



בינינו

NEWS FROM THE JEA FOR ITS MEMBERS

MARCH, 2009 / ADAR, 5769

PHOENIX WAS PHABULOUS!

We have recently returned from a fabulous Conference at the Chaparral Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. More than 150 educators from across North America and Israel participated in the Conference, which included a Workshop Day for teachers from the Greater Phoenix / Scottsdale area, a Family Festival for the community, an honoree dinner, a country-western barbecue, a visit to the Desert Botanical Garden featuring a Chihuly Glass Exhibit, and a host of notable speakers from the Phoenix area and the West Coast. Educators from Day Schools, Congregational Schools, Family Education programs, High Schools, agencies and bureaus all were included. We were especially pleased that our track for Early Childhood educators grew significantly this year.

The theme of this year's Conference was "Exploring Eco-Judaism and Searching for Spirituality in the Desert Environment" and was meant to help educators look at environmental issues and teaching preservation of the planet based on Jewish text and sources. The tone was set by Rabbi Brad Artson, Vice President of the American Jewish University in Los Angeles who spoke on "Finding God and Soul in Creation and Nature." He was followed up by Dr. Barry Holtz, newly appointed Dean of the Davidson School of Education at JTS who spoke on "Teaching and Learning – Through the Lens of our Tradition." Bill Kaplan, Executive Director of the Shalom Institute, Malibu, CA, gave a featured talk on "Eco-Judaism and Going Green." Additional major speakers included Rami Wernik, Dean of the Fingerhut School of Education at the American Jewish University, Los Angeles; Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Rector of the American Jewish University, Los Angeles, who was honored with the United Synagogue Book Service Award; Rabbi Jerome Epstein, Executive Vice President, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism who was honored on his forthcoming retirement; and Rabbi Ed Feinstein, spiritual leader of Valley Beth Shalom Congregation, Encino, CA.

Additional sessions were offered on students with special needs, facing the challenges of the economy in education, educational vision in practice, CAMERA's Eyes on Israel curriculum, engaging the intermarried family, Jewish experiential education, bringing Israel into the classroom, Crypto-Jews, and fundraising techniques. Jane Shapiro taught and introduced the Mitzvah Initiative being undertaken with synagogues by JTS. A special track for Early Childhood educators helped them to focus on their unique needs, including a visit to a local EC Center. An affinity group meeting was also held for Directors of Congregational Learning.

Conference attendees had the opportunity to tour the Heard Museum of the Native American and to visit Old Town Scottsdale. The entire conference body visited the magnificent Desert Botanical Garden where we joined together for an outdoor Shacharit service, followed by breakfast, Torah study and a walk through the desert

trails. A special treat was the Chihuly Glass Exhibit currently on display. Entertainment was provided by Cantor Marc Philippe and the Chai-Tones and the new, rock sound of the Josh Nelson Project. Our opening country-western barbecue was also memorable with the entrance of Dusty, the horse! Two dozen vendors and exhibitors displayed the latest in textbooks and classroom materials, media and computer programs, curriculum initiatives and study and enrichment opportunities both here and in Israel. A great deal of networking took place with participants sharing ideas and information over meals and in the hospitality suite.

During the Conference, tribute was paid to Karen and Jay Bycer for their significant leadership roles in the Arizona Jewish community and beyond, to Rabbi Mark Bisman, spiritual leader of Scottsdale's Har Zion Congregation and to longtime JEA member and Past President, Lonna Picker.

There are a number of exciting ideas and proposals that came out of the Conference. Our new Officers and Board will be working to follow-up on these in the days and months ahead. We welcome your involvement on our committees and your ideas and suggestions for JEA as well as for next year's Conference.

Thank you to all of our presenters who gave of their time and energy to "educate the educators." It takes a tremendous team effort to create such an event. Rav todot to: Fran Richter and Myra Shindler, Yom Iyun Chairs; Janette Silverman, Family Festival Chair; Hazzan Arlyne Unger and Hazzan Larry Brandspiegel, Tefila Chairs; Sue Rodrigues, Vendor Chair; Susan Wyner, Hospitality Chair; Robert Westle, Speaker Contact Chair; Danny Kochavi, Evaluation Chair and all who helped throughout the Conference.

A super ***Kol HaKavod*** to our overall Conference Chairs ***Hedda Morton and Barb Moskow! Well done!!!***

Visit our website www.JewishEducators.org to view photos of the Conference.

JEA JOURNAL AD BOOK

In association with our Conference, JEA published a magnificent Journal Ad Book paying tribute to our honorees and our educators. Thank you to Judith Pearl, our Administrator and to Marsha Sesskin, our Development Consultant who worked tirelessly on the Journal. Special thanks also to Michael Edelstein who did all of the layout and graphics for the Journal. We do have a quantity of extra journals available in the office. Please call or e-mail if you would like to receive a copy.

PLACEMENT

We are now in the midst of the Placement season and quite a few new positions have become available. The most recent Placement Listing is included in this mailing. JEA is here to help guide you through the process and evaluate the choices before you. Applications for Placement are available on our website www.JewishEducators.org. Even before you make the decision to apply for Placement, we invite you to speak with our Executive Director, Eddie Edelstein. All such conversations are strictly confidential. You can reach Eddie at the JEA office 516 569-2537 or placement@jewisheducators.org.

JEA RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

We are pleased to report that a JEA Research and Development Grant has been awarded to Beth Copelovitch of Beth Israel Center, Madison, WI for her proposal of a 3-year Spiral Music Curriculum for grades K-2.

Howard Goldberg
Jon Mitzmacher
Rabbi Barb Moskow

Marshall Kupchan
Sharon Wasserberg

SECOND YEAR OF A SECOND TWO-YEAR TERM

Cantor Larry Brandspeigel
Barry Gruber
Susan Rodrigues

Michael Schatz
Laurence Scheindlin

בנינו is published by the Jewish Educators Assembly, Broadway & Locust Ave.,
PO Box 413, Cedarhurst, NY 11516
Phone: 516 569-2537 Fax: 516 295-9039
E-mail: JewishEducators@JewishEducators.org
Visit us on the web at www.JewishEducators.org
Edward Edelstein, Executive Director Lawrence M. Katz, President



כּוֹן שְׁנֵתִמְנָה אָדָם פִּרְנָס עַל הַצְבוּר - מִתְעַשֵּׂר

יומא כב

Jewish Education has enriched my life!

רַב תּוֹדוֹת

To those who helped make it happen...

My Beloved Family

***Teachers, Students, Colleagues, Congregants &
Friends***

מִזַּל טוֹב וַיִּשֶׁר כַּחֲכָם

to

Fellow Honorees

Karen, Jay, Mark, Elliot & Jerry

***JEA Officers, Board, Conference Chairs,
Executive Director***

***I am deeply honored to join my esteemed
colleagues***

as a

Behrman House Honoree

Lonna