



HISTORIC B'NAI JACOB SYNAGOGUE

Nissley at Water Streets

Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057

NOVEMBER 2012

Services Calendar

Sunday, December 9, 2012
3:30 p.m. - Hanukah Party
Friday, January 4, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Friday, February 1, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Friday, March 1, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Friday, April 5, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Friday, May 3, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Sunday, May 19, 2013
11 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Annual Hoffer Park Picnic
Friday, June 7, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Friday, August 2, 2012
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Wednesday, September 4, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Erev Rosh Hashana
Thursday, September 5, 2013
9:15 a.m. - Morning Service
6:30 p.m. - Evening Service
Friday, September 13, 2013
6:45 p.m. - Kol Nidre
Saturday, September 14, 2013
9:15 a.m. - Yom Kippur Service
11:15 a.m. - Yitzkor Service
6:00 p.m. - Ne-lah Service
8:00 p.m. - Break the Fast
Friday, October 4, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Sukkos/Simchas Torah
Friday, November 1, 2013
7:30 p.m. - Shabbos Service
Sunday, December 1, 2013
Noon - Hanukah Party
Changes on Shul Website

LEADING SERVICES

Our Shul was again filled for the High Holy Days, including those who come back to Middletown especially to join us each year. For the celebration of the New Year 5773 we were also able to have a guest hazzan lead our services with the assistance of one of our local Middletown members as "gabbai" and of our Baal Koreh (to read the Torah and Haftorah) and Baal Te-kiya (sounding the Shofar). There were many new and beautiful melodies and service elements that come with a guest hazzan. We honored members of our Shul with "aliyahs." The sounds of the Shofar once again awakened us to the challenges of the New Year and continuing services at our Shul, now in its second century and recognized on the National Register of Historic Places.

Our guest hazzan was one of the last graduates of the Philadelphia-area Gratz College program to prepare cantors to lead Jewish services. That program closed down in 2010 after thirty years. Other programs for cantors, including the one at the Miller School at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, are also feeling the effects of shuls throughout the country having services led by lay members of their congregations to deal with decreasing attendance and funds and the cost of the expanded role of the cantor. Many small congregations have disappeared or consolidated; and, some larger ones are now downsizing.

Hebrew Union College's Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music in New York has developed a

special certification outreach program to assist lay members to continue and enhance a musical dimension for their services, including the use of modern settings for traditional prayers. Placement services for new, experienced, and retired cantors are provided through Cantors Assembly as well as the remaining college programs in New York and California.

Historic B'nai Jacob continues to face these same challenges. For the past several years, our Shul has limited our service calendar to one service each month except for the High Holy Days; and, our members have been leading our monthly and High Holy Day services for many more years without a rabbi or cantor, including a long period of continuity in which services and special mitzvah occasions were ably prepared and led by our Shul's past presidents. In 2011, our Shul's president encouraged the congregation to become more active in leading our services; and, during 2012, more members have stepped up to prepare and lead our monthly services, bringing some trial additions and friends to assist, while preserving familiar traditions.



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The sound of the Shofar challenged our Shul to look for additional options and encouraging signs to continue our traditions in these different times. The college campus across the road from our Shul is expanding and houses programs and a Center for Jewish Studies. The new railroad station in Middletown is going up near our Shul. New faces joined us for the High Holy Days and during the past year. We have been able to update the Shul with a new roof, windows and electrical and water heating systems and we received a reusable sukkah as an Eagle Scout project from a recent Shul bar mitzvah.

We are also reaching out to rabbis, cantors and seminary students to develop itinerant and shared resources to assist with services for congregations such as ours. While our congregation has been able to schedule our calendar for the coming year with services to be led by our members, special guests and developments that can be added will be posted on our Shul's calendar on our website and in our local Jewish community publications.

If you are interested in working through these challenges with us or leading a service for our Shul, contact a Shul Officer listed or join us at our December 9, 2012 Annual Meeting to volunteer. See you in Shul!

By the Way

While our Shul's Summer Slam Youth Basketball Team did not make the championship round this year, our Shul is now also sponsoring a weekly Chess Club that meets at the Shul and is led by our Shul Treasurer (all ages are welcome).

Historic B'nai Jacob Synagogue is located in Middletown, near the Harrisburg International Airport. If you have Community News that you would like to share in the next Shul Newsletter or would like to be added to our mailing list, PLEASE e-mail that information on the Website e-mail link at: <http://www.bnai-jacob.org>.

Shul Officers (2012)

Tom Armstrong (President); Deb Armstrong (Vice President); Bruce Baron (Secretary); Larry Kapenstein (Treasurer); Loren Barisch (Assistant Treasurer)

2012 Orstein Scholarship Winner

Nai Lin was the recipient of the 2012 Ida Betty Orstein/Historic B'nai Jacob Synagogue scholarship at the Middletown High School graduation award ceremonies. He was very surprised and pleased to receive this cash award and plaque; and, his entire graduating class gasped with joy for him when he was called up to receive the award.



Nai came to the United States in 2003 and did not speak English at all then. He said that the grammar was difficult to learn, but other than that, he speaks and understands English pretty well now. His parents came to the U.S. earlier and worked for other people before opening their own restaurant: Lin Gardens located on Route 230 near the Airport. They wanted Nai and his sister Gina to be able to stay in one area for more stability rather than moving around as they did when they worked for others.

In 2011, Nai's father passed away due to brain cancer. Nai said that was his greatest obstacle to overcome because his father was like a giant who protected him; and, it was like losing one of his arms. He misses his father greatly for his advice and being able to ask him questions. Nai works with his mother at the restaurant and helps keep it going. Nai also started a chess club for Middletown High School students.

Nai will be attending Penn State Harrisburg, majoring in either engineering or environmental engineering. He plans to stay in the U.S. and would like to write a book someday. He is also considering becoming an educator, possibly a college professor.

Julian Armstrong Eagle Scout Award

On Sunday, August 5, 2012, Julian Armstrong was honored at the Shul by his parents, the Boy Scouts of America, Pennsylvania Troop 196, attending Eagle Scouts, area representatives and members of our Shul in a ceremony qualifying him as an Eagle Scout. Julian's Eagle Scout Project provided a re-usable sukkah for our Shul along with hand-crafted wooden benches.

The Eagle Scout ceremony includes "challenges" by scouts of different ranks to assure that the candidate has in fact passed all of the requirements to be an Eagle Scout and possesses the attributes necessary to hold that rank. During



his remarks, Julian's father, Dr. Tom Armstrong (pictured above with Julian and the other attending Eagle Scouts), who also works with troop members to help them achieve the Eagle Scout honor, noted that Julian recently was also able to save a life in his part-time job as a lifeguard. Deb Armstrong, Julian's mother, also participated in the ceremony to place the blue Eagle Scout scarf that signifies Julian's Eagle Scout rank and accomplishments.

Julian had his bar mitzvah service at our Shul and has helped lead our services. Julian was a member of the 2010 silver medal winning boys basketball team from the Harrisburg JCC at the Maccabi Games held in Omaha, Nebraska. Julian is now in college at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.