



The

Greater Altoona Jewish Community News

Sponsored by the Altoona Federation of Jewish Philanthropies—Edition No. 1—Summer 1999—Av 5759

Annual Drive Nears Goal

by Reva Dotan

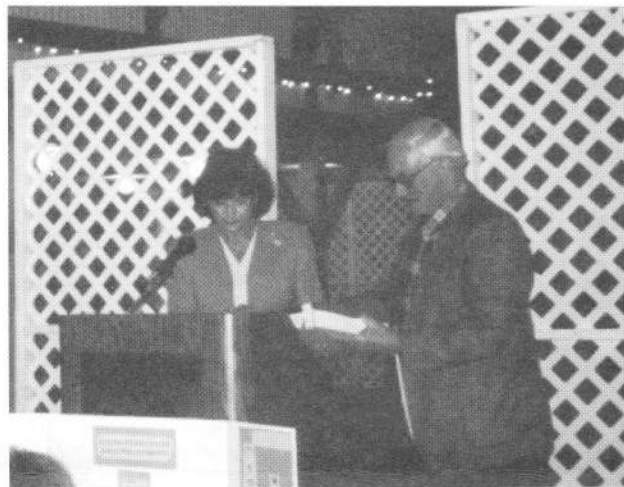
“Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh LaZeh.”

All Jews are responsible for one another. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Greater Altoona Community for participating in our 1999-2000 Campaign. Your contribution enables our Federation to provide financially more services to our community as well as Jews in over sixty countries and in Israel.

Throughout our community's history, the Federation has guaranteed the privacy and dignity of those in need as well as the successful growth and maintenance of our communal allocations such as the Community Sunday School, Jewish Memorial Center, Y.E.S. Scholarships, Celebrate Diversity, Passport, and the Adult Social Club.

Your gift to this year's campaign is indeed a noble expression of devotion to the entire Jewish people. It demonstrates a love of community which is without limitations, a proud statement of commitment to our individual community and to every individual Jew.

I thank you for the honor to serve our community as the Campaign Director. I am extremely proud of the contributions and pledges we have received and I am confident we will reach our goal of \$185,000 by August 31st.



Mickey Port presents gift to outgoing president, Bill Wallen

Vision Becomes Reality

by Bill Wallen

After several years of talking about a need to have a newsletter where we can share terrific events that are occurring in the Greater Altoona Jewish Community—here it is.

In it we will both preview upcoming Federation sponsored and other community-wide events and report on recent programs and activities. We will also recognize members of our community for special achievements and accomplishments. Articles and pictures will highlight such programs as: camping experiences of our children through the Y.E.S. program, trips to Israel through Passport, journeying to the Holocaust Museum with the CDC group, Sunday School special events, Adult Social Club activities, and many more events.

We will include items on Federation activities throughout the world where our contributions helped to save Jewish lives, protect the vulnerable and enrich Jewish life.

Help us make this newsletter a success—call Reva or Laura at the Federation office with ideas, pictures, and quotes. Let's showcase our fine programs and activities—let's “qvell” a little.

Word from Our Presidents

Federation Gavel Passed

by Mickey Port

I am so pleased to offer greetings from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies through our first newsletter. This periodical is the creative vision of our previous



President, Bill Wallen. Both Reva Dotan and Laura Scheinberg have undertaken this idea and produced a great vehicle of information covering many activities within the Jewish community of greater Altoona.

As incoming President, I am pleased to be working with a Board of Directors both new and old to the Federation. It will be important to continue to support those activities of the Federation which have been successful under the guidance of Bill Wallen. I also look forward to new and innovative ideas and suggestions for new programs that would meet the needs of our community and of Israel.

Under the leadership and nudging of Reva and the many people who assist her, we are completing the most successful campaign we have had in years.

I am excited to bring the Federation into the new millennium. Please join us by being a part of our Jewish community. Feel free to offer any ideas and/or critique our efforts, but most of all, help us be successful by participating in our organization. Shalom and Thank You.

Federation Board

President:

Mickey Port

Vice President: Judi Sue Meisner

Vice President: Ronna Lasser

Vice President: Dr. Joel Younger

Secretary: Neil Rudel

Treasurer: Stephen Port

Federation Staff:

Reva Dotan

Laura Scheinberg

Helen Magill

Cohen Urges Unity

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Agudath Achim Congregation I would like to congratulate the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies for its continuing efforts to vitalize and unify our Jewish community. This inaugural newsletter will be a valuable resource for providing the timely information we need to remain an active and participating community.



Cohen

While there are various Jewish organizations in our community, the Federation plays a vital role in representing all Jews in our local and worldwide interests. As I have reflected upon Judaism and my Jewish identity I have found that the purpose of religion is to put people in touch with each other just as much as it puts people in touch with God. This newsletter furthers this goal as we celebrate our lifecycle events and plan programs to better understand our responsibilities as Jews on this earth.

