



“Blood Moon” Eclipse–Fall 2014



Dramatic photo of the “Blood Moon” Eclipse of October 8, 2014 was captured by **Michael Greenberg**, Midwest Region FJMC president. Because of its reddish color, a totally eclipsed moon is often referred to as a “blood moon.” In the 2010s, the media began associating the term “blood moon” with the four full moons of a lunar tetrad, especially the 2014-15 tetrad **coinciding with the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles**. A lunar tetrad is a consecutive sequence of four lunar eclipses, spaced six months apart.

FALL 2014 The Inside Story

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**Mazel Tov to
Quality Club
2013-14 Winners
(Recognized on Page 2)**



Prez Says Mazel Tov to the 2013-14 Quality Club Award Winners!

The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (FJMC) Quality Club Award was developed to strengthen and encourage member clubs to offer a variety of activities at the local level and to participate in regional and FJMC programming.

The FJMC Quality Club Award is presented each year to member clubs who meet established criteria at the international, regional and local levels.

The criteria are a blueprint for a club to follow in planning its annual events. The award, an engraved 15-year perpetual plaque, is presented in even numbered years at a regional event and in odd numbered years, 2015 being one, at the FJMC Biennial Convention.

Refer to:

<https://fjmc.org/content/award-criteria> for information about the Quality Club Award criteria for 2014-15.

MIDWEST REGION RECIPIENTS:

- Congregation Beth Shalom, Northbrook, IL
- Congregation Beth Israel Ner Tamid, Glendale, WI
- Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, Wilmette, IL
- Congregation Kneseth Israel, Elgin, IL
- Kol Rinah, University City, MO
- Congregation B'nai Amoona, Creve Coeur, MO
- Congregation Beth Judea, Long Grove, IL
- North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, Highland Park, IL



Michael Greenberg

The Communicator is a quarterly publication of the Midwest Region, FJMC. We invite your editorial content and photos. Kindly submit to the editor at: max-brown@sbcglobal.net

Besides sending your club president our yearly Midwest Region dues statement, I wanted to remind you of the innovative ideas,

(Continued page 6)

The various phases of the eclipse were photographed by Midwest Region President, **Michael Greenberg**. The moon appears red because of the sunsets and sunrises from the Earth that reflect onto the lunar surface.

During the eclipse, although it's completely in the shadow of Earth, a bit of reddish sunlight still reaches the moon.

Of course, this explanation has nothing to do with Midwest Region news, but you must agree, Mike's photography is stunning.





The Next Wave Of Jewish Feminism: Engaging Jewish Men In Communal Life

By Rabbi Charles E. Simon

Last month, filled with holiday and synagogue activity, provided me with the opportunity to visit a number of different shuls in the Northeast. I visited chavurot, small, medium and cathedral synagogues.

For some reason, perhaps because the services were so long, I found myself counting and comparing the number of men and women who were actively participating. In one synagogue, the ratio of female Torah readers to male was two to one. In another, three to one and in yet another it was 50/50.

In each instance, I attended the Kiddush (after-prayer collation) where being a stranger made me fair game for every "greeter" or "welcomer." It was as if I was wearing a sign on my head, which proclaimed, "I'm new here, so please introduce yourself."

"Hello, I'm so-and-so, welcome to our community, who are you?" the designated community greeter would ask. Gratefully, I supplied my name, praised the service and asked my new friend to tell me about their community.

As the conversation progressed, I would ask my key question: "Do you have any idea what the relationship of men to women is on your synagogue board? Do you have any idea what percentage of your volunteers are men?"

At that moment, I noted that the energy in the festive room began to shift. The friendly conversation became strained -- and then I would be introduced to the rabbi.

In most cases the rabbi recognized me and was able to answer my questions.

Sixty to 70 percent of the people sitting on the synagogue board were women and most likely that number paralleled the percentage of female volunteers. But if 70 percent of the volunteers in the community were women, what did that say about the men?

I knew if I pressed further I would likely hear the explanation that men were less present because of the difficult economic times or because they needed to work harder but I knew that most of the women who were volunteering were also engaged full-time and most likely with similar if not more prestigious positions.

After all, more women are currently graduating from universities than men; women are outperforming men in a number of professional fields and as a result obtaining better placements. In some fields this is more pronounced than in others.

Benedict Carey reported in the *New York Times* on May 24, 2014, that psychotherapy has evolved into a field that primarily attracts women. As a result of the dearth of men in the profession, women who treat male patients are being trained primarily by other women. He adds that psychology, pediatrics, social services and elementary education are just a few of the fields in which women are dominant and therefore, providing the majority of treatment and education to men and boys.

Expanding on this theme, at the Second Conference on Male Studies held in Manhattan in the spring of 2011, Tom Mortenson of the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher



Rabbi Charles E. Simon has served as Executive Director of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs since 1982.

