



## Convention 2015 at Miami Beach

Yes, you already know that it will be at the newly renovated Deauville Beach Resort in incredible (and getting better)

**Miami Beach, Florida**  
**Wednesday, July 8 to**  
**Sunday, July 12, 2015**

Check [fjmc.org](http://fjmc.org) often, as we'll be posting the fabulous details of this exciting convention, which should already be on your calendar. We'll be **engaging** you in many ways.

Mark Druy,  
Convention Chair  
Bill Becker,  
Convention Co-Chair



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## A Lazy Summer: Not Even the Buffalo Are Roaming



Buffalo taking a break at Lone Elk Park, St. Louis County, Mo.



**Prez Says:** The Prez is "on vacation." See his adventures at [www.imagetripping.com/gallery30.htm](http://www.imagetripping.com/gallery30.htm) and [www.imagetripping.com/gallery31.htm](http://www.imagetripping.com/gallery31.htm)



Rabbi Melman sent the following letter from Israel to his congregants at Congregation Beth Shalom:

A letter from Rabbi Aaron Melman to all CBS congregants

Dear Friends,

It has been a very interesting day. Arriving late last night I was immediately struck by the signs throughout Ben Gurion Airport pointing the way to the shelters. One becomes immediately aware of the reality of the situation. I have never seen those signs on any of my previous visits - not even when I came during the second Lebanon War. This is different as most of the country is affected due to the distance the rockets can travel.

I was able to take in some of the sights, sounds and yes, eats of Jerusalem this morning (I just love walking the streets here - I

feel at home) but it is awfully quiet for the middle of the summer. It is very sad. Yes, it may have been late morning on a Monday, but there would normally be many more people on Ben Yehuda Street.

Shopkeepers told us that the numbers of visitors are way down. My colleagues tell me that their flights from the States were half to seventy percent full. It is a reminder that we must not stop coming. We must continue to tell the people of Israel how much they mean to us and how much we care about them.

This afternoon I felt myself in awe. I remember when I was younger, marching with my father in downtown Toronto on behalf of Soviet Jewry and a man whose name I had never heard of before. Today, we had the distinct privilege to spend time with Natan Sharansky. Natan is the current head of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Natan told us that even when he was in the government they knew that Palestinians were building tunnels in Gaza and no foreign country wanted to believe them. It is a shame that nobody paid attention at the time.

He reassured us that Aliyah flights are still arriving without a single cancellation and tomorrow over four hundred Jews from France will arrive on an Aliyah flight.

Over dinner this evening we heard from Yuval Steinitz, who serves as the Minister of Intelligence, International Relations and Strategic Affairs. He briefed us a bit on the situation and gave us details he could share. They believe that fifty percent of Hamas' weapons have been destroyed. Several tunnels have been destroyed with more to come. To achieve calm and security in the region he believes that the ground operation will have to be expanded and he fears that Gaza might need to be taken over by Israel once again in order to truly stop all the attacks which will only mean more casualties. Earlier today, Minister Steinitz visited wounded soldiers at Saroka Medical Center in Be'ersheva. He told us that not a single family complained about how or why their loved one was injured - truly believing in this operation. Most of the



Rabbi Aaron Melman has been a rabbi at Congregation Beth Shalom in Northbrook, IL for eleven years. He is originally from Toronto.

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*"We must continue to tell the people of Israel how much they mean to us and how much we care about them."*

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The Communicator is a publication of the Midwest Region, FJMC. Stories, photos and ideas may be submitted to the editor at [max-brown@sbcglobal.net](mailto:max-brown@sbcglobal.net)

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## What Could Synagogues Look Like in 5 Years?

**[Whether you agree with the thoughts of the two rabbis who wrote this, Rabbi Charles Simon, Executive Director FJMC, and Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, Big Tent Judaism/Jewish Outreach Institute, the issues which are raised are matters which need to be discussed within the community.]**

Five-year benchmarks are quite commonly employed to measure the progress and success of initiatives. Were a Conservative/ Masorti synagogue to choose to respond positively to demographic change implied by intermarriage, these are some of the issues that will have to be thoughtfully considered and employed.

