



L'Chaim!

News & "Chailights" of The Greater
Altoona Jewish Community

Winter 2008
Issue No. 15
Federation: 515-1182
E-mail:
altfed@atlanticbb.net

Message from our president

Dear Friends:

As you read through another marvelous edition of L'Chaim, I encourage you to think BIG.

This edition of L'Chaim highlights many of the significant events that have occurred in our community in the last six months and our plans for the next six months.



Cohen

From the front to the back page, you will read about the tremendous role of our Greater Altoona Jewish community in local affairs. Our contribution to Jewish life and the general community has been very BIG.

Making a difference and setting a good example is our mission. Our Federation looks to make a difference and advance our community through philanthropic, social, cultural and educational programs. We also look to foster cooperation among local Jewish organizations directed toward that end.

This is what I have observed and learned in my past experiences with Federation and from the leadership of our recent presidents — Bill Wallen, Mickey Port, Neil Rudel and Roz Sky. They have positioned our Federation as a uniting community for all.

I hope you read this issue of L'Chaim from cover to cover, be enriched by great things happening in our community, become motivated to be involved and be proud to be Jewish.

I encourage you to think BIG, and I encourage you to live generously and continue to support our community by being a member of your Greater Altoona Jewish Federation.

HALL OF FAMER



Morley Cohn (right and left) poses outside his family's business, Kopp Drug in downtown Altoona, sometime, according to L'Chaim estimates, in the early 1970s. Kopp Drug, represented by Morley and his wife Carol, was inducted into the Blair County Chamber Business Hall of Fame on October 22, 2007 at the Blair County Convention Center. Kopp was one of four businesses operated by current or former members of the Altoona Jewish Community that were honored. For more coverage, please see Page 4.

Israel celebration set

■ Community planning to commemorate 60th birthday.

May 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel.

The historic designation of statehood by the United Nations became effective on May 14, 1948.

Each year Jews worldwide celebrate this event on Yom Ha Atzmaut. Because this year is a special milestone, the Sunday School and the entire community will celebrate



together. Planning is being led by Tobi Rispoli and Sue Port Simon.

We need your help with ideas and preparation work. Contact one of them or the Federation office to volunteer.

"This event will connect us with millions of other Jews worldwide," Federation executive director Bill Wallen said. "We look forward to a week of celebration culminating in this community-wide event."



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Around the community

By Bill Wallen

Comings and goings

Welcome to the **Namenwirth** family! **Mitch and Sue** are owners of the **All Pro Trophy Inc** at 304 Allegheny Street in Hollidaysburg. Mitch moved here from Holmdel, N.J. in 2005.

Sue grew up in Altoona. They have six children and five grandchildren. Four of the children are living at home, ranging in age between 7-15. They are very busy with the kids' activities, including wrestling, basketball and baseball. Sue works for the Altoona School District Transportation Department. Mitch is a new minyonaire at Agudath Achim and is interested in being further involved in our Jewish community.

Best wishes to **Mike, Lynn and Hayley Rosen** who have recently moved to Wilmington DE.

Mike received a promotion in the Value City Furniture chain – an offer he couldn't refuse.

While in Altoona, Mike and Lynn were very active at Temple Beth Israel. He served as Temple president and she as Sisterhood president.

Mike was the Temple ritual committee chair and a representative on the commonality committee.

The community will surely miss their commitment to Judaism and their hard work. The Rosens' new address is 27 Brooklet Drive, Wilmington, DE 19810.

Farewell to **Dr. Mark Stracks and Kristen Jocums Stracks** and their children who have relocated to the state of Georgia, where Mark will work as a psychiatrist at an inpatient facility.

Lifelong Altoona resident **Ethel Fried** is now living in Florida year round. For some years, she wintered there and lived here for the other seasons.

She lives near her son **Andrew Parish** and is enjoying the Florida weather. Her address is Apt. J204 7775 Southampton Terrace, Tamarac, FL 33321.



Annie Schneider and her brother Mike just returned from a trip to Israel.

In the news

Many of us enjoyed the wonderful three-part PBS special **The Jewish Americans**.

The Federation office has a copy that is available to borrow, and we are planning to utilize it as an adult education program. Details will follow soon.

As a companion to the series, our local PBS radio aired a series on Jewish Americans in Central PA, including a segment on Temple Beth Israel.

Joe Silverman, Bonnie Gordon, Sissy Kadane, Shirley Pechter, Rabbi Kaber and Student Rabbi Shalhevet were all featured. Check with the Temple for a link to the broadcast.

