Rededicating Ourselves to FJMC and Its Midwest Region

Norwin A. Merens, President - FJMC Midwest Region

Chanukah means rededication. The annual Festival of Lights commemorates the purification and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem following the defilement of the holy site caused by the Greeks. Today, the holiday reminds us to rededicate ourselves to keeping alive the flame of Jewish religion, culture and the wonderful work of the Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs (FJMC).

FJMC’s mission is to involve Jewish Men in Jewish Life by building and strengthening Men’s Clubs in the Conservative/Masorti movement. We accomplish this by:

Leadership - Mentoring leaders at the club, region and international level,

Innovation - Developing programming that better connects people of all ages to the Jewish community,

Community - Forming meaningful, enduring relationships based on camaraderie, common interests and core values.

In this issue of our repurposed Midwest Region newsletter, The Communicator, we profile what’s been happening with the Beth El Synagogue Men’s Club in Omaha, NE and provide a pictorial review of club and region activities that have occurred in recent months. Many thanks to Mike Greenberg, our Region’s honorary president, for capturing the essence of FJMC Midwest Region events through his stellar photography.

We invite you to email your club event summaries and photos for publication by January 18 in advance of our February 2016 issue. Info can be sent to: nmerens@nmmarketingbiz.com … Make sure all photos are properly captioned so people can be identified. If you’ve devised a new program at the club level, let us know how it evolved and how your members supported it locally.

Just passing, our Region is now working with host clubs in the Chicago and St. Louis metro areas to plan and promote upcoming Man of the Year/Youth of the Year events during the late winter/early spring of 2016. Now, is the time to reserve your “tribute” display ads for the program book now being assembled by our very own Mike Spanjar. He can be reached at 414.791.6457 or spanjar@sbcglobal.net. The deadline for all ads is Friday, January 15, 2016. There will be no extensions offered after this date, so please go to the FJMC Midwest Region website to design and place your ads online: www.midwestregionfjmc.org. If you need help developing ad copy, give Mike a call in advance of mid-January. You can also make dinner reservations for the Chicago MOY/YOY event online, so act soon.

We’ll also be staging a silent auction in Chicago and are seeking appropriate auction items: gift cards, theatre and sporting event tickets, certificates for hotel and travel excursions, wellness and salon passes, framed artwork and much more. Give me a call at 847.724.5110 if you would like to donate suitable auction pieces.

Our sincere thanks to the Beth Judea Men’s Club, Long Grove, IL for stepping up last fall to arrange the Chicago area program on Sunday, March 6 at Beth Hillel Congregation B’nai Emunah, Wilmette, IL. The organizing committee for the dinner event includes: CBJ’s club president, Eric Yegelwel, Ron Friedman, Allen Harris, Ron Lipka, Fred Rabinowitz and Jerry Sakol.

Also, to the Kol Rinah Men’s Club, University City, MO for staging the St. Louis MOY/YOY luncheon on Sunday, April 10. Our gratitude to KR’s club president, Bob Oshan, Max Brown, David Propper and others for their committed efforts.

Finally, act now and complete the ordering process for Yom HaShoah yellow candle purchases in advance of Day of Remembrance planning for Spring 2016. To learn more, contact Region VP Jon Norton who is coordinating the overall candle effort for the Midwest. To build greater visibility for this important FJMC initiative, the 2016 program is being expanded to include Reform Temple brotherhood affiliates, Jewish organizations, day schools and fraternal groups along with various senior living communities. Jon can be reached at: jonathanwnorton@gmail.com or by calling him at 773.209.8979 Let’s continue to rededicate ourselves to FJMC.

Happy Chanukah and Happy secular New Year to you/your families!
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* Of blessed memory

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Our thanks to Region VP Howard Minkoff for compiling all name listing information. Yasher Koach!
Untold Stories of Jewish GI’s Stationed at Camps Holding Nazi POW’s in the United States

Seventy years ago, World War II ended and a large scale Tikkun Olam, “Repairing the World” effort was in full swing. Two forts in Rhode Island were converted into colleges to educate and enlighten former Nazi soldiers including the Afrika Korp on the virtues of a democracy and how to run a democratic government upon their return to Germany. Who were some of the lead instructors at these forts? Jews.

Much has been written about Nazi Prisoners of War in the United States and more recently the relationship between American officials and the Wehrmacht general officers held as prisoners of war in the United States between 1943 and 1946. The first large group of Nazis to arrive in Allied hands came from the massive German surrender in Tunisia in May 1943. By VE Day, approximately 400,000 German war prisoners were held in 500 prison camps across the country. Approximately 47,000 American personnel supervised the transport, guarding, work details and other activities of these prisoners.

Surprising little is known about Jewish GI’s who were stationed at U.S. camps holding German POW’s (PW’s). Information on the Jewish GI experience followed 15 GI’s through the war, but these soldiers did not serve in U.S. POW Camps (4). Another excellent review of 27 first-person accounts by German/Austrian Jewish refugees who served in the U.S. armed forces in North Africa and Europe striking back against the Third Reich. Some were translators and interrogators, but served overseas.

