

Congregation Etz Chaim

February 2012/5772



Rich Joy and Beth on the bema

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An Interview with Richard Joy

by David Strassler

On November 19, 2011, at age 60, Richard Joy was called to the Torah to become a Bar Mitzvah. He approached me two years ago with a request to tutor him. And then he began his journey. The following is an interview I recently had with Ritch.

DS: So Ritch why did you want to become a Bar Mitzvah?

RJ: I thought it was the “Jewish thing to do”. Watching all those kids going up there from Hebrew school, made me want to go through this experience. Actually, the first time I was ever at Congregation Etz Chaim was in 2005, when your daughter, Sarah, had her Bat Mitzvah. I remember getting those blue wristbands.

DS: What did you do to prepare for your Bar Mitzvah?

RJ: I already knew the blessings for before and after the Torah reading. You then helped me learn the Haftorah blessings. After that, I learned the maftir. But when we started on the Haftorah, I “hit the wall”. I remember telling you that I was "done" because I was so stressed out. I was doing too much at one time. At the same time as I was studying for my Bar Mitzvah, I was also trying to learn how to play guitar.

You then gave me a new option--instead of chanting the Haftorah, I could express the Haftorah story using my artistic skills. I didn't realize there was any flexibility on how one can do a Bar Mitzvah. After that session, I was so relieved and then able to devote myself to my studies. Prior to that, I didn't feel confident that I could do it.

DS: Would you describe your Haftorah picture?

RJ: The drawing I did is my interpretation of the story of King David’s last days of life. This was a real challenge. I spent one month researching the story and the architecture of the time--how things were made in the room, including the bed, seats, ceiling. I then spent one month drawing in pointillism, my interpretation of the Haftorah.

In the picture, David is on his deathbed with Abishag, to keep him warm. He is talking to his son, Solomon. In the hallway are three people--his prophet, Nathan, and 2 of his other sons. He explained to them why they were not being chosen to be the king. I usually don't draw people, so that was a stretch for me. This probably took me longer to do than if I learned my Haftorah! (see picture on page 7)

Continued on page 6....

A Cantor in the Making

By Beth Strassler



I found myself in a group of people who were spearheading a re-vitalization of the Biddeford shul.

I fulfilled the requirements for a Certificate in Jewish Music from Hebrew College, School of Jewish Music last May. I have since decided to continue my studies with the goal of cantorial ordination and am in the process of formally applying to the program.

I would like to share one of the essays I wrote for the application.

a. Discuss the path that has led you to apply for graduate study in the cantorate and Jewish studies. Reflect on your personal growth as a Jew, a musician, an educator and a community leader.

When we moved to Maine in June 1982, David and I decided to buy a house in Arundel, while I commuted to teach at the University of New Hampshire and he started a medical practice in Biddeford.

We drove by Congregation Etz Chaim in Biddeford--on Bacon Street, no less--during our weekend search for a house. July and August were filled with settling in the house and getting the practice off the ground before I began teaching in late August. In September, we headed to the synagogue for the high holiday services.

We quickly realized that locating a synagogue was only part of the homework we should have done. We had not thought to ask more in depth questions, such as: Is there a rabbi? (No.) Do you get a minyan for Shabbat services? What? You don't HAVE Shabbat services? Where is the religious school? (There was none.) In fact, where are the children? (There were none.) You only meet for yearzeits and the high holidays? AND the VISITING cantor who comes for High Holiday services is wonderful!!!

We had arrived at an interesting time in the history of the Jewish community that has occupied the building since 1906. The President was on

the half of the board which had voted to keep the doors open. The other half had left. Everyone had been schlepping their children to Portland for long distance religious school and b'nai mitzvot since 1963.

We wanted no part of driving our future children forty minutes to Portland for their Jewish education. Meanwhile, we uncovered a secret: The older Jewish community members in the Biddeford area and the younger, newer Jewish community members in the neighboring Kennebunk area had not found each other. They met at a Chanukah party at our home in 1986. Each side was surprised to find that even as Jews had been moving out of Biddeford, others were moving into Kennebunk.