"The drive toward egalitarianism began in Conservative Judaism nearly 30 years ago. At the time, a number of people predicted that since the synagogue was the last vestige of male domination, once it became an egalitarian venue, men would flee."

(Continued page 8)



2015 Man & Youth of the Year Region Update

Our 2015 Midwest Region FJMC Man & Youth of the Year Dinner for the Chicago and Milwaukee area has been confirmed for **Sunday, February 22, 2015** at Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette, IL.

There will also be a silent auction at this event, and an ad book with 50 percent of Youth Ad Revenue collected being returned to the respective Synagogue Youth Departments.

For our St. Louis clubs, a luncheon is planned for **Sunday, March 15**, at Congregation B'nai Amoona, Creve Coeur, MO. The following deadlines apply to our Chicago and St. Louis events.

We recommend that you begin the selection process for Man of the Year candidates with your Men's Club Board and Youth of the Year candidate honorees with your Youth Directors. **All honoree selections should be submitted to the FJMC Midwest Region by early November.**

Select one member of your Club to function as **chair by November 14**. Kindly advise us of your chairman's name, phone number/email address for contact purposes. The chairman should be responsible for directing his club's attendees to the FJMC Midwest Region website to make and pay for dinner reservations.

Directions for using the Region web site will be sent in a separate email. As in the past, members can still handle their payments by personal check to your club. **Reservations must be received**

and processed online by Friday, February 6, 2015.

We would like each Club to send us head-and-shoulders portraits (digital picture preferred) and compose a 150-word maximum summary of each honoree's experiences, achievements, personality and character, and mail or e-mail it to us by **December 1**, so it can be incorporated into the Ad & Program Book.

Again, this year, we are selling display ads for your club to express additional congratulations for your selected honorees. **All ads must be received by Monday, December 29.**

Last year's Ad Book and the honoree photos remain on the Midwest Region FJMC web site for viewing at: <http://www.MidwestRegionFJMC.org>

Sincerely,

Norwin Merens

Executive Vice President, Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs/Midwest Region



Norwin Merens

The Midwest Region Board approved the following Man & Youth of the Year Ad book pricing at its October board meeting:

Full Page: \$110

Half Page: \$55

Quarter Page: \$30

Inside & Back Cover Positions: \$150 each



Post-Season Softball Tournament Championship Recap



Congregation Beth Judea Men's Club won three playoff games and took the first League Championship, August 3, 2014.



Congregation Beth Shalom Men's Club: best record and first place in regular league play.

The Midwest Region Championship Game featured Congregation Beth Judea Men's Club vs. North Suburban Synagogue Beth El Men's Club.

Beth Judea took the crown winning three games in the single elimination tournament. Who would have thought? Hitting and solid defense were the keys to Beth Judea's success.

Photography by Michael Greenberg, Imagetripping LLC. Other photos at www.midwestregionfjmc.org





Prez Says, continued from page 2

experienced leadership and camaraderie that makes our Region one of the best in the FJMC.

Innovation

We sent each club our new **Tu B'Shvat** program, complete with all materials for you to hold a successful Tu B'Shvat seder. A perfect opportunity for you to engage your members and their families in a fun family-oriented celebration.

Our first year of Men's Club Softball League was highly successful this summer in the Chicago area. We had a great time and encouraged many of our younger men to get involved. The St. Louis clubs continued their softball teams with much success. These efforts are ideal for enticing men to become active members.

Besides our outstanding Man of the Year programs held every year in Chicago and St. Louis, we are successfully adding a **Youth of the Year**. The opportunity recognized an outstanding young woman or man in the community and showed that we support our youth. In addition, **we returned a portion of youth ad revenues** to the participating youth groups.

The Midwest Region web site continues evolving. We have implemented **online registration** and ad purchases for the Man & Youth of the Year events.

New this year: we are conducting a pilot program with 2-3 Region Clubs to train and certify Shiva Minyan Leaders and Assistant

Leaders. We intend to expand the program to the rest of the Region and FJMC in 2015.

Experience

Besides the two past presidents of the FJMC involved in our Region, there are many other men who remain active in the FJMC. These men are ready, willing and able to assist you and answer any questions you have. If we don't have the answer, we will find it.

Many of our clubs have won **Torch Awards**, including **six** at the most recent convention, for outstanding programming. Eight of our Clubs received 2013-14 Quality Club Award honors. Our goal is to increase the overall number so all Clubs receive 2014-15 Quality Club Awards at next year's Convention in Miami Beach. Our clubs will be happy to assist you in modifying for your use their ideas or helping you to develop your own award-winning programs.

