



THE ELECTRONIC EDUCATOR-
A weekly update of information for you and your school!
A service of the NJ Region USCJ Dept. of Education
Michelle Rich, Director of Education and Youth Activities
Nita Polay Levin, Field Worker
Lisa Harris Glass, Executive Director

Hi Everyone,

Once Yom Tov is over, it's that time of year when teachers and parents should begin having conversations if they have not yet done so. Hopefully phone calls can happen before problems have begun to percolate. Originally designed to give to teachers before the beginning of the year, the templates below about phone calls can be easily adapted to your school. I've also included some tips for teachers when having parent/teacher conferences.

Please adapt these documents to fit your community.
Hope you find these helpful,
Serene

Serene Victor
USCJ National Consultant for Synagogue Education

PARENT CONFERENCE TIPS

Parent/teacher conferences are likely to be positive and productive when teachers begin with certain beliefs that inform their stance.

- *Parents know their children better than we do, even if they have a hard time saying what they really think and feel.*
- *Parents and teachers have the same goal: the welfare and education of the child.*

The following methods have proved successful in building real communication between parent and teacher.

Decide in advance with the parent what is to be discussed during the conference. Assemble a folder of the student's work and jot down a checklist of the various problems to talk about.

Sit in chairs at the back of the room for a more informal setting.

Don't rush the meeting. Plan for enough time for parents to tell what they are really worried about, and express their real feelings and fears.

Agree with parents whenever possible. When there is agreement on a hundred small things, it is easier for both parent and teacher to state their differences frankly if a difference of opinion does exist. When the answer must be "no", take a long time to say it, and say it softly, without hostility.

Listen with enthusiasm. Parents should be encouraged to do the talking, telling, and suggestion making. Give parents a chance to "sound" off", especially if they are angry or upset. After they have let off steam, you will find it easier to discuss the problem calmly. Try not to argue with them.

Control your facial expressions of disapproval or anger. A wince or frown at a parent's comment or revelation may embarrass him/her or put him/her on guard.

Examine your own emotional reaction to criticism. Do you dislike people who give you new ideas, or who disagree with you? If so, you may be getting this message across in subtle, unspoken ways.

Explain what you and their child do in school. Gear your talk to the parents' interests and avoid jargon at all costs.

Don't let comments about other children creep into the conversation. Avoid making comparisons with the student's siblings or classmates.

CONCLUDE the conference at which there were "issues" or problems by making a list of some action items that would address them.

FOLLOW-UP communication (phone calls are best but a note or an E-mail is adequate) to give an update on the action taken. In a far away world where everyone has infinite time, the teacher could send a note thanking the parent for his/her input at the conference.

PHONE CALLS HOME

Making phone calls to parents before school begins is a very effective way to begin a partnership.

Call Parents Before School Starts

Please take a few moments to call parents and introduce yourself. Invite parents to come into the school *after class* to meet you and say hello, and to be in touch with you during the course of the year, letting you know about things that have worked and things that don't work for their child. By doing this, you will find it much easier to make a call later in the year when you have a concern you want to discuss.

Keep Records

Please make a note (in writing) of all phone calls you have with parents. Indicate date, time, and nature of call and give me copies so we can keep track of our pattern of communication.

No Surprises

It is imperative that you call the parents no later than the 4th - 6th week of religious school, depending on how often you see the student if you are concerned about her. If you wait any longer parents will rightly ask why you didn't call them earlier when they could have provided some helpful interventions.

Never send home a report card that will surprise parents.

Once something is in writing it takes on a level of importance that can escalate any issue. This kind of report card is received as an evaluation of their child (and therefore of the parent!), rather than as a tool for learning. If you have a concern about a child, parents should know about it well before the report card goes home so that intervention strategies can be discussed.

Helpful Tips

The goal of parent-teacher communication is to enhance the learning experience for the child by building a partnership between home and school. The following tips will help you communicate this goal to the parents, rather than sounding as if you are complaining and appearing to place the full responsibility for improvement on the parent.

- a) Begin the conversation with "What can you tell me about David that will help..."
- b) Enlist their support: "Do you have any suggestions?" or "From your experience, what might I do that will help David..."