With our youth

Safe journey to **Amy Pimentel**, who has been accepted into the Peace Corps and just left for her assignment in Uganda in Eastern Africa until 2010. She will teach math, English and science in a secondary education setting as well as be involved with HIV education.

Annie and Mike Schneider went with a Penn State group on a **Birthright Israel** trip from Dec. 27-Jan. 7.

They both had an amazing experience and look forward to returning to Israel sometime in the future. Birthright is free and open to all Jewish youths ages 18-26, as a first trip to Israel.

It is funded by private donations, the State of Israel and United Jewish Communities. Our Federation also makes a special contribution to Birthright.

Annie is a junior at University Park and active with Hillel, serving as their food director. She coordinates and prepares their holiday and Shabbat meals and is already planning the Passover Seder. Mike is a freshman at Penn State Altoona.

In the arts

Former Altoona resident **Shirley Goldfarb** was recently inducted into the Blair County Arts Hall of Fame, in the visual arts category.

Gregory Masurovsky accepted the honors medallion for his late wife. Shirley was a painter who lived in Paris. Her paintings are displayed worldwide.

We are pleased to announce that her works will be on display at **SAMA** in Loretto and Altoona in 2009. Her cousin, **Rebecca Schulman Cohen**, is in the process of writing Shirley's biography. We are hoping that she will review it in Altoona upon its completion.

Tikkun olam

Special thanks to all of our many children and adult volunteers who made possible the **Love Feast** on Dec. 22 at the **Simpson Church**.

This is the third year that our Jewish community has provided a holiday meal for low-income individuals in our community. We served over 150 meals, sent 50 more plates home and donated leftovers to the men's shelter.



Curtain rises on Film Festival

Four-week series begins on Feb. 21

February 21, 2008



Rape of Europa – 117 minutes, English, French German, Italian, Polish and Russian with subtitles (made in the United States) 2006. The Rape of Europa tells the epic story of the systematic theft, deliberate destruction and miraculous survival of Europe's art treasures during the Third Reich and World War II. But heroic young art historians and curators from America and across Europe fought back with a miraculous campaign to rescue and return the millions of lost, hidden and stolen treasures. In a journey through seven countries, the film takes the audience into the violent whirlwind of fanaticism, greed and warfare that threatened to wipe out the artistic heritage of Europe.

February 28, 2008

Ira and Abby – 105 minutes, English. A sweet, hilarious and slightly subversive romantic comedy that examines the issues of marriage, monogamy and whether "I do" is the only path to life-long love and happiness. Ira is brilliant, Jewish and has so many issues he can't fit them into 12 years of analysis. Abby is a free spirit and is better at solving her friend's problems than her own. When the two meet, they fall in love and decide to get married, all in a few breathless hours. And life is good for awhile, until a series of comic misadventures force the couple to rethink their strategies.



March 6, 2008



Black Book – 145 minutes, In Dutch, German, English and Hebrew with English Subtitles (Made in The Netherlands/Germany/ United Kingdom/Belgium) 2006. Paul Verhoeven, famous for such naughty treats as Showgirls and Basic Instinct, returned to his homeland to make this gripping World War II thriller about resistance to the Nazis by the Dutch in 1944. While Verhoeven never betrays his blockbuster talent for heart-pounding suspense and sexy scenarios, Black Book also presents a complex moral drama. No one – neither resistance fighter nor Nazi soldier – is ever exactly who he appears to be, hard won loyalties can be bought and sold, and heroes emerge where you least expect them.

March 13, 2008

Steel Toes – 90 minutes, English (made in Canada) 2004. Academy Award nominee David Strathairn (Good Night and Good Luck) portrays a soul-searching Jewish lawyer appointed by the court to represent a neo-Nazi skinhead on trial for the racially motivated murder of an East Indian immigrant. The lawyer is initially reluctant to stay on the case, but he is challenged by his seemingly unrepentant client and simultaneously intrigued by his own belief that there is something worth redeeming in the young man. Set in Montreal, Steel Toes takes us into the intense and fiery relationship that develops between these two men as they explore their emotional and intellectual differences.



Join us for a great dinner next door at the Heritage Discovery Center prior to the films. We'll have wine and appetizers, with dinner catered by Paula Binus and good fellowship. It's the best bargain in town with dinner at only \$10/person and films at \$3 for Federation members and free for students. Reserve your space by calling the Federation office at 515-1182 or e-mail us at altfed@atlanticbb.net.