Camaraderie

Our **biennial Region Retreat** held on May 2-4, 2014 at Starved Rock State Park in Illinois was well received by nearly 50 attendees. The committee assembled a great program, excellent kosher meals, hiking the canyons, meaningful services and discussions. We have now reserved facilities and more rooms at Starved Rock for Spring 2016.

The 2015 Convention will be held on July 8-12, 2015 at the Deauville

Beach Resort in Miami Beach, FL. To help our men, **we have increased our subsidies** from \$400 to \$600 **for first time attending club presidents**, from \$300 to \$400 **for other first time attendees**, and from \$200 to \$275 **for repeat attendees**. Our Region is committed to share monies raised so our men from our 12 clubs can attend convention.

Whenever you are traveling to one of our Region Clubs, let us know and we'll try to arrange for **Shabbat Hospitality** or have someone to attend services with you at the Club location.





FJMC Resources: Does Your Club Need Some Direction?

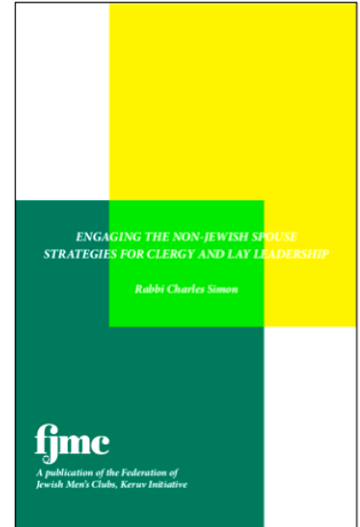
Did you know Consultants are available for club or regional training and usually travel to geographically nearby areas? Although not specifically listed, an FJMC officer or the Regional President can be used as a consultant. Contact the FJMC office to arrange for a consultant to visit your club or region. We'll work hard to fit the consultant for your club with the needs of your club.

Focus areas may include:

- Developing Financial Guidelines
- Planning Special Events
- Region/Club Succession Planning
- Identifying Speaker Resources

NEW PUBLICATION! Engaging The Non-Jewish Spouse: Strategies for Clergy and Lay Leadership

This new publication, Engaging The Non-Jewish Spouse: Strategies for Clergy and Lay Leadership can be used by any synagogue seeking to adjust to demographic change as a blueprint for discussion and planning. It provides a step-by-step guide to inclusion taking into consideration the unique culture of each community. It suggests questions that should be discussed by a synagogue's leadership and also serves as a tool to further engage and guide Boards of Directors. Full details at <https://fjmc.org/content/non-jewish-spouse-strategies>.



Mark Your Calendars

Announcing the site & dates for

**Convention
2015**

**July 8 - 12, 2015
Deauville Beach Resort
Miami Beach, Florida**





Engaging Jewish Men In Communal Life

Continued from Page 3

Education in Washington, D.C. noted that "women are a majority of undergraduate degrees in biology, social sciences, history, education and psychology."

The presence of women in the university, in the workplace and indeed, at the helm of many professions is well documented. Gone are the days when female volunteerism was in lieu of professional work. If men are less present in the volunteer world and specifically in the Jewish world, it has to be due to other reasons.

The drive toward egalitarianism began in Conservative Judaism nearly 30 years ago. At the time, a number of people predicted that since the synagogue was the last vestige of male domination, once it became an egalitarian venue, men would flee. While it is true that smaller percentages of men are currently active in our synagogues, I doubt it is for the reason that the Conservative shul is no longer a boys' club. If men are less present in synagogue life, other factors are to blame.

I believe that these factors are rooted in a negligent attitude toward changing male social roles that was an unfortunate side effect of the effort to help women achieve equality in the religious realm. Just as women's inclusion in the life of the Conservative synagogue was an imperative (witness the large number of female rabbis ordained by our movement over the past 23 years), is it not of vital importance that we advocate for the inclusion of men to counteract the attrition that is taking place?

Thirty years ago, the Jewish community began to allocate a tremendous amount

of resources toward the creation of programs, like adult bat mitzvah. They were extremely needed and successful but at the same time the community assumed that men's needs would remain the same; after all, they were the ones who had all the rituals. At that time, discussions of gender roles within our movement did not have to do with men at all but with women. There was so much to fix on the female front that the pioneers of change did not consider how men's needs might change as well and that new types of motivational strategies would be needed to keep them engaged.

While Jewish leaders are beginning to think about the diminishing number of men who are active in our institutions, the issue is more far reaching and requires much broader thinking than simply: How do we motivate men to volunteer? The lack of volunteerism is a symptom, not the problem itself. There are pressing issues relating to male self-esteem, to father-son relationships and to the development of boys, especially within the setting of educational institutions.

In my recent paper "The Diminishing Role of Jewish Men in Jewish Life: Addressing the Challenge," I suggest that to rectify the gender imbalance that is occurring in the general and specifically Jewish volunteer world, organizational leaders and educators need to incorporate what education and developmental gender research is telling us about how boys learn, because the implications of this information predicts a challenging, if not dismal, future for Jewish men and the families that we hope they might create.