- c) What can you tell me about his learning style? How did Sarah learn to read?
- d) What methods/techniques/approaches used in public school or Hebrew school have been successful in the past?
- e) Let's agree upon a consistent message that we will give to Sarah about what is required and why, so that she knows we are together on this.
- f) Let's be in touch in another two weeks to compare notes and see how we are doing.

**If you are feeling timid about making that call...
Come see me. We can plan it out, and/or you can make the call from my office. I'll be your silent partner. The important thing is not to delay.**

CAJE PAGE

I am writing to you with information about a **"SPECIAL SALE"** that CAJE is having for its **2008 CAJE Partner Member program**. Take advantage of the October membership sale and you can both support excellence in Jewish education and financially benefit your organization.

The CAJE Partner Program allows schools, central agencies, congregations, and organizations to support CAJE and the pursuit of excellence in Jewish education while saving money. An institution can become a CAJE Partner by completing the on-line form available at www.caje.org and paying the annual Partner membership fee. This fee will help support CAJE's year-round efforts to achieve excellence in Jewish education.

Sign up by November 1st to be a CAJE Partner Member and in appreciation for your support, CAJE Partner Institutions that send three full pay participants to the August 2008 CAJE Conference will receive the option to send a fourth registrant for "free" (no registration fee.)

Educators, clergy, staff, and lay leaders working directly with CAJE Partner Institutions can each realize significant savings on their own [individual CAJE membership](#) dues by paying the \$60 discounted fee. Regular membership dues, for non-Partner members, is \$100 per teacher and \$125 per administrator.

[Sign up](#) by November 1st and the annual CAJE Partner Institution membership fee will only be \$250. After November 1 CAJE Partner Program membership fees for 2008 will increase to \$360.

For more information about the CAJE Partner Program contact Yoram Schwell at the CAJE National Office by phone at (212) 268-4210 ext. 15, by fax at (212) 268-4214 or by e-mail at yschwell@caje.org.

You may also print out a [form](#) to complete and mail in with your payment.

Moadim L'simchah,

Shoshanah Zaritt
Membership Vice President

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Hi Everyone,

I'm happy to forward this mailing from the Jewish Women's Archive in honor of parashat braisheet.

B'shalom,
Serene

Serene Victor
USCJ National Consultant for Synagogue Education

October 8, 2007
Dear Educator,

Just as we begin our yearly Torah cycle again, JWA offers a timely resource on the creation story. Go to
<<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=bxihfcab.0.ww95mecab.4g5kaacab.739&ts=S0289&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jwa.org%2Fteach%2Fgolearn%2Fsep07%2F>><http://www.jwa.org/teach/golearn/sep07/> to find "Lilith Evolved: Writing Midrash."

This year's first edition of JWA's online resource "Go & Learn" explores the notion of midrash and takes a fresh look at the creation story, highlighting "The Coming of Lilith" by theologian Judith Plaskow. Lesson plans for youth, adults, and family education also ask students to create their own midrashim.

I invite you to share your feedback or questions by emailing me at
<<mailto:maxner@jwa.org>>maxner@jwa.org.

Marya Axner
Education Specialist
Jewish Women's Archive
<<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=bxihfcab.0.cryhqacab.4g5kaacab.739&ts=S0289&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jwa.org%2F>>www.jwa.org
617-383-6768



uscj.org/eNews

October 2007

In This Issue:

- [New Ideas](#)
- [Bragging Rights](#)
- [Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center](#)
- [From Our Book Service](#)

- [What's Happening](#)

- [With Just One Click](#)

New Ideas

Seeding New Congregations - United Synagogue's Alim program provides grants to new and emerging congregations that helps them grow. To learn more about it, [click here](#).

To read earlier new ideas, [click here](#).

[[Back to Top](#)]

Bragging Rights

Nativ Group the Biggest Ever - This year, 106 recent high-school graduates landed in Israel to begin a year in Israel on a United Synagogue Youth [Nativ](#) program. This is the largest group so far in Nativ's 27-year history; the group has doubled in size since 2003. [USY's](#) had a wonderfully successful summer, with more than 400 participants in its Israel programs. This year's Nativ students come from 25 of the 50 United States and two Canadian provinces. They will live at the [Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center](#) for one semester and then on a kibbutz or other Israeli community for the other. For more information, call USY's shaliach, Nahum Binder, at 212-553-7800, ext. 2321, or [email him](#).