### Synagogue Culture

1. Disparaging remarks from the pulpit or in the pews will not be tolerated. Religious school children raised in Jewish families will be encouraged to share their experiences in the classroom. The conversation among synagogue leaders will move from who one is marrying to how one is raising children.

2. Staff members and volunteer leaders in interfaith relationships will not be discouraged nor penalized.

3. Youth group participants will be welcome to bring friends to events irrespective of their religious backgrounds. Youth leaders will not be limited in their relationships.

### Administration and Program

4. Teachers will be sensitive and respectful of children who have intermarried parents and strongly support their efforts to raise Jewish children.

5. Synagogue application forms will reflect the religious traditions of people married or partnered to Jews in an equal and non-judgmental manner. Celebrations of those who have intermarried will be affirmed in synagogue publications without distinction. Those who wish to honor their children's choices with a Kiddush or other celebration will be encouraged/ welcomed.

6. Educational and social programming will be designed to engage people of different religious traditions.

7. Youth group events will be viewed as an opportunity to bring people close to Judaism and will not be governed by the fear that they promote interfaith relationships.

### Life Cycle

8. Aufrufen (pre-marital blessings) and "Keruv aliyot" (recognition of the decision to have a Jewish family) will serve as an important step to integrate intermarried couples into the community.

9. Clergy will be able to attend and participate in some capacity in the interfaith weddings of

congregants and their children.

10. Clergy will officiate at funerals and burials of their members and their families who are part of the community irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

### Ritual

11. An adult partner or grandparent from another religious tradition will be able to participate in the life cycle events of their family and their family members.

12. Patrilineal children will be welcomed in the synagogue and will undergo a "completion ceremony" in anticipation of b'nai mitzvah (rather than a "conversion ceremony").

### Governance

13. People of different religious traditions will be permitted to sit on synagogue boards as voting members.

14. People who are part of the community will be considered full members of the synagogue and will be permitted to vote on all issues. ≈

*This article is reprinted with the permission of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs.*



Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky is the Executive Director of the Jewish Outreach Institute, a United States independent organization dedicated to bringing Judaism to interfaith families and the

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*"Youth group events will be viewed as an opportunity to bring people close to Judaism and will not be governed by the fear that they promote interfaith relationships."*

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





## COMING TO THE FJMC MIDWEST REGIONAL MEETING, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

Leonard Kofkin, a member of Congregation Kneseth Israel's Men's Club and avid genealogical researcher, will present a commentary / slide show, entitled "My Town," describing what he learned about Jewish life in a beautiful and peaceful small European location where the residents, for hundreds of years, were well-educated, devoutly religious, politically active, socially conscious, and friendly to visitors. You will never forget Len's discoveries.

The meeting begins with services at 9:00 a.m. at Congregation Kneseth Israel, 330 Division Street, Elgin, Illinois. ≈



### About Leonard Kofkin



Leonard Kofkin is a Chicago lawyer who, for more than 55 years, has practiced in the fields of transportation and labor relations law, largely representing trucking companies and their affiliates. During the past 45 years, beginning when he inherited a box of old photos depicting his paternal grandfather's Estonian family, he has been an amateur genealogist and now has identified 652 of the descendants of Osher Kofkin, who was born in Belarus in the year 1760. Included in his travels over

the years have been visits to newly-discovered family members in many countries, including Israel, who were previously unaware of their family history or the existence of relatives beyond their immediate families. An active member of CKI and its Men's Club, Leonard has presented slide shows, written a number of articles for the synagogue newsletter, and has conducted educational presentations relating to, among others, Jewish history in various countries, including China.