The quest was to locate Jewish GI’s who served at camps holding Nazi PW’s and to determine their roles and responsibilities at these camps. Also, to determine their interactions with the Nazi PW’s, especially with knowledge of Kristalnacht and reports of Nazi death squads that came to light by the time of their entry into service.

This quest started after the discovery of letters Arthur Greenberg of Chicago, wrote to his sweetheart at the time (and later Mike’s mother) during the war. Letters from February to August 1944 detailed his service at the Clinton Prisoner of War Camp near Jackson, MS, including his time supervising the compound holding Colonel General Hans Jüren von Arnim, the commander who surrendered the Afrika Korp. in Tunisia and one of the most prominent German prisoners of war in Allied custody.

To date, stories and documentation collaborating service has been obtained for six Jewish GI’s who served in U.S. Camps holding German PWs.

These soldiers experiences will be shared at the FJM C Midwest Region breakfast meeting because these men:

• Practiced Tikkun Olam — Repairing the World
• Were recognized as American war heroes
• Were of value to the war effort and countered criticisms in Army reports such as “The average GI assigned to these camps had few qualifications of value to the war effort.”

Two of the men were from the Milwaukee area – one still living. The late Sheldon Green resided in Glenview, IL and his wife belongs to Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, Wilmette.

Mike Greenberg’s presentation will focus on how these men wound up at German PW camps in the U.S., their experiences with Germans and the U.S. Army, and how all this shaped their lives and what they did post World War II.

Let Us Know You’re Attending!
Email Rodney Ugent at RDUgent@aol.com by Thursday, January 8, 2016.

Congregation Beth Israel Ner Tamid
6880 N. Green Bay Ave., Glendale, WI
Phone: 414.352.7310
HONOR YOUR 2016 MAN & YOUTH OF THE YEAR

With an Ad in the Program/Ad Book

On Sunday, March 6 and April 10, 2016, the FJM C Midwest Region will once again honor your Man & Youth of the Year recipients in Chicago and St. Louis, respectively. From now until January 15, 2016, we are selling ads in the Program Book for you to express additional covet for your honorees! Each recipient will have a picture and a short biography included in the book. Ad book space is first in, first placed. Please submit your ad as soon as possible to honor your recipients.

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The Program / Ad Book is 5-1/2"w x 8-1/2"d
Please see artwork specifications on backside.

If your Club or someone wishes to buy one of only three premium spaces available (either the Inside Covers or Outside Back Cover) the special price will be $225.00 for the full page.

Submission Deadline: Friday, January 15, 2016
There will be no extensions offered after the 15th.

ORDER FORM (Please Print Clearly)

Submitted by ________________________________________________________________
Men’s Club ________________________________ E-Mail ________________________________
Telephone No.____________________________ TOTAL ENCLOSED $ __________________

Please complete one form per ad
Ad Size __________________________ Total Enclosed $ __________________

Make checks payable to: FJMC Midwest Region – All ads must be received with payment in full. Ads are placed in order received with payment (Front-to-Back of book).

TO PLACE AN AD FOR YOUR MAN & YOUTH OF THE YEAR, follow online and template instructions for display ad placement and payment.
Send checks and ads to: Mike Spanjar, 2129 W. Kendall Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53209
Your Ad Book Questions? email: spanjar@sbcglobal.net
Ad sizes. To Honor YOUR 2016 Man & Youth of the Year
Book Size: 5 1/2"W x 8 1/2"H, so all ad text and borders must fit within these dimensions.

Each honoree will have a photo with his/her biography.

Send checks and ads to: Mike Spanjar, 2129 W. Kendall Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53209
Ad Book Question? 414.791.6457  email: spanjar@sbcglobal.net

Yes, if you do not have a computer, and want to place an ad, call Mike well before the deadline.
He will offer you assistance.
We can provide basic ad layout services at no added cost.
Send Mike Spanjar the exact text along with your ad size and check.

Ad sizes:

- Quarter Page 4 1/4” x 1 3/4” $50.00
- Half Page 4 1/4” x 3 1/2” $75.00
- Full Page 4 1/4” x 7 1/4” $125.00

Artwork Tips
Line copy and text reproduce the best. Low quality photos and clip art will not reproduce well. What looks good on screen may look terrible in print.

This is true of small headshots from the Internet, for example. Avoid sending honoree photos with “busy” backgrounds or where other people have been removed from the image.

Formats Accepted
Acrobat, AI, Corel Draw, high-res bitmap or MS Word file to size are fine.

Email is preferred (Artwork cannot be returned.)
1) After putting on your talit, get out your arm (Yad) tefillin and say:

Baruch Ata Ado-nai elo-heynu melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu, b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu l’haniyach tefillin.
“Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot by commanding us to put on tefillin.”