Eit Ratzon - The annual Eit Ratzon conference, sponsored by the Joint Placement Commission, met at United Synagogue's Manhattan headquarters in August. The conference helps new rabbis and the lay leadership of their congregations discuss the changes and adjustments necessary for both sides. The New Jersey region's delegation included, in the back from left, Rabbi Michael Goldstein, Rabbi Mark David Finkel, Steve Rogers, Jeff Sacks, Rabbi Benjamin Adler, Rabbi Ronald Roth, Rabbi David Seth Kirshner, and Rabbi Elliot Salo Schoenberg, the Rabbinical Assembly's associate executive director. United Synagogue's New Jersey regional director, Lisa Harris Glass, Abby Scheer, Randee Fox, Rabbi Toni Shy, Leah Todres, and Holly Levy sit in the front row.



Koach's Richard Moline Honored by Jewish Educators Assembly - Richard Moline, who heads our [Koach](#) program for college students, is to be honored by the [Jewish Educators Assembly](#) in January. He will be given the JEA's Or Zarua award in recognition of his many contributions to Jewish education.

[[Back to Top](#)]

Calendar

Koach Shabbat - On November 2 and 3, Jewish students across North America will study about the [Tzedek Hekhsher](#), United Synagogue's look at ethical kashrut, on their own campuses, using materials provided by [Koach](#). Last year, nearly 4,000 students on 82 campuses shared [Koach Shabbat](#); on more than 30 campuses teachers supplied by Koach added to the experience.

Join Us in Orlando for Our International Convention! - United Synagogue's international biennial convention is planned for November 29 through December 3 at the [Rosen Shingle Creek Resort and Golf Club](#) in Orlando, Florida. [Click here](#) for more information. Please plan to be there with us!

USY Convention - [United Synagogue Youth's](#) 57th annual convention is set for December 23 to 27 in Anaheim, California. USYers are invited to five days of social action projects, summer program reunions, education programs, and more. Go to USY's website, www.usy.org, for updates.

Hazak in Israel - United Synagogue and [Hazak](#), for people 55 and over, join to offer a trip to Israel next winter. Spend February 12 to 24 in Jerusalem; celebrate Shabbat at the [Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center](#), and take day trips around the country. For more information, [click here](#).

Koach Kallah - From February 28 to March 2, Northwestern University in metropolitan Chicago will host the [Koach Kallah](#). College students from more than 60 campuses will gather for a weekend of fun, study, friendship, and worship.

Sulam - United Synagogue's 2008 program for new synagogue presidents and vice presidents, [Sulam](#), [meets](#) in Newark March 6-9 and in Chicago March 27-30. For more information, email Rabbi Moshe Edelman at Edelman@uscj.org.

[[Back to Top](#)]

What's Happening

Convention Early Registration Ends October 12 - Register for our [convention](#), set for November 29 to December 3 at the [Rosen Shingle Creek Resort](#) in Orlando, Florida, and save \$100. Don't miss the chance to learn, network, talk, think, study, argue, eat, and celebrate Shabbat with other committed Conservative Jews. [Register](#) for the convention online or [download a printable PDF](#). Either way, don't forget to check the early registration box in the convention fees section of the registration form.

Two-Minute Torah - Want to study Torah but don't have much time? Want a new, fast take on the text? Want some wisdom to go? On October 1 [Koach](#) will inaugurate Two-Minute Torah, a weekly podcast d'var Torah that will be available over the web at www.koach.org or by subscription on iTunes. They'll be given by professional, lay, and student leaders - that range of backgrounds is sure to produce a range of styles and ideas. If you want a take on the Torah parasha that's both short and smart, give it a try.

[[Back to Top](#)]

Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center

Virtual Hevruta from the Conservative Yeshiva - Anyone who is interested in furthering his or her Jewish education is invited to join the [online hevruta program](#) offered by the [Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center's Conservative Yeshiva](#).