I found myself in a group of people who were spearheading a re-vitalization of the Biddeford shul. Opportunities opened to me that would have been unthinkable in a larger, more established synagogue with more educated members. I either had to step up to the plate and get involved, or nothing would get done. As I became a parent, I also became a community organizer, synagogue board member, religious school teacher & co-principal, executive director and facilitator of an exciting Jewish community resurgence. I attended regional and national Jewish education and administration conferences that kept me a step or two ahead of our programs.

In the 1980's, I attended synagogue mostly on the high holidays, and recognized the music, but was unable to fully participate because I didn't know the Hebrew. It was frustrating that most of the meaningful (Christian) religious music that I had collected as a child and teenager was irrelevant to my current Jewish wor-

A Cantor in the Making, cont.

By Beth Strassler

ship. My *neshama* or my love for G-d hadn't changed, nor had my desire to express it musically, but I did not have the repertoire.

I began to participate in services by using the transliteration of the prayers. For the many prayers whose transliteration was not included in our prayer book, I recorded congregants and then transcribed their singing. When the tune seemed unclear, I wrote out the music. I shared this work with others who also wanted to more fully participate. The experience launched me as both a student and teacher of synagogue prayer.

Today, I see my *primary* role is bringing music and meaningful prayer experiences into our synagogue community. Yes, we come together to sing and it is enjoyable, but I have had glimpses of how I may be able to *inspire* others through music. This is very different from a sing-a-long. I believe this is what the cantorate is about.

My applying to the School of Jewish Music Cantorial Program is the culmination of my thirty years of Jewish life in Maine. Each day has moved me closer to this application. I began primarily as a community doer with little religious knowledge and morphed into a community organizer and lay leader with more religious knowledge. After I completed the requirements for a Certificate in Jewish Liturgical Music in May 2011, I realized that it is not enough. It is not enough for me personally, nor is it enough for what our synagogue community needs from me.

The cantorate combines technique and spirit in a way that appeals to me. Study is the means for developing more *ruach* (spirit) in my praying. The end goal is not for perfect, rote, technical exper-

tise in my prayer. This idea prevented me from studying music earlier in my life because I was concerned that studying music would take away my joy in creating it. To the contrary, the learning I have done on my own and through my studies at Hebrew College has made my prayer more expressive and meaningful. When I pray from the bimah, I am filled with inspiration, purpose and an indescribable strength which seem to radiate in my voice. I have come to recognize how closely my singing is connected to my soul.

Our first child was tutored for his Bar Mitzvah by a knowledgeable teacher in the community. I struggled to memorize a few lines of Torah for the occasion. I tutored our last child in chanting Torah and Haftarah. The eight years in between were filled with extensive study, including my own Bat Mitzvah.

The more I learn, the more I see it reflected in the students in our Hebrew School. The bar has been raised for what is accomplished during b'nai mitzvah preparation, which is our "prime time" for bringing students and families from our religious school community closer to our prayer community. Our graduates now chant for each other's b'nai mitzvot and during the High Holiday services.

I am blessed with a synagogue community of people who benefit from my leadership and continually encourage me to further develop my skills. What is music to *my ears* is when people tell me they were deeply touched by my praying.

I could not have predicted that this would be my path when I moved to Maine, but today I am satisfied that I am right where I am meant to be.



Machzor Eit Ratzon

After reviewing several recent options, and comparing them with our current book, the Ritual Committee has chosen *Machzor Eit Ratzon* as a replacement.

New Machzor Chosen for High Holidays

by Alan Fink

Congregation Etz Chaim has been using our current machzors for over 20 years, and there has been increasing discussion that they are becoming dated. While selection and order of the Hebrew prayers is consistently the same by tradition, the accompanying English translations and reflections can vary among machzor editions.