To address this concern, the FJMC has

"The lack of volunteerism is a symptom, not the problem itself. There are pressing issues relating to male self-esteem, to father-son relationships and to the development of boys, especially within the setting of educational institutions."

created a number of venues designed to empower and motivate men at their different life stages. These venues include providing fathers with relevant information about the use of fatherly influence to enable them to make educated decisions how they parent as well as gender needs based motivational seminars designed to provide a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

It may not sound politically correct but the future of Jewish men is indeed being challenged and this needs to be placed on our community agendas. I call on the Jewish community to respond. In the liberal Jewish world, men are not oppressors and patriarchy is considered an antiquated word. We have a responsibility not only to ourselves but to our sons and daughters to build a strong community where male leadership is reinterpreted for the 21st century.



**A Midwest Region FJMC and the Cantors Assembly Program
Coordinated by Chazzan Steven Stoehr, Congregation Beth Shalom**

Click on the link for details:

<http://www.midwestregionfjmc.org/resources-clubs/shiva-minyan-leader-assistant-certification-training/>

This program is a short course leading to certification as a Shiva Minyan Leader, or for those that are not Hebrew fluent, a Shiva Minyan Assistant. At this time, the short course is open only to Congregation Beth Shalom Men's Club Members.

What you will learn:

Ritual aspects of a Shiva Minyan including chanting, service flow, mood, concluding thoughts, especially on the last night.

Recognizing the needs of the assembled and comfort level. (Knowledgeable vs. Uninitiated Worshippers). Leader presence from time you arrive to time depart. Psychological aspects.

Laws regarding Shiva period.

Assistants will learn the laws, needs of the assembled and how to assist the Leader at the Minyan. Men who are Leaders and Assistants can be partnered to attend a particular Minyan.

What you need to attend:

Hebrew fluency a must for Leaders.

Interest in learning about all Shiva Law, rituals, people skills for Leaders and Assistants.

A Men's Club Membership

Dates, Times & Location:

November 3, 10 & 17, 2014.

7:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Congregation Beth Shalom, 3433 Walters Road, Northbrook, IL 60062

Register and perform a Mitzvah !!

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Check appropriate boxes below:

I am fluent in Hebrew

I am not fluent in Hebrew, but would like to become an Assistant.

This three-week, pilot course is open only to Congregation Beth Shalom Men's Club members.

Return completed form to Chazzan Steven Stoehr, Congregation Beth Shalom, 3433 Walters Road, Northbrook, IL 60062



Kol Rinah Steak & Scotch in the Sukkah–Plan B

What do you do during Sukkot if there is a thunder storm, complete with lightning, and the temperature hovers around 50 degrees? You go to Plan B—move inside.

That's just what they did at Kol Rinah's Men's Club Steak & Scotch in the Sukkah on October 12.

More than 60 guests enjoyed a delicious steak dinner, a little Scotch education and a tasting of six Scotches.



Kol Rinah Men's Club President and grill master, Bob Olshan, had quite a blaze going.



Selecting the proper Scotch to accompany chocolate chip cookies.



Rabbi Noah Arnow, standing center, shares some words of Torah and Sukkot traditions.

Photos by Jonathon Bergmann



Midwest Region - FJMC

9 Pricemont Drive
Olivette, MO 63132

2013-14 Midwest Region

Michael Greenberg, President
Norwin Merens, Executive Vice President
Mark Givarz, Vice President
Paul Glaser, Vice President
Darryl Temkin, Vice President
Rodney Ugent, Vice President
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Perry Pitzele
Gregg Pollack
Ernie Smolen

The Midwest Region is an affiliate of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (FJMC), an international organization of more than 250 men's auxiliaries serving 25,000 men worldwide.

FJMC's mission is to **involve Jewish men in Jewish life**, but our influence goes far beyond men in the Conservative/Masorti Movement. Our programs have a profound impact upon our congregations, the Jewish communities in which we live and Jewry worldwide through alliances with other international organizations such as Mercaz.

We're on the Web!

www.midwestregionfjmc.org

COMING EVENTS

**Remember
the Date!**

WINTER REGION MEETING
Beth Israel Ner Tamid

Sunday, January 18, 2015

FJMC – LDI, Pearlstone Center, Baltimore, MD

January 23-25, 2015

World Wide Wrap XIV

Sunday, February 1, 2015

Man and Youth of the Year—NORTH/Chicago Area

Sunday, February 22, 2015

Man and Youth of the Year—SOUTH/St. Louis

Sunday, March 15, 2015

INTL FJMC CONVENTION, Miami Beach, FL

JULY 8-12, 2015