Fuchsberg Non-Capital Programs Campaign - There are a variety of non-capital programs that support the [Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center](#). This is in addition to the capital campaign, which has [naming opportunities](#) ranging from \$5,000 to \$5 million. The non-capital programs, which must be funded on an annual basis, strengthen Conservative Judaism for both North Americans and Israelis. They include programs for Russian immigrants, scholarships for Conservative Yeshiva students, and [gemilut hesed projects](#). Funding opportunities range from \$5,000 to \$38,000 a year. For information, email our development director, [Ron Friedman](#).

[[Back to Top](#)]

From Our Book Service

[I Will Wake the Dawn](#) - In the new *I Will Wake the Dawn*, artist Debra Band illustrates 36 of the psalms; her rich, brightly colored art is accompanied by the JPS translation, Band's explanation of her work, and Arnold Band's commentary on the psalm. The book's foreword is by Rabbi Harold S. Kushner. \$48

[[Back to Top](#)]

Around the USCJ

Koach Tribute Cards - Help support Koach's student scholarship fund! [Koach](#) is United Synagogue's organization for college students, and funds raised by the [tribute cards](#), just \$25 for six cards and perfect for any occasion, go to that fund.

Convention Update - Our international biennial convention is just months away, and preparations are ramping up. This convention will be held over Shabbat, letting us experience the beauty and wonder and joy of that day together.

To learn more about the convention, which will be held from November 29 to December 3, 2007, in Orlando, Florida, take a look at our [convention e-newsletter](#). As our plans develop, we'll keep you posted.

[[Back to Top](#)]

With Just One Click



Take advantage of **free Internet hosting services** to affiliated synagogues, USY chapters and afternoon/day schools.



Get suggestions for **building a Jewish home library**. Great ideas for gift giving as well.

[[Back to Top](#)]



October 2007

We've launched a blog! It's called OnLion. It's our way to share with you what we're up to, and to promote conversation about Jewish education.

Here's what's in the blog right now:

The Leadership Institute Wants YOU!

[October 8, 2007](#) [Dena Kahn](#)

UJA - Federation of New York has awarded \$1.9 million to the Leadership Institute - \$50,000 per educator! [More](#)

The Best Parts of My Job

[October 4, 2007](#) [Terry Kaye](#)



I like my job a lot. So here, in no particular order, is a list of my 10 favorite things I do at Behrman House. [More](#)

Faster Than FedEx?

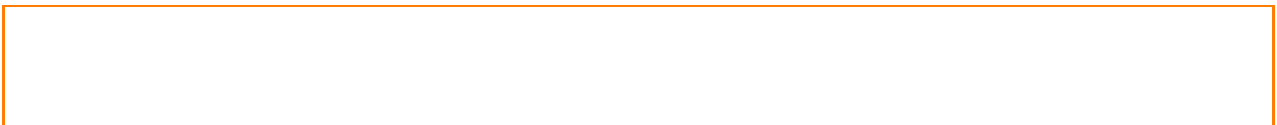
[September 26, 2007](#) [David Behrman](#)

We're just tickled pink at the performance of our warehouse team this summer. It's common knowledge that Behrman House ships fast. [More](#)

To read the whole blog, [click here](#).

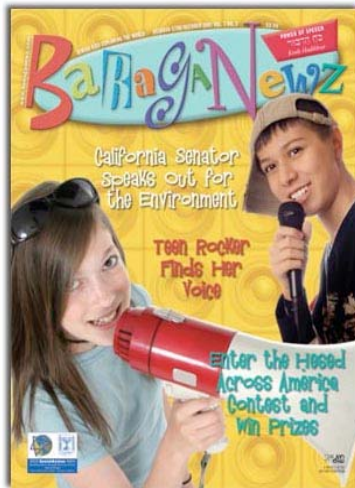
Come join us. We'd love you to read what we've posted, and we'd especially love to hear from you. You must register to comment on a post. To register for the blog, [click here](#).

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In This Issue

October 2007/ Heshvan 5768



Guide.

To join the conference call, please dial 1-888-247-2572 (PIN=9607#) or for more information, contact lisa@babaganewz.com

Link to Us

Link your school website to BabagaNewz.com. Let kids connect directly to the engaging educational games, music, crafts, videos, and more from your home page. Click [here](#) for more information!