After reviewing several recent options, and comparing them with our current book, the Ritual Committee has chosen Machzor Eit Ratzon as a replacement. Major changes and advantages include: complete transliteration of all prayers, new and more readable translations, and gender-neutral language. Each page contains extensive commentary on the specific prayers, with basic information about what's going on in the service at that point. Meditations and insights into the themes of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are plentiful. The machzor was first published in 2010 and an

updated version was made available this past Summer, with new revisions and additions.

As you know, we have been working over the past two years to make the High Holiday services more participatory and stimulating, both spiritually and cognitively. Cantor Scott Rapaport has contributed to this effort through his increased reflections and historical comments from the bimah. We are very excited to expand this potential to all congregants individually, as you pick and choose among the rich Machzor Eit Ratzon offerings. My prediction is you'll all be extremely pleased with the change!

Alan Fink, on behalf of the Ritual Committee

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at Congregation Etz Chaim  
Jewish Books, Music & Movies  
for the  
York County Community

To donate books call: 967-5833



## As I Heard It

by Morton Gold

There are numerous individuals living among us who are distinguished in their own fields, though they are not well known within the general community. One of these individuals is Carl Dimow. Among his accolades is the fact that he plays flute and guitar in the Casco Bay Tumblers, a Klezmer band whose music complements many a festive local Jewish occasion.

To digress a bit, the word "Tumbler" is a Yiddish word that resists a ready translation. The root is the word "Tummler", which literally means noise. However, like many other Yiddish words, the true meaning depends on how and where the word is used. In the context of the Band, it means folks who create excitement or sounds, in this case of a musical nature.

The word Klezmer, the origin of which probably dates back to eighteenth century Eastern Europe, denotes itinerant musicians, whose main purpose (and occupation) was to supply music during festive occasions, usually, but not limited to, weddings. The group usually consisted of a clarinet, accordion, string bass, drum and could also include a violin, trumpet and trombone.

While deriving most of the names of various dances from Eastern Europe, these dances have taken on a patina of ethnically charged Jewish character. Klezmer music and jazz have much in common. A tune may begin with one person or the entire group, and then each instrumentalist singly or in groups would embellish or ornament the tune. This process may continue for a few moments, or for ten or more minutes. From its humble origins, one can now find Klezmer ensembles in many a higher institution of learning (e.g. The New England Conservatory). Klezmer released several fine CDs in that genre.

Getting back to Mr. Dimow, as a child, he related to me that he was not serious about music. It took him ten years to get serious about playing the flute. He enrolled at the University of Southern Maine at Gorham, and studied with Robert Dick, who taught him extended techniques on the instrument. Since the flute was not a standard instrument in a Klezmer group, these special effects were employed to create

a traditional Klezmer sound.

The Casco Bay Tumblers were organized just over twenty years ago, and Mr. Dimow has been a member of that group for just under twenty years, no mean achievement in any league. What brought Mr. Dimow to my attention was a recent CD of his, named *Border Crossings*, music he composed for flute and guitar, two instruments he knows very well. This is his second CD, released with Nathan Kolosko, who plays the guitar. Literature does not contain many works with this instrument combination. One can mention duos composed by Vivaldi in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Guiliani in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

What inspired Mr. Dimow to compose the piece that aroused my interest was one of the works on this CD, called a "Klezmer Suite". Mr. Dimow told me that the point of departure was the fact that an Argentinean composer (Piazzolo) wrote a Tango Suite. Why not a Klezmer Suite? Indeed, why not? Furthermore, one of the pieces in this Suite (a grouping of pieces) is one called "a Bacon Street Bulgar". This needs a bit of explaining, as well. Bacon Street in Biddeford is home to the synagogue of Biddeford's small Jewish community. While it does not have a rabbi, it does have many learned and devoted members who run the place. A "Bulgar" is a snappy, happy dance. The Tumblers have appeared at the synagogue in Biddeford (and other venues) for many years, and this dance is particularly endearing, as well as enduring, way to call attention to this association. Mr. Dimow needed to be prodded, but eventually he mentioned that he has a website [Carldimow.com](http://Carldimow.com), where one can go to learn more about what he has available for purchase. As Fiddler on the Roof's Tevye is reputed to have said: "To life, to life, l'chayim!"

(Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor and a music and theater reviewer.)

the Casco Bay Tumblers



Klezmer Band

Casco Bay Tumblers were organized just over twenty years ago, and Mr. Dimow has been a member of that group for just under twenty years

**"There are numerous individuals living among us who are distinguished in their own fields, though they are not well known within the general community. "**

- Hear the "Bacon Street Bulgar" as the background music to a YouTube video of the 2011 Chanukah Party at Congregation Etz Chaim on Bacon Street. [etzchaimme.org/baconstreetbulgar](http://etzchaimme.org/baconstreetbulgar)
- To order the CD (\$10 plus shipping) that contains this song, go to Carl Dimow's website: [www.carldimow.com/cds.shtml](http://www.carldimow.com/cds.shtml)

## *An Interview with Richard Joy (cont. from p.1)* by David Strassler



**I realized  
that I was in  
the right  
place at the  
right time--  
where G-d  
wanted me  
to be.**



DS: What about learning the maftir?

RJ: I knew my maftir pretty well, but you surprised me when you asked me to consider reading it from the Torah a few weeks before my Bar Mitzvah. Again, I started to feel overwhelmed. But after practicing it the first time, I said to myself: "I can do this". And I did.

DS: Why did you want a tallit that had either brown or green in it?

RJ: The number one reason for my choice of having green or brown as the color in my tallit is in reminding me that G-d created the earth.

DS: How did you feel on the day of your Bar Mitzvah?

RJ: In a good way, I felt like I knew what I was doing. I did better than I thought I would. It was "such a feeling". When reading the Haftorah blessing, I started crying. It was unexpected. I didn't know where it was coming from. I didn't feel "hurt". I realized that I was in the right place at the right time--where G-d wanted me to be.

In searching for other life experiences that were

as wonderful as that feeling, it brought back memories of how I felt after the birth of my children, overwhelmed with happiness. And now I feel more Jewish than I have ever felt in my life. I feel that I have crossed a major threshold. I feel more in touch with G-d. I am even continuing to learn through the Internet, using sites like Torah.org.

In 1985, I started to learn about Judaism when I joined a girlfriend who was attending conversion classes at Temple Emanuel, a reform congregation in Worcester. I continued to be interested even after we broke up. After a lot of study and attending Friday night services, eleven years later, in November, 1996, I converted under the supervision of Rabbi "Sissy" Coran. I went into the mikvah, held the Torah for the first time, and said prayers.

DS: Were there any other surprises on the day of your Bar Mitzvah?

RJ: My cousin Greg was overwhelmed. He thought he would stay for ½ hour because of his back problems. But instead, he stayed 1 ½ hours. That day he understood why I was so dedicated to Judaism. He couldn't believe it.



*Richard Joy's  
Bar Mitzvah  
November 16, 2011*







## *Sunday School Schedule*

*Sunday School is back for your family's enjoyment!*

*Denise and Greg Hammond are taking over Sunday School coordination, beginning with Purim. They will help continue to provide a fun atmosphere for you and your children, and will need your participation!*

*Enjoy this time; our kids grow oh so quickly, as we've seen!*

*Adrienne, Jeff, Tara & Ethan Levy*

| <u><i>Holiday</i></u> | <u><i>Sunday School</i></u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Purim</i>          | <i>Mar 4</i>                |
| <i>Pesach</i>         | <i>Apr 1</i>                |

## Hebrew School - Gimmel Class

by Jeff Levy

The Gimmel class at York County Community Hebrew School is comprised of a very special group of young people. We have been reading an inspiring text called "And You Shall Teach Them Diligently to your Children... transmitting Jewish Values from Generation to Generation", by Rabbi Steven Bayar. This book teaches us about various mitzvot, such as Lechem Le'evim – feeding the poor, L'hader Pnai Zaken – honoring the elderly, Bikur Cholim – visiting the sick, Hachnesat Orchim – hospitality, and many others.