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## Israel's Army Veteran Heroes Recognized



CBS MC Member and AFIWDF Event Chairperson Paul Lapping

Congregation Beth Shalom Men's Club Israel Committee, and the AMERICAN FRIENDS OF ISRAEL WAR DISABLED

FOUNDATION (AFIWDF) sponsored a brunch on June 22, 2014. The brunch was the last event for the 10 veterans who spent two weeks in the Chicago area staying with local families. A veteran was seated at each table which allowed intimate contact to learn about what it is like to serve in the IDF. All of these veterans were seriously wounded in battle. The trip to the US serves as another tool used in the rehabilitation process. Over 100 attended the brunch and heard presentations from 4 of the veterans. CBS Men's

Club served brunch and had one of it's members, Paul Lapping, as the chairperson from AFIWDF. The veterans received a souvenir bag of local products and provided CBS Rabbi Carl Wolken with a gift plaque. Photographs of the event were collected by Past CBS MC President and Midwest Region FJMC President Michael Greenberg who emailed photos of the event to each of the Israeli Heroes.



CBS MC VP of House Abe Drayer arranges one of the serving tables.

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CBS Men's Club Member Neal Blustein cooks scrambled eggs as Elliot Goldman provides encouragement



Left to Right: CBS MC Co-President Ray Rokni, Israel Committee Members Lisa Dembo and Fern Roseman, CBS Co-President Larry Grossman



Veterans lead **Hatikvah**



Veterans' presentations to attendees

American Friends of Israel War Disabled Foundation hosts Israeli disabled veterans each year for a period of rest and rehabilitation to expand ties between Israel and the Chicago Jewish community metropolitan area and support Israeli disabled veterans and victims of terror attacks. ≈





## Congregation Beth Judea's Men's Club

By Eric Yegelwel

Congregation Beth Judea's Men's Club has been very active this summer. Our softball team led by Allen Harris has played several games against other synagogues in a six-team league. Although this is only our rookie season, the turnout has been great and the games fun. The team picture is posted below. If you are interested in playing please contact Allen Harris. A postseason game will be played against the CBJ USY team during the annual USY-Men's Club softball game held during the Beth Judea BBQ August 17.

Men's Club members continue to volunteer at the Lieberman Center Home in Skokie, IL every fourth Shabbat morning. We assist the residents to and from services and assist as needed during the Shabbat service. This is a wonderful opportunity for Men's Club

members as well as anyone else interested to help others. Contact Jerry Sakol or Ron Friedman for more information.

The 19th Annual Jack Rizman Memorial Golf Outing will be held on Sunday August 24 at the Buffalo Grove Golf Club. Jack was a founding member of Congregation Beth Judea and a dynamic member of Men's Club, Ritual Committee and Board of Directors. He loved music and sang in the synagogue choir. His strong work ethic, good nature and terrific sense of humor were an inspiration to those who knew him. The Golf Outing supports the Dr. Jack Rizman Memorial Fund and the Men's Club. The Golf Outing includes a golf cart, golf and summertime BBQ. Contact Chuck Walcer or Marty Rizman for more information.

Future events planned this fall include Project Isaiah, Building the Sukkah and Steak and Scotch Under the Sukkah. Hebrew Literacy One class will also begin in the fall jointly sponsored by the Men's Club and Adult Education. This is a great opportunity for those of you whose Hebrew skills are lacking or need to be refreshed.

As the newly installed President of CBJ Men's Club, I want to congratulate our new officers: Allen Harris, VP Programming; Brian Schwartz, Treasurer; Louis Rabin, VP Ritual; Jerry Sakol, Secretary; Directors Rob Lipka, Ron Friedman and Maynard Hirsch. Lastly a hearty "yasher koach" to our immediate past President and new VP Membership and Communications David Granoff! ≈



Lance Pacernik, makes his pitch and second baseman, Max Fisher, is ready to make the play.