Printable lesson plans, source sheets, and worksheets available online

Resource materials and [lesson plans](#) relating to the articles in the new Heshvan issue of BabagaNewz magazine are available online for your convenience. Be sure not to miss the following lessons:



[Raechel Rosen Rocks the World:](#)

This article profiles a teen who has used her music and lyrics to make positive changes in the world. In this lesson, students will explore the role of music and lyrics in conveying a message. As a bonus, students can listen to Raechel's band's song "[World Without Windows.](#)"

[A Geek's Guide to Internet Glory:](#) This article tells kids everything they need to know about YouTube and sites like it. In this lesson, students will create a class video and explore what kind of message they want to send to the world. As a fun complement, BabagaNewz features [two popular YouTube movies](#) for students and teachers.

[High Court Limits Students' Speech:](#) This article explores the balance between freedom of speech and the disruption of the educational process. In this lesson students will look at the issues of a recent Supreme Court case through a Jewish lens. Students can also read the [online article](#) and post on the [free speech message board](#).



[Senator Barbara Boxer: Speaking Out for Those Who Can't:](#)

For this U.S. Senator from California, speaking up is all in a day's work, especially when it comes to defending the environment. In this lesson, students will design a public service announcement and speak out about a pressing community issue. Students can also learn more about Barbara Boxer and about drilling in Alaska [here](#).

Also Explore

- [More Heshvan Lesson Materials](#)
- [Themes for 5768 / 2007-2008](#)

- [Themes for 5768 / 2007-2008](#)
- [Heshvan's Torah for Teachers](#)

More Israel@60!

It's never too early to begin celebrating Israel's 60th birthday!

Games in Hebrew

Help your students improve their Hebrew in preparation for their first trip to Israel!

- [Match Game Archive](#)
- [Zoons](#)



This Week in Israel's History

This feature is in full swing! Each week, we post a fact from Israel's history on the babaganewz.com homepage. We encourage you to announce the fact in your classroom each week and to challenge your students to research other events from that same period of time to share in class.

JEWPARDY: Israel@60 Edition

Celebrate Israel's history by exploring Israel's domestic and global accomplishments with [Israel@60 JEWPARDY!](#)

434-3934 ext. 18.

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**JEWISH EDUCATIONAL SERVICES OF THE
UJA OF NORTHER NEW JERSEY AND
THE CENTER FOR JEWISH EDUCATION OF ROCKLAND
Presents**

**FALL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
on Sunday, Nov. 11, 2007/1Kislev 5768
at Temple Beth Or, Township of Washington, NJ**

Workshops include: 60 Ways to Teach Israel at 60; Active Learning Strategies: Engaging and Motivating Students to Learn About Israel; Beginning at the End: the Best Way to Plan Any Curriculum, grades K – 5; Creative Holiday Art and Experiences, with Israel at the Center; Israel in Stories; Teaching Israel: Challenging the Challenges; Bringing Hebrew Conversation into Our Classrooms; Using Israeli Film; “Why Jerusalem?” and “Eyes on Israel”

If you would like a full brochure, contact Nita at Levin@USCJ.org.

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ARTICLES FROM OUR ARCHIVES

1. *Writing Report Cards*, by Serene Victor, National Consultant for Congregational Schools, USCJ-NJ Region
2. *When a Lesson Isn't Working*, by Carol Oseran Starin, from *Let Me Count the Ways*.

To request a copy of either of these articles, contact Nita Polay Levin at Levin@USCJ.org or (732) 738-4301.

With an eye on Israel:

From CAJE comes a list of the following news resources and organization for your to peruse:

United Jewish Communities, www.ujc.org; Jewish National Fund, www.jnf.org, American Friends of *Mogen David Adom*, www.armdi.org, Friends of the IDF, www.israelsoldiers.org, Jewish Agency for Israel, www.jafi.org.il; Haaretz Daily, www.haaretzdaily.com, Israeli Government News Response, www.israelemb.org/current_events.html, Jerusalem Newswire, www.jnewswire.com, Jerusalem Post, www.jta.org, YNetNews (English site of Yeditot Ahcronot) www.netnews.com