Our community is a microcosm of the Jewish people. We are small in number but large in good deeds. Divided we can all live our lives but only united can we transcend isolation by being a part of a greater whole. I encourage you to be involved. It will be its own reward. Let us continue to be a light unto all nations, I'dor v'dor.

Michael L. Cohen
President, Agudath Achim Congregation

Gurman: Communication is Key

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to participate in this inaugural newsletter and I wish the project well. I hope that these pages become a forum for discussion of items that affect our community in both positive and negative ways.



Gurman

To start with, I would like to solicit ideas about how the Federation and the two congregations can better communicate and share in each other's special events. It has always struck me as disappointing when I attend a function and find the attendance is not representative of the entire community. We are too small a group not to include each other and support one another! Here's to K'lal Altoona!

Best wishes to one and all for a happy healthy new year.

Andy Gurman
President, Temple Beth Israel

New American Program Grows to 34

by Phyllis Port

The Soviet Jewry movement in America was and still is "an extraordinary series of events that culminated in the taking out of 1.3 million Jews from the Soviet Union." It is one of the great exoduses of the historical Jewish experience and not just the 20th century. "American Jews could not rescue the Jews of Europe during World War II and they carried that sense of guilt...it motivated them not to fail a second time."

Our Altoona Jewish Community proudly has had and continues to have a share in the rescue and resettlement movement. This commitment partners with world Jewry to financially support resettlement efforts to Israel. Since May 1990 our Federation has been actively welcoming new Americans to this community. It all began with the Aryev and Belenitsky families. Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) called: we responded - with heart and energy and time and monies and friendship, tutoring, employment and housing, and all that is required to make "family" feel at home.

And they kept coming and we kept doing what Jews historically do—take care of their own. In giving we receive. Certainly in the scope of 1.3 million, 34 is a relatively small number. But for our community and for these people, it made and continues to make all the difference in their lives and in ours.

There were many citizenship ceremonies, high school and college graduations, b'nai mitzvot, confirmation milestones along with the everyday excitement of getting a job, earning good grades and winning awards, buying a car, a



Children at Camp Ramah with Adele Giller (second from left) and Reva Dotan (third from right). At right is Eugene Belinitsky, one of the new Americans.

house, sharing a meal and a life—all part of the fabric of the American dream. All reaffirming the good work and purpose of Federation and our community.

What a magnificent human drama! It's happening in Jewish communities all across this country and in Israel. Federation largely enables it to happen. We empower Federation with our contributions to make it happen, magnificently, and here. Each one of us has the opportunity to put his/her signature on this story to reaffirm this chapter ONE PEOPLE and our commitment to TIKKUN OLAM repairing the world.

Thank you for helping out. We don't have to change our lives to help out...but helping out has changed our lives.

A Gift of Kindness

by Laura Scheinberg

Daniel Holzer, son of Russell and Sue Holzer of Altoona, recently completed an innovative mitzvah project. Of the three synagogues in Sacramento, CA that were damaged by firebombs in early June, Temple B'Nai Israel received the most damage. It completely destroyed their library which housed over 5,000 volumes. Daniel made contact with the congregation from Temple B'Nai Israel and they told Daniel that they would willingly accept any contributions. The following is a letter that Daniel wrote and sent along with his donation to Temple B'Nai Israel.

Dear Congregation of Temple B'Nai Israel,

I am sorry to hear about the fire. I hope these children's books will help rebuild your once-grand library. I recently became a Bar Mitzvah and hadn't done much for my charity project. Then I attended my cousin's Bar Mitzvah and heard about the fire and decided to get involved. I hope you enjoy the books and I wish you lots of good luck getting started again.

*Sincerely,
Daniel Holzer*



Daniel Holzer

Concerns Raised Over Project Ten Commandments

by Rabbi Burt E. Schuman

At a meeting of the Altoona Area School Board on Monday May 17th Pastor Gary Dull, of the Faith Baptist Church in Altoona, called upon the School Board to adopt Project Ten Commandments. Such a resolution would require a posting of the Ten Commandments in every classroom within the Altoona Area School District, distribute bookmarks inscribed with the Ten Commandments, and organize "voluntary" courses devoted to this topic. Based upon his presentation, it was assumed by Pastor Dull and his supporters that such a proposal would brook no significant local opposition, and that "a vote for Project Ten Commandments is a vote for everything that is decent and moral in society."