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*"Men's Club members continue to volunteer at the Lieberman Center Home in Skokie, IL every fourth Shabbat morning. We assist the residents to and from services and assist as needed during the Shabbat service."*

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Left to right – Top row Allen Harris, Bob Fisher, Russ Barnett, Lance Pacernik, Steve Limer, Eric Marder, Jeff Kostis, and Cliff Silk.

Bottom Row Evan Harris, Adam Bender, Arnie Bender, Max Fisher, Michael Gomberg.

Not Shown Ken Goldstein, Greg Schwartz, David Granoff, Marlon Suskin and Fred Rabinowitz.





## Softball Around the Region



### Northbrook Temple Beth El vs. Congregation Beth Shalom

Congregation  
Beth Shalom



Northbrook Temple  
Beth El





## B'nai Amoona Softball



## Kol Rinah Softball







## Rabbi Melman's Letter from Israel, continued from page 2

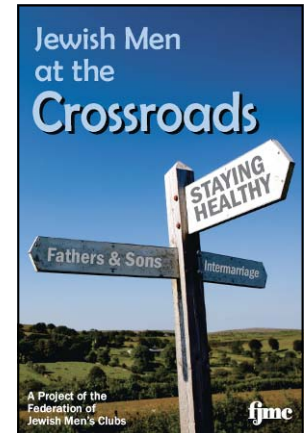
soldiers were anxious to get out of the hospital and get back to Gaza to continue the fight. Tomorrow will be a very different day. We will head south to visit and bring strength and support to our Masorti communities in Ashkelon, Sderot, Be'ersheva and Omer. Yes, that is where many of the rockets have been fired. So why go?

That is why we are here. They need us now more than ever and I am honored and humbled to be co-chairing such a mission that will bring this important message. I am truly honored to represent Congregation Beth Shalom and bring our prayers and good wishes to the communities here. Thank you for allowing me to be your shaliach, your

emissary, on this sacred mission.

Laila Tov from Jerusalem.

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*It's often said that, when lost or at a crossroads, men refuse to ask for directions. They would rather stubbornly wander around or go the wrong way than admitting they need help. Here is a phenomenal GPS for men seeking a way forward.*

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and the [FJMC.org](https://www.fjmc.org) store. (\$12.95)

## Beth El Omaha Men's Club Year in Review

**Men's Club Highlights:**  
Jews 'N Brews - Social get togethers for all Men of Beth El chaired by Art Kohen.

Sukkah Building - Annual construction of Beth El's Sukkah.

December 25 Dinner - More than 130 congregants were treated to a Chinese

buffet dinner December 25. Arts and craft activities were provided, compliments of Sisterhood. The men were in charge of all set-up, cooking and cleanup.  
Men's Club Shabbat - Chaired by Doug Smith with high membership participation.  
Scotch Tasting - Learning

while enjoying. We were treated to knowledge and tastes, thanks to Ari Kohen and Hazzan Krausman.

Yellow Candle Project - To commemorate the Holocaust and to memorialize its victims. Funds raised support Beth El youth projects. ≈



Future Beth El Men's Club members help prepare for the Chinese Buffet.



Clockwise from bottom left: Scotch Tasting, Sukkah Building, Chinese Buffet Prep, World Wide Wrap.



## Midwest Region - FJMC

3244 Greenbriar Dr.  
Glenview, IL 60025

### 2013-2014 Midwest Region

Michael Greenberg, President  
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Gregg Pollack  
Ernie Smolen

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

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](http://www.midwestregionfjmc.org)

# COMING EVENTS

**Remember  
the Date!**

**FALL REGION MEETING**  
Congregation Kneseth Israel  
Quality Club Awards Presentation

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2014**

**WINTER REGION MEETING**  
Beth Israel Ner Tamid

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2015**

**World Wide Wrap**

**Sunday, February 1, 2015**

**INTL FJMC CONVENTION**  
Miami Beach

**WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 8-12, 2015**