Yale Schulman



Don and Nancy Devorris



Sandi and Chuck Kaminsky



Amy and Steve Seltzer



Larry Bloom

Honors flow for community pillars

Over the last several months, many individuals from our Jewish community have been honored for their various contributions to improving the economic, social and quality of life in our area. Yasher Koach to all of them and may they continue their good work!

Business Hall of Fame

Among the Chamber honorees this year were current businesses Kopp Drug, Puritan Cleaners, Steve Seltzer Honda and the Heritage Award to Puritan Sportswear. The theme of the honors ceremony was "Excellence Unfolding," and the Chamber said they were truly fortunate to stand in witness.

Israel bonds

On October 14, 2007, Nancy and Don Devorris were recognized for their commitment to improving the quality of life for the residents of Altoona. The tribute booklet stated "Their fingerprints can be found on every aspect of service and philanthropy in our community. They share the philosophy that it is one's responsibility to give back."

A large crowd honored them at a dinner at the Casino.

Military honor

Congressman Bill Shuster recently presented various medals to our own Yale Schulman for his service to our



Outgoing Senator Bob Jubelirer and his portrait artist, Sally Ullman, admire the commemoration presented in Harrisburg recently. Jubelirer concluded his 32-year tenure as a State Senator in 2006. He also served as President Pro Tempore for nearly 21 years, the longest in Pennsylvania history.

country 1942-45 during WWII as a member of army military police.

Schulman, who landed on Omaha Beach on DDay, spoke about "his duty to get involved." He was one of six brothers who served during the war. Yale concluded the ceremony by stating "I was raised to be thankful that I was living in a free country."

We're all thankful to Yale for all of his service to our country and community.

Portrait presented

Bob Jubelirer was honored for his service to the Commonwealth with a portrait to be hung in the Senate chambers.

He was the longest serving President Pro Tempore in PA Senate history and ably represented our area as state Senator for many years. Bob continues to work as a consultant and maintains an Altoona office.



Students step up to assist Darfur

Bishop Guilfoyle High School was the site for the Students for Darfur rally on Feb. 2.

The rally concluded a day of fasting and promoting awareness and education about the genocide currently occurring in the Darfur region of the Sudan.

Students from Hollidaysburg, Altoona and Bishop Guilfoyle planned the activities. Sudanese Lost Boy John Yak, a Penn State student, spoke about the atrocities in his home country and how thrilled he was about the efforts in Central PA to raise awareness and promote action.

The event featured speakers, rock bands and food. It raised \$10,000 that will help provide solar cookers to prevent rapes of women, who venture out of their camps to collect wood for cooking, and backpacks filled with educational and health supplies.

Individuals from our Jewish community are active with SAVE Darfur program. Allison Cohen helped organize the youth rally and Mickey Port is on the



Allison Cohen (right) helped organize the Students for Darfur Rally held early this month at Bishop Guilfoyle High School. Other student organizers included from left: John Yak, Leonard Fiore, Devon Irwin, Arianna DeReus, Emily Morris and Derek Hersey.

Central PA committee.

Our Federation and many from our group have contributed to the effort. The

green t-shirts worn by the volunteers are available for \$10. Call Allison or the Federation office.

Commonality discussions continue

By Michael Cohen

The Greater Altoona Commonality Committee, with representatives of Agudath Achim Congregation (AAC) and Temple Beth Israel (TBI), is pleased to report a tremendous amount of progress over the last 12 months.

The Commonality Committee, which began meeting in February of 2007, has been discussing areas of common concern to our reform and conservative congregation members of our community.

The initial focus of the committee was to gather demographic information about our community and explore possible future scenarios for our Jewish community based upon the information gathered. The committee also spent time gathering information about the similarities as well as the differences between Reform and Conservative Judaism.



Through monthly meetings, there has been a consensus that the decrease in the number of Jewish families and children has accelerated in the last few years and is creating significant challenges for both congregations. The members of this committee have come to understand that spirituality and people hood requires a critical mass for a functional community, and beautiful buildings and bank accounts are not the answer to responsive religious experience for our children and adults.

After gathering our demographic

information the committee explored the advantages and disadvantages of the following levels of collaboration:

- Level I** Shared Administration & Education
- Level II** Shared Administration, Education & Spiritual Leader
- Level III** Shared Administration, Education, Spiritual Leader, Building & Funds.