The book tells the story of many "good people" who have done deeds that have truly made the world a better place. Among these heroes was Dr. William Thomas, who transformed many nursing homes from very sterile environments where people went to die, to warm environments that emphasized activity and life enrichment by adding pets, plants and associating them with daycares.

Our class has conducted a drive to benefit the food pantry in Biddeford, and currently is in the process of assembling "distraction bags" (a gift bag of entertaining toys and activities) that will be given to children who end up in the Southern Maine Medical Center's Emergency Room or in the Pediatric Unit. I am very proud to be part of such a motivated and bright group of young people!





## Notes from NewCAJE A conference for Jewish educators

by Robert Pierce

What makes the conference so special is in the way the sessions are offered, the way all are welcome to every session, the feeling of welcoming inclusion

I attended the second annual NewCAJE (Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education) for Jewish educators, held in Greensboro, NC this past August, thanks to a sponsorship from Etz Chaim.

This is my second year experiencing a conference for Jewish educators, and it has become a wonderful experience in my life personally, to be immersed in a Jewish community for learning and support, and to become a better educator at Etz Chaim.

The CAJE conference for Jewish educators has a long history, with an annual conference since the late 1970s, but the NewCAJE is only two years old. The NewCAJE is smaller than the CAJE, and is in need of more financial and volunteer support.

### Wide diversity of conference attendees and presenters

There is a wonderful spirit of connectedness and shared respect as Jewish educators of all levels, ages, and abilities attend interesting sessions, eat delicious meals, and join in evening musical entertainment each day.

What makes the conference so special is in the way the sessions are offered, the way all are welcome to every session, the feeling of welcoming inclusion, including discussions during and after classes, joining any given table at meal time, and social events such as additional keynote lectures and music concerts each evening.

This year, the conference was held at the American Hebrew Academy (see more information at: [www.americanhebrewacademy.org](http://www.americanhebrewacademy.org)).

### Conference: Areas of interest

There is a wide selection of sessions for Jewish educators, and many attendees tend to focus on those that support their areas of interest and actual focus at work. I mostly focused on attending sessions in History, Torah, and Teens categories.

Whereas the theme of sessions I attended last year was focused on instilling an appreciation for, and connection to, Israel, this year's focus included contemporary events and Jewish values. This focus was based in part on the teen class students' interests, requests for this coming year, and on my personal interests.

Here is a sampling of notes from some of the sessions I attended:

### Conversations on the effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Following are some of the points made and points of view I heard:

While there is an opportunity for peace, more real facts about the history of the Palestinians need to be more widely known, such as that they have rejected all previous proposals for partitions, and they have repeatedly rejected the recognition of Israel as a nation or state. In 1900, only about 10% of Palestinians were native or had roots in the land of what is now the state of Israel. The vast majority of Palestinians come from Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, but never made any effort, nor did they receive support, to become part of those countries. Furthermore, for the past 60 years, these countries, along with others such as Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have been uncooperative with the State of Israel to promote peaceful communications that would have enabled better economic opportunities for all the countries, and a better life for their people. While the Palestinians have created a territorial identity, Palestine was, and is, a region, never a country or a nation.

### They come for their friends...creating a high school midrasha (place of learning) where teens want to come

This session provided lessons on how to create the right atmosphere for teens that integrates social time, integration with a religious school, Jewish identity and learning. The class had leaders from all over the U.S., all with a common goal: to keep kids connected with their

**Notes from NewCAJE**  
**A conference for Jewish educators, cont.**  
*by Robert Pierce*

Jewish communities. Leadership projects and dinner programs were two ideas presented, and were new to most of the class.

This session covered how to present students with Jewish texts, ideas, questions and values, but not in-depth learning. Examples were used, such as Jewish texts as lessons for male role modeling, or bullying, gender expression, and asked students what social issues and topics are important to them and why.