With a rather high degree of trepidation, and serious concerns about how the Altoona Area School Board would respond, I took the floor in opposition to the project; opposition which was shared by the Board of the Altoona Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, as well as countless others in the interfaith community. The points raised in the presentation were as follows:

1. Such a proposal would constitute a serious breach of the wall of separation between religion and state, open the door for the other sectarian religious activities in the classroom.
2. Project Ten Commandments sets back the cause of multi-culturalism and respect for diversity, by imposing a Judeo-Christian Biblical text on students of other religious traditions, as well as those without any religious affiliation.
3. To post the Ten Commandments in the classroom in this manner would remove this passage from its sacred and covenantal context, and cheapen its meaning for political purposes.
4. Project Ten Commandments would place children of religious minorities—including our own—at risk by setting them apart from the dominant Christian majority.
5. More effective means exist for teaching and practicing ethics and morality in the classroom without resorting to sectarian methods.

In response to this issue, The Altoona Federation of Jewish Philanthropies has helped to mobilize opposition to this proposal by organizing a letter writing campaign working with allied organizations such as the Interfaith Committee and the YWCA, and meeting with Dr. Dennis Murray, Solicitor David Andrews, and members of the Altoona Area School Board.

We urge you each and every member of the Greater Altoona Jewish Community to make their voices heard on this issue.



There were smiles all around at the last meeting of the Adult Social Club held in July at Park Hills Country Club. From left: James & Audrey Rosenthal, Helen & Jack Edelman. In back: Saul Paikin.

A Country of Beauty and Passion A Network Mission to Israel

March 26, 2000
Pre mission—Turkey
Post mission—Petra

*Interested? Call the Federation office
for further details
944-4072*

The Federation Newsletter gratefully acknowledges:



High Holiday Message 5760

by Rabbi Gary Atkins

We will be spending many hours in our sanctuaries during the coming Days of Awe. As you prepare for services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, please consider the following advice that I call "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Jews."

1. **Quality not quantity.** You don't have to say all the words to every prayer. You don't have to be on the same pages as the rest of the congregation all the time. You don't have to be as fast as the person who is leading the service. It's true — you don't want to say the Shema during Kol Nidre, but do linger over the words that affect you. Say fewer words, but say them with real kavvanah, sincere and deep intention.
2. **Travel light.** You are starting a new year. Just as you leave your briefcase at home, can you also stop carrying around your grudges, envy and hatred? It is much easier to stand, and sit during services without those weights dragging you down. The New Year is a time for reconciliation.
3. **Say your prayers.** The emphasis here is on "your." The words in the Machzor are the poetic masterpieces of Jewish life. However, the words that only you can say are even dear to God. There are many times during our services when we speak silently to God. Don't miss those opportunities to pray words only you can utter. Remember God understands English too.
4. **Take advantage of your assets.** Think of what is in your hands—the Machzor. Make that holiday prayer book yours. Chant and say the Hebrew, if you can. If you don't understand Hebrew, read the English. The translations are beautiful and by looking at the additional readings in the back of the Machzor you can carry on a conversation with the themes of the holiday.
5. **Count your change before leaving.** Reflect on the process of change and how gradual it is. The essence of the holidays is the ability of each of us to contemplate our actions during the past year and resolve to change in the future.
6. **Take your time.** Remember that it takes time for the full impact of the services to be felt. Don't rush in and out too quickly. Let the mood sink in. As we move from one prayer to the next, review the words you just read or sang. Think of how they apply to your life.
7. **Don't delegate responsibility.** In the work place it is wise to have others work on your projects, but only you can do teshuvah, repentance. Don't expect your rabbi to be able to take your place. Examine your life thoroughly during our services. It's your responsibility.

I know that the above habits may not be as easy as they sound but I pray they will become part of your Holy Days this year.



What's in a Name?

by Neil Rudel

What's in a name?

That's what we would like to know.

The Altoona Federation of Jewish Philanthropies has been trying to create a newsletter, like the one you're reading, for some time. Now, thankfully, we have our newsletter. What we are seeking is an identity. That's where you come in. We're hoping this issue of The Greater Altoona Jewish Community News is only a temporary name. Before the next issue is published over the winter (plans call for three or four issues a year), we'd like to conduct a fun contest soliciting names for the newsletter.

Please send them to:
Federation of Jewish Philanthropies Newsletter Contest
1308 17th Street, Altoona, PA
16601