Collaboration seeks to bring the best out of both congregations to enhance the strength of the overall Altoona area Jewish community through commonality, while preserving and respecting the heritage, practices, traditions, beliefs and uniqueness of Reform and Conservative Judaism.

Our focus has been to explore possibilities, and our initial fact finding was

(Please see Commonality on page 9)



Smile for the camera: The



Carol Lipitz and her daughter Nicole, who was home from the University of Cincinnati.



Greg Werstil and wife Janine.



Dana Sky is flanked by Josh and Lee Port.



Dana Sky enjoys watching her Sunday school class school play. Class members are: Mandy Sky, Felicia Keenan, Ava Kline, Sophira Morris, Casey Rispoli.



Poised to light the Hannukah candles are: Namewirth, Casey Rispoli, Elliott Horv

Jewish community in focus



of first and second graders recite their lines in a
Devorris, Samantha Bilofsky, Phoebe Simon, Lucas



Genia and Peter Viner are all dressed up for Hannukah.



Ronna and Stacy Lasser. Where's Byron?



e, from left: Tyler Rispoli, Jaelynn
witz.



Burton Parish and wife Betty.

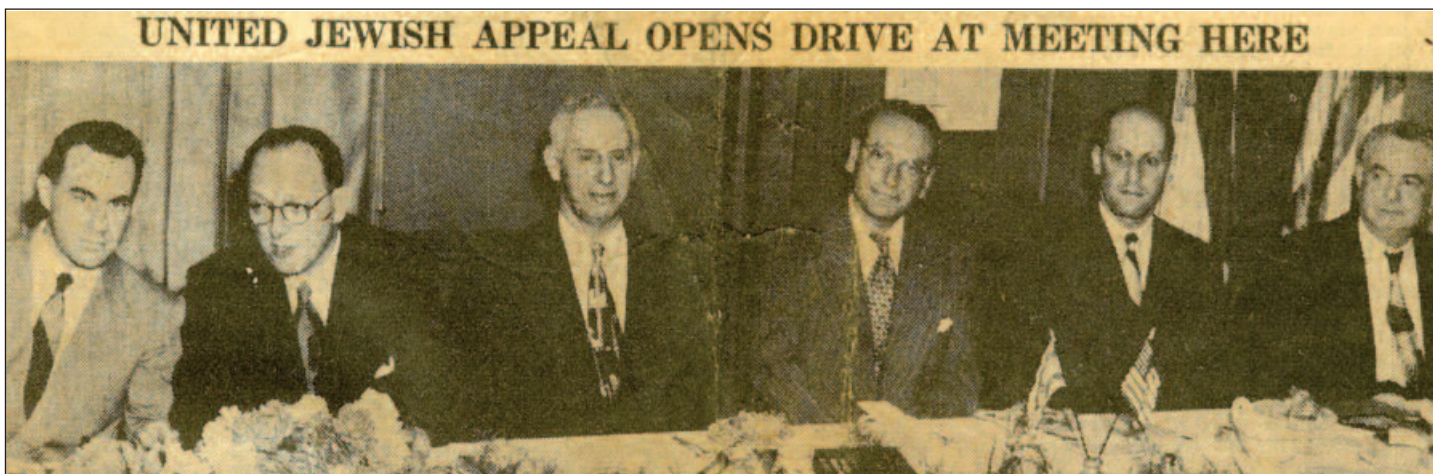


Hazaan Michael Horowitz, his wife Heidi
and their children — Elliott and Quinn.



THE WAY WE WERE

Memories...like the corners of my mind, misty, water-colored memories...of the way we were.



Prominent members of the Altoona Jewry are shown above as they were seated at the main table at the dinner held for the opening of the 1949 United Jewish Appeal for funds at the Penn Alto Hotel. Those shown, left to right are Rabbi Elihu Michaelson, Rabbi Max Schenk, principal speaker; Myer Abelson, local chairman; Frank M. Titleman, Attorney Abraham Colbus and Myer Cohn.



Some of the thespians featured in the JMC production of *Knish and Tell*, circa 1959. From left, front row – Abe Handler, Lee Goldberg. Second row – Blanche Kaminsky, Lenor Rubenstein, Florence Newman, Bernice Levinson, Roz Handler.



JMC youth basketball team from the early 1960s. From left, front row – Danny Handler, Chuck Cogan, Terry Goldstein, Jerry Binus. Second row – Eric Krivoy, Jack Snowiss. Third row – Joel Kaber, Dave Dolinger, Arnie Karp, Steve Wolfberg, Jack Titleman.



