. They did a wonderful job in Detroit, and their reward is to be able to plan and host the 2004 conference in Toronto.

Jews and Non-Jews The Love/Hate Relationship

October 23-26, 2003

International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism
The Pivnick Center, The Birmingham Temple
28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI

For more information, call 248.476.9532
Email: iishj@iishj.org Web site: www.ishj.org

Humanists and other peoples gods (or God?)

When the first letter of a word is capitalized, e.g., "A" rather than "a," a special status is implied. This status is reserved for a proper noun, such as the name of a person, place or thing. This is particularly significant when the letter so capitalized is the "g" in the word "god," so that the word becomes God.

For instance, I notice that on my one dollar bill the phrase, "IN GOD WE TRUST," all in capital letters. But suppose someone were to change it to "In god we trust:" the words are the same; but is the meaning the same? The former points to an absolute deity without equal, while the latter, according to true believers, refers to one of the multitude of false deities imagined by misguided people. We would see a massive uprising from the bowels of triumphalist American Christendom to charge that the nation had been betrayed, and to demand that martial law be imposed until the sorry wretch who did the deed is executed in several different ways, along with all those who might have harbored the evil-doer.

Even to raise the issue will be hard to justify in our present piety-soaked nation. We have invested so much feeling and fear in our national identity that the capital "G" says who made us, protects and commands us, even coloring our subconscious impulses. That we should dare to think about the source of our religious intoxication poses a nearly impossible task. How shall we allow ourselves the mere suspicion that our "G" god might be a "g" god? Can we permit this question to intrude into our solidarity as people who refuse to question our absolute rightness? What could assure such belief in our rightness for ourselves and our descendents except the belief that our god is the One and Only God?

If we were still living in a previous millennium, when people typically knew only their own tribe with its language and beliefs, there would be little reason for such a question. But we have made the unintended discovery that the world is full of people like ourselves. Many of the others believe quite the same things about their god as we mean about our own god. All of those who insist on the "G" for their god agree with us as to the meaning of the "G." They have the same unquestioning belief that their god is absolute that we do that ours is absolute. -

- - *Phil Griffin*



Humanistic Jews of Minnesota

C/O Mike Persellin
Box 22513
Robbinsdale, MN 55422

SHJ Glossary

SHJ – Society for Humanistic Judaism. Offices in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Organizes and supports Humanistic Jewish communities throughout North America.

CSJO – Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations. Offices in Cleveland, Ohio. Represents Secular Jewish communities and schools throughout North America. Co-sponsors movement activities with SHJ.

ISHJ – International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism. Offices in Farmington Hills. Educational arm of the movement: Leadership, Rabbinic, Musicians programs.

International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews. Offices in New York. Coordinating body of Secular Humanistic Jewish organizations in North America, Israel, Europe, Australia, and South America.

LCSHJ - Leadership Conference of Secular and Humanistic Jews. Professional organization and certifying body of the movement's leaders.

AHR – Association of Humanistic Rabbis. Professional organization of rabbis. There are ten Secular Humanistic rabbis in North America and five students in the Institute's rabbinic program.

Jews Outside the U.S.

The Czech and Slovak Republics have a long history of Jewish life. The synagogues, cemetery and museum of the Jewish Quarter in Prague is one of the outstanding Jewish sites in Europe. The names of 77,291 Czech Jews (85% of the 1940 population) are painted on the walls of the 500-year old Pinkas Synagogue. Elsewhere in the two countries, hundreds of synagogue buildings – a few being restored – and cemeteries attest to the extent of settlement. A very useful guide to some of these is

Jewish Sights of Bohemia and Moravia by Jiri Fiedler (Sefer, Prague).

New Book About Sherwin Wine

To honor Rabbi Sherwin Wine on the occasion of his retirement after 40 years of service to the Birmingham Temple, he was presented with a tribute book, *A Life of Courage: Sherwin Wine and Humanistic Judaism*. "We performed a great service for the community," Wine said. We enabled people to focus on ideas, not just survival. What is it that Jews believe?" *A Life of Courage* contains contributions from other notable Jewish humanists, such as former Knesset member Shulamit Aloni and noted Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer, and more than 300 pages of biography and photographs that survey the story of Sherwin Wine and the fifth alternative in Jewish life. "We reach out to this huge population of secular Jews who do not have a community. I am not saying we have the answer for everybody, but we do for some of them." *A Life of Courage* is on sale for \$30. For details visit the SHJ website: www.shj.org.

Did You Know?

Israel has since 1953 prohibited civil marriage. Interfaith marriage is not permitted. Thousands of Israeli couples travel abroad – especially to Cyprus – to be married, or they live together without the government benefits and status of being legally married.

Keep this in mind the next time our government claims they wanted regime change in Iraq because of the hold religious leaders there had over civil life.

Kravitz called his Rabbi and said, "I know tonight is Kol Nidre; but tonight the Twins start the playoffs. Rabbi, I'm a lifelong Twins fan. I have to watch the game on TV. The Rabbi answers, "Kravitz, that's what VCRs are for." Kravitz is surprised. "You mean I can tape Kol Nidre?"

Or Emet Fall 2003 Schedule

	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
September			
Saturday 6	10-3 pm.	St. Martin's Table	School staff and Education Committee meet w/Harriet Maza
Saturday 6	5 pm.	St. Martin's Table	Parents meet with Harriet Maza
Saturday 6	6:30 pm	St. Martin's Table	Havdalah Service and Members Pot Luck with Harriet Maza
Sunday 7	10 - noon	Hillel House	Cultural School and discussion: Setting the Year's Programs
Tuesday 9	6:30 pm.	t/b/a	Executive Committee Meeting
Friday 26	7:15 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Rosh Hashonah Service
October			
Sunday 5	7:15 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Kol Nidre Service
Monday 6	3:30 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Yom Kippur Day Service
Monday 6	5:30 pm.	Home of Harold Londer and Jan Withers	Break the Fast
Sunday 12	10 - noon	Hillel House	Cultural School/Building the Sukkoth
Tuesday 14	6:30 pm.	t/b/a	Executive Committee Meeting
Friday 24	7:15 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Shabbat Service; River's Edge Playback Theater
November			
Sunday 2	10 - noon	Hillel House	Cultural School
Tuesday 11	6:30 pm.	t/b/a	Executive Committee Meeting
Friday 14	7:15 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Cultural School conducts Shabbat Service; Shabbat Memories
Sunday 16	t/b/a	t/b/a	1 st rehearsal for Hannukah play
December			
Friday 5	7:15 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Shabbat Service; Carol Logan: The ExUSSR Preserved on File: The Gorbachav Era and Beyond, 1987 - 1995
Sunday 7	10 - noon	Hillel House	Dress Rehearsal for Hannukah Play (No adult program)
Tuesday 9	6:30 pm.	t/b/a	Executive Committee Meeting
Saturday 20	5:30 pm.	Friends School 1365 Englewood Av., St. Paul	Hannukah Play and (Pot Luck) Party
January			
Sunday 4	10 - noon	Hillel House	Cultural School and Adult Program (t/b/a)
Friday 9	7:15 pm.	Mpls. Sabes JCC	Spiritual Eldering
Friday 23	7 pm.	Friends Meeting House or ___'s Home	Shabbat Dinner

The Minneapolis Sabes JCC is located at 4330 Cedar Lake Rd. in St. Louis Park.

Hillel House is located at 1521 University Avenue S.E. on the University of Minnesota Campus.