**When history has a name, a face, and a story: Using new technologies to connect students to 20th century Jewish history**

Taught by a teacher with a PhD who is part of the Centropa Institute, an organization based in Europe, she presented approaches teachers can use for students learning Jewish History in general, and available resources at the Centropa Institute, in particular from <http://www.centropa.org/index.php?nID=>. Resources on this site include videos, photographs, and information on how Jews lived during different time periods and cultures, particularly in Europe before the Holocaust.

**Introduction to Talmud**

Led by a rabbi, this session covered the structure, concept and how the sections of Talmud are presented in their unique form. He also discussed some interpretations of the Torah, and the literary method of understanding text versus the oral tradition.

He explained that wisdom gained through the Torah is not passive, and learning requires interpretation. Torah and Talmud are laws for the soul, and God's direction for the people of Israel. For example, he cited the story of Cain and Abel as a story about human needs. Another example is the first law from Moses, about being enslaved for six years, then one year to freedom from bondage. There's a parallel here to Jacob's having to serve the same number of years under Laban for Leah and Rachel, his two wives.

There's an oral tradition behind all the written texts. For instance, why is manumission (freeing) of slaves documented, but little else written about slaves? The writing came from a deep understanding of the oral law, which was likely far richer than what is now available in the texts.

Some interesting comments from the rabbi:

"If you want to understand the shema, know when to recite it at night" - but what does that mean?

"Why was eternal life not destroyed with the tree of knowledge? To allow people to find their way back to a life lived eternal, not an eternal life."

"Purim as a masquerade - we're all masquerading."

"Who and what is a king? Mordecai and Haman were both descended from kings..."

The sessions covering portions of sacred texts led me to see that studying them can always be relevant to today and contemporary life.

**...lessons on  
 how to  
 create the  
 right  
 atmosphere  
 for teens  
 that  
 integrates  
 social time,  
 integration  
 with a  
 religious  
 school,  
 Jewish  
 identity and  
 learning.**



## Notes from NewCAJE

### A conference for Jewish educators, cont.

by Robert Pierce

#### I can't see my soul! How to teach the world of the spirit to our youth

The focus during this session was to help instill a sense of the soul through some of the best teachings in Kabbalah. We should remind ourselves that our relationship to God is as a servant. We should open our eyes in amazement, in part through learning. Life is a journey of continuous study, through whatever resources are available. Rabbis, communities, books and the internet are all types of resources.

Kabbalah expresses the belief that we are a soul within a body, not a body with a soul, and we need to cultivate our soul.

There are five levels of the soul to attempt to understand:

- **Nefesh** - Our meaningless bodily needs and desires. If God made us in his image, then we should likely focus on our spirit vs. our body.
- **Ru'ach** - The holy spirit that fills us with a sense of truth. We express the truth with our tongues, which have the power to help or hurt.
- **Mishama** - Our ideals and the world of ideas. We have a sense of purpose, of what we should do with our life. Giving power to God instead of ourselves is the difference between humility and ego, and can lead to a deeper sense of purity.
- **Cha'in** - Life animates us through a sense of belonging to the people and communities we are part of. Cha'in helps us grow, gives us a sense of responsibility to help others. One good mitzvah leads to another, and the reward for a mitzvah is another mitzvah. (We do not require an afterlife, but death is viewed as a gathering to your people in a place where you belong.)
- **Y'chida** - Seclusion with your soul connection, your true love. God is considered our first love and a "spouse" or partner is second. Y'chida enforces and defines our connection to our "spouse" - this is a transitory level of Kabbalah, in that we can't have the feeling all the time, but the memories of connectedness help sustain us. Examples: the birth of a child, or watching an amazing event occur.



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#### Website:

<http://etzchaimme.org>

## Notes from NewCAJE A conference for Jewish educators, cont.

by Robert Pierce

...we listened to ideas of how to present art, photographs and personal narratives of the Holocaust to teens in a way that resonates with them.