2) Slide your arm tefillin up your weaker arm and tighten the loop so the box sits on the muscle of your bicep and the knot on the strap faces toward your heart. Wrap the strap once over your bicep towards you to anchor the box.

3) Wrap the strap towards you 7 times tightly, over the top of your forearm. As you wrap, count the number of wraps by using either the seven days of the week, or the verse from the Ashrei: “Potev’ach et yade’cha umas-beebeh l’chol chai ratson” (7 words) then wrap the remaining strap loosely around your hand.

4) Next, hold your head (Rosh) tefillin and say:

Baruch Ata Ado-nai elo-heynu melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu, b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al mitzvat tefillin.
“Praised are you Adonai, our God who rules the universe, instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot by giving us the mitzvah of tefillin.

5) Place the head tefillin box on your head where your hairline is/was. The knot should sit in the depression at the back of your head. Bring the straps over each shoulder to the front to drape.

6) Say:

Baruch shem k’vod malchuto l’olam va’ed.
“Praised be God’s glorious sovereignty throughout all time.”

7) Unwrap the strap around your hand back to your wrist and wrap it across the back of your hand to between your thumb and pointer (1). Then go across your palm to the middle finger at which point you say the following (say 1 line with each wrap around your middle finger: top (2); middle (3); and bottom (4)):

“I will betroth you to Me forever; I betroth you to Me with righteousness and justice, with love and compassion. I will betroth you to Me with faithfulness; then shall you be at one with Adonai.”

8) Next, wrap around your 4th and middle fingers together (5) then go back around your 4th finger and down to between your thumb and forefinger (6). Finally, go across the middle of the back of your hand down between your thumb and forefinger (7) forming a Shin. Excess should be wrapped over (7) with any remaining strap tucked inside.

9) Removal is the reverse: Unwrap the hand, remove the head, remove the arm and gently put away.
Presenting
Beth El Synagogue Men’s Club
Omaha, Nebraska
www.bethel-omaha.org
Clergy:
Rabbi Steven Abraham
Hazzan Michael Krausman

Omaha, NE – The Midwest Region recently conducted a lengthy conference call with Beth El’s Club President Jason Blair and Glen Fineman, a long-time club member and official Region liaison. From all reports, the club is experiencing a “renaissance” with increased member participation, the development of several new programs and plans to recognize MOY/YOY 2016 recipients locally next March in conjunction with its Men’s Club Shabbat. In December, the Beth El men will be staging a Chanukah dinner for the community. The club is also planning an elaborate Chinese buffet meal on Friday, December 25. On the menu will be egg drop soup, mini vegetable egg rolls, sweet and sour chicken, fried rice and mixed Oriental vegetables.

News Notes “Around the Region”
• The men’s club at Congregation Rodfei Zedek, located in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood, held its annual Shabbat service in June. Three congregants each gave a short D’var Torah following the reading of Shelah. Guest speaker Ivan Backer later told the story of how he and 668 other children in Czechoslovakia were transferred safely out of the country in the late 1930s by trains called “Kindertransports.” The children most likely would have perished in the Holocaust were it not for the efforts of an Englishman, Nicholas Winton, who organized the trains and found homes for the children in the United Kingdom. Many of these children later came to the United States. Mr. Winton passed away on July 1, 2015 at age 106.
• Several Region clubs hosted successful Sukkah events this fall. In late September, the West Suburban Temple Har Zion men’s club prepared a sumptuous grilled salmon and tilapia lunch with all the sides … In Northbrook, more than 90 members and guests attended an outstanding Scotch & Steak dinner at Congregation Beth Shalom … The Anshe Em et, Beth Judea, Beth Israel Ner Tamid, B’nai Amoona and NSS Beth El men’s groups also held similar type Sukkah programs – all of which were well attended. Yasher Koach!

Have Club news to share with others in the Region?
Email event summaries and photos by January 18 to Norwin Merens: nmerens@nmmarketingbiz.com or call: 847.724.5110 to appear in the February 2016 issue of The Communicator.
FJMC’s Midwest Region Presents Its 2016 Regional Retreat

A Weekend of Fun & Ruach

Join Us For a Memorable Weekend of Physical & Spiritual-Health & Wellness

• Hike through scenic Starved Rock State Park
• Swim in the lodge’s indoor pool
• Lively discussions, traditional and alternative services
• Inspiring, motivational speakers
• Program ideas to recharge you and your club
• Meet Club leaders from numerous Midwest Region clubs and the FJMC
• Plenty of Fun & Ruach for everyone!

This Unique, Not-To-Be Missed Event starts at 3:30 pm on Friday, May 13, 2016 and ends following Lunch on Sunday, May 15.

All Events & Accommodations are at the Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center.

New This Year...Arrive a day early and enjoy all that Starved Rock has to offer.

To learn more, contact our Retreat Co-Chairs: Creighton Cohn, cohn cj@yahoo.com, or Perry Pitzele, pesachp@sbcglobal.net