Commonality discussions continue

(Continued from page 9)

presented at a community meeting at The Casino at Lakemont Park on Sept. 6, 2007.

Over 100 members of our community were present to hear this report and each person in attendance was given the opportunity to speak and respond with a written questionnaire.

The results of the questionnaire were very similar from members of both congregations. The overwhelming majority of 82 respondents to the questionnaire felt that Commonality should be continued — 96 percent AAC and 82 percent TBI.

In addition, the majority of respondents felt that Level III is the appropriate goal of Commonality — 63 percent of the surveys from AAC members and 68 percent of the surveys from TBI members.

Following this mandate from the community to continued pursuit of Commonality, both congregations' Board of Directors have passed motions in support of the work of the Commonality Committee.

This committee has resumed its monthly meetings and is exploring ways to bring Commonality through collaboration. The committee's agenda is to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration in the following areas: programming, sisterhood, religious school, spiritual leadership, cemetery, ritual practice, buildings, Kashrut, finances and bylaws/administration.

This committee looks forward to presenting the results of our discussions to the community later this year.



Jon Kaplan and wife Stephanie



Ellen Weinberg and husband Ken Marowitz

L'CHAIM MILESTONES

Engagements

Craig Cohn, son of **Carol and Morley Cohn**, and **Sharon Puczynski**. They will be married on September 6, 2008 in Vail Colorado.

Mike Holzer, son of **Sue and Russ Holzer** and grandson of **Norma Sevel**, and **Heather Drier**. They will be married on November 1 in St. Marys, PA.

Weddings

Ellen Weinberg and **Ken Marowitz**, January 6, 2008 in Isle Marado in the Florida Keys. Ellen is the daughter of **Maxine and Henry Weinberg**.

Jonathan Kaplan and **Stephanie Martin**, September 8, 2007 in Baltimore, MD. Jon is the son of **Dr. Steve and Lynn Auerbach Kaplan**.

'08 allocations approved

Our allocations include monies from both the campaign and the Port and Petsonk endowments.

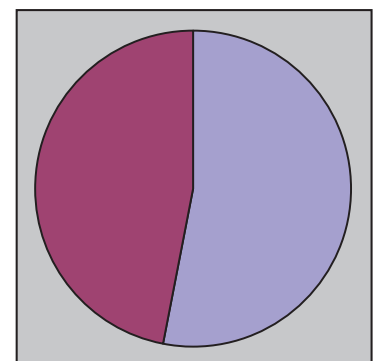
Fifty-three percent of these allocations go to programs that enhance Jewish life in the Altoona area.

They include our annual Film Festival, Jewish camps, Interfaith activities, the newsletter, programs for outreach to local colleges and others.

This year we began funding SAVE Darfur Central PA, Birthright Israel and Penn State Hillel.

Forty-seven percent of our funding goes to programs overseas that help sustain Jewish lives that are at risk.

This includes funding for the Joint Distribution Committee and Agency for



Israel. These programs help serve over 250,000 poor and elderly Jews in Russia as well as promote immigration to Israel. The programs truly save Jewish lives.

Campaign 2007 update

Annual campaign – our income

Total Pledges	\$184,881.94
Total Contributors	141
New Members/Contributors	14
Increased Pledges	37

Our 2007 campaign concluded in December with total pledges of \$184,881.94, which represents about a \$3,000 increase over 2006. Thanks to you, the 141 contributors, for making our campaign a success.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar. 21	Purim
Apr. 4	Joint Confirmation at TBI
Apr. 5	Joint Confirmation at AAC
Apr. 13	3rd Annual Family Spaghetti dinner
Apr. 19	Passover: 1st Seder
April 20	Passover: Community Seder, TBI sponsored
Apr. 30	Yom Ha Shoah program
May 1	Holocaust Memorial Day
May 4	Israel Independence Day Celebration
May 8	Yom HaAlzmaut
Jun. 8	Erev Shavuot
Jun. 9-10	Shavuot
Aug. 10	Tisha B'Av
Sept. 29	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Sept. 30	Rosh Hashanah – 1st day
Oct. 1	Rosh Hashanah – 2nd day
Oct. 8	Kol Nidrei
Oct. 9	Yom Kippur

Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah

May 3	Noah Scheinberg Bar Mitzvah 9:30 a.m. AAC
May 24	Ginger Glass Bat Mitzvah 9:30 a.m. AAC
Jun. 21	Ian Bilofsky Bar Mitzvah 9:30 a.m. AAC
Aug. 30	Carly Port Bat Mitzvah 9:30 a.m. AAC

L'Chaim!