### Teaching anti-Semitism and the Holocaust to teenagers

Presented by a volunteer teacher, we listened to ideas of how to present art, photographs and personal narratives of the Holocaust to teens in a way that resonates with them. The history was de-emphasized; the focus was on the stories.

### The last hope for audacity? Jews and politics today

This session was an open forum on how we can (and should) as Jews, respond to the state of the political world. We discussed where responsibility lies, who can or should be leaders, and what the religious tracts say about these issues.

One proposal was that if 5% of Americans own or control more than 95% of all our nation's money, and presumably about 10% or more of that 5% of Americans with money are Jewish, then they have a moral obligation to be leaders and help support Jewish interests in politics.

It was humbling, and fascinating, to spend four days with this Jewish community.

For more information on NewCAJE and the 2011 conference, see these sites:

<http://www.newcaje.org/> and <http://newcaje.webnode.com/online-session-schedule/>





## Etz Chaim Chanukah Party

by Sarah Beth Campisi

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, we gathered together to renew that age old argument, applesauce versus sour cream. The annual Etz Chaim's Hanukkah party was a resounding success. Our very own famous latke chef, Marc Feldman, kept the crowd coming back for seconds (and thirds) with his potato creations. When folks had their fill of latkes, they danced to the Casco Bay Tumblers to make room for dessert or a few more latkes.

The Hanukkah party drew people from all around Southern Maine, New Hampshire and even Massachusetts. People look forward to the party every year. It gives people a chance to catch up with friends, eat, and dance. We hope you can join us next year!

P.S. I prefer applesauce.

The Hanukkah party drew people from all around Southern Maine, New Hampshire and even Massachusetts.



## Our Synagogue

Our community programs are available to all members of the York County Jewish Community and are driven by the following mission statement:

“We promote Jewish cultural, social, educational and religious activities in southern Maine. Our primary goal is to make available a range of activities that facilitate the expression of what each individual finds valuable in the Jewish experience.

We attempt to accommodate individuals along the entire spectrum of Jewish practice and theology. We value and support the existence of a local formal congregation, but view our community programs as open to all interested people, regardless of whether or to what congregation they may be formally affiliated.”



Etz Chaim photo 1916  
from MacArthur  
Public Library

## York County (YC) Jewish Community

This newsletter is published four or five times each year. It is intended to announce and report on Jewish community events in York County, and especially at Congregation Etz Chaim in Biddeford. It offers local perspectives on historical and contemporary aspects of Jewish life.

Adrienne Levy, Editor & Layout Design  
Consultants: Levy family & some Board members  
Email articles or feedback to: [mail@etzchaimme.org](mailto:mail@etzchaimme.org)

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“...intended to  
announce and  
report on Jewish  
community  
events in York  
County, and  
especially at  
Congregation Etz  
Chaim...”

## Synagogue Contacts

**Please mail Membership dues to:**

*PO Box 905,  
Kennebunk, ME 04043*

**Memorial Plaques, Prayer books, Etz Chaim books of Torah:**

*David Strassler: 967-5833*

**Hebrew School/Services:** *Beth & David Strassler 967-5833*

**Sunday School:** *Denise and Greg Hammond 985-3181  
or [dghammond@roadrunner.com](mailto:dghammond@roadrunner.com)*

**Shabbat Potlucks:** *Linda 967-4047*





**You are invited to the  
Annual York County  
Community Potluck  
Purim Party.**

*Join us for: Games, Prizes,  
Treats, a Purim Play, and the tra-  
ditional reading of the Megillah.*

**When:** 6:00PM, Friday, March 9th, 2012

**Where:** Congregation Etz Chaim, Biddeford, Maine - ([Go to Google map >](#))

**For more information, please contact:** [events@etzchaimme.org](mailto:events@etzchaimme.org)

February 2012/5772



**You are invited to the  
Annual York County  
Community Potluck  
Purim Party.**

Join us for: *Games, Prizes, Treats, a  
Purim Play, and the traditional read-  
ing of the Megillah.*

**When:** 6:00PM, Friday, March 9th, 2012  
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Address Label