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Articles should be submitted to the
Federation at 515-1182

or e-mailed to altfed@atlanticbb.net
Suggestions and feedback are welcome.

We remember them...

*So long as we live, they too shall live,
for they are now part of us, as we remember them.*

Dr. Herbert M. Kusner

Herbert Kusner, age 95, died on October 30, 2007 at the Presbyterian Home in Hollidaysburg.

He was proud to be the oldest member of Agudath Achim Congregation where he had been a loyal minyonaire for many years. He had his own seat in the chapel and a foot stool with "Dr. Herbie" printed on it. Others at services knew he was there as he frequently asked in a voice above a whisper, "what page are we on?" and "can't someone turn up the heat?"

Doc was a native of Patton who later graduated from St. Francis and Temple Dental School. He was a well respected dentist in Altoona for 56 years.

He married the love of his life, Lee Stoop in 1940. They had been married for 50 years when she passed away in 1990. He was a member of the Army Air Corp during WWII, where he attained the rank of Major and served as a medical officer.

Doc was a member of both Agudath Achim Congregation and Temple Beth Israel. He is survived by 2 nephews, Dave Brooks of Altoona and Dr. Lawrence Phillips of Atlanta, GA.

Sandra Nederlander Weber

Sandy Weber, age 50, died on November 10, 2007 in Pittsburgh after a long and courageous struggle with cancer.

She was born in Windber, the daughter of Nevin and Esther Thaler Nederlander and sister of Renee. Sandy lived most of her life in Altoona, graduating from Altoona High and Penn State Altoona.

She was married to Thomas Weber Jr. and together they had two children, Lindsey and Tommy. She loved spending time with her family and enjoyed sports, music and traveling. During her career, Sandy worked for Weis Markets, Altoona Hospital and Phonepower. She is sorely missed by her mother, sister Renee Marks, children and the entire Thaler/Seltzer family.

Seymour "Sy" Greenwald

Sy Greenwald, age 83, died on December 19, 2007. Sy was born in the Bronx, New York City in 1924, grew up in Long Island and graduated from Dewitt Clinton High School, while helping his parents in their dry cleaning business. He joined the Army Air Force following graduation and served as an aerial photographer, responsible for the cameras on the B17 bombers.

Sy returned to New York after the war where he met and married Carol Millard in 1947. They were married for 57 years and together raised two sons, Daniel and Arthur. The family moved to Altoona in 1960 where Sy worked with his brother-in-law, Abe Handler's clothing manufacturing business. They were members of Agudath Achim Congregation and active in the JMC, especially in the bowling leagues.

In his later years, Sy worked as a driver for the Skills Group and was devoted to the disabled adults and children. He also volunteered with Meals on Wheels. When Carol died in 2004, Sy moved to Washington State where he resided with his son Dan. He is survived and missed by his sons and their families and by his niece, Andy Grimsley and nephew, Danny Handler.

Condolences to

Lynn Kaplan and family on the death of her mother **Minerva Auerbach**

Sara Brozgal on the death of her brother **Sol Novey**

Esther Scheinberg and the whole Scheinberg family on the death of Esther's mother, **Bernice Lapin**.

Jeanne Heinbaugh and family on the death of her son, **John Gregory (Greg) Miller**

Gerry Bergstein and family on the death of his sister, **Ann Bergstein Siegel**



Among the group pictured from EKC 2007 are Altoona Jewish community members Annie Schneider, Alex Schmidt, Erica Schmidt, Emily Knepp and Ethan Knepp.

Federation supports summer camps

Now is the time to make plans for children and teens for camp this summer. National research has confirmed that one of the best ways to develop a solid Jewish identity is for kids to attend a Jewish summer camp.

Many of our children have gone to Emma Kaufmann, Ramah, Harlem and B'nai B'rith camps and have made lasting friendships and great memories.

Our Federation has made Jewish camp experience a priority and since 1995 have helped dozens of our youth attend the Jewish camp of their choice. Both Sisterhoods also help with funding.

Applications for financial assistance are due by March 1. Spaces are filling up quickly so call the Federation office for details.

**E-mail your stories and photos for the next
L'Chaim issue to: altfed@atlanticbb.net**



The Greater Altoona Jewish Federation
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Winter 2008 edition

L'Chaim!



**Come to
the Purim
Carnival
Sunday,
March 16
from 10 a.m.
to noon at
the JMC.**