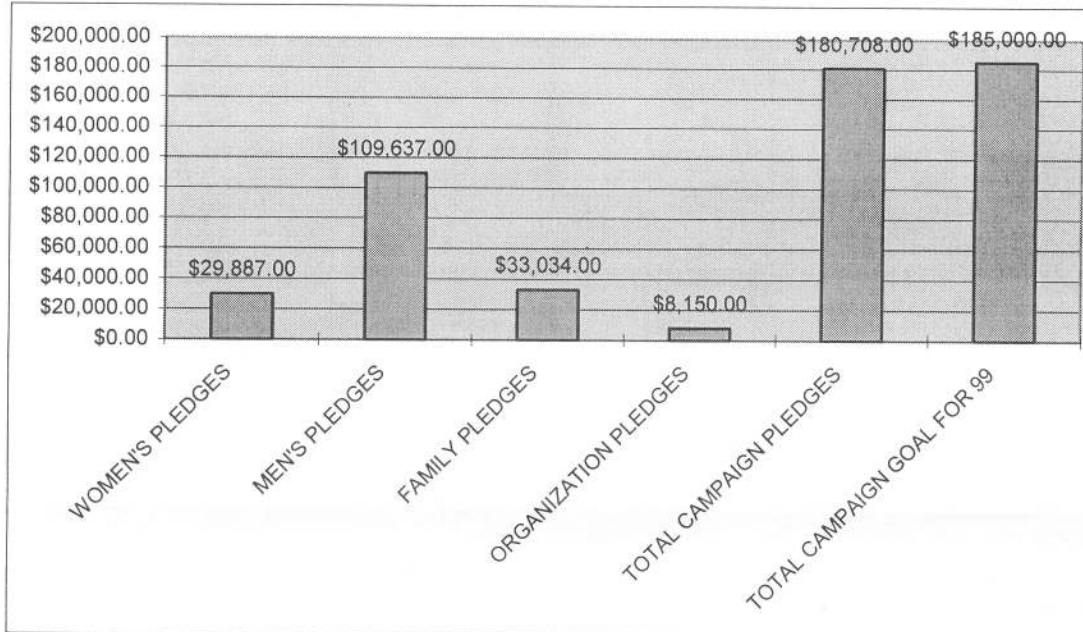
Jewish people have always been known for their wit and creativity so the Federation staff is expecting to have a tough selection. Also, anyone wishing to contribute items to the newsletter is encouraged to send them to the Federation's above address. News can include anything from family tidbits to someone willing to expound on a subject of Jewish interest.

For more information, call
Laura Scheinberg @ 944-4072
or e-mail to scupe@aol.com

1999 CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

1999 Pledges	
WOMEN'S PLEDGES	\$29,887.00
MEN'S PLEDGES	\$109,637.00
FAMILY PLEDGES	\$33,034.00
ORGANIZATION PLEDGES	\$8,150.00
TOTAL CAMPAIGN PLEDGES	\$180,708.00
TOTAL CAMPAIGN GOAL FOR 99	\$185,000.00

	Women	Men	Family	Organizations	Totals
TOTAL NEW DONORS	21	17	12	1	51
TOTAL INCREASED GIFTS	46	43	25	1	157
TOTAL INCREASED GIVING	\$7,644.00	\$9,757.00	\$3,882.00	\$50.00	\$21,333.00



A POEM FROM THE SKY

written by Roz Sky

Maybe summer's kept you busy,
you didn't write the check.

Or maybe you forget one
little person—what the heck?

But we want you to know
every little bit does count,

We'll accept your contribution
in any amount.

We're so close, but yet so far,
please won't you help him reach the
star?



A keepsake as beautiful as your tzedekah

There is a lovely and meaningful way to celebrate a simcha honor, a loved one's memory, or send heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery.

When you pay tribute to someone with a contribution to the Altoona Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, we will commemorate the gift by sending a personalized, beautifully rendered parchment certificate. Three distinctive new designs have been created, and one of them is sure to be appropriate for any occasion.

Memorials should be sent to the Federation office at 1308 Seventeenth Street, Altoona,

A Timeless Tradition of Mitzvot

Bar/Bat Mitzvahs 1999-2001

1999

May 15	Brandon Bauders	(TEMPLE)
May 29	Ian Housman	(SYNAGOGUE)
June 5	Daniel Holzer	(TEMPLE)
June 12	Caitlin Rosenthal	(TEMPLE)
June 19	Ricky Rosenthal	(SYNAGOGUE)
August 28	Brian Thaler	(SYNAGOGUE)
October 23	Jason Clayton	(TEMPLE)

2000

April 1	Erin Allen	(TEMPLE)
April 15	Andrew Mathias	(TEMPLE)
May 6	David Kivitz	(TEMPLE)
May 6	Matthew Kivitz	(TEMPLE)
June 3	Annie Schneider	(SYNAGOGUE)
October 28	Jonathan Levin	(TEMPLE)
November 11	Emily Benjamin	(TEMPLE)

2001

April 21	Bobby Lebendig	(TEMPLE)
April 28	Rani Pimentel	(TEMPLE)
May 5	Jennifer Weiss	(TEMPLE)
May 12	Kara Schmidt	(SYNAGOGUE)
May 19	Jacob Gordan	(TEMPLE)
June 9	Kevin Thaler	(SYNAGOGUE)
September 1	Rachael Arlick	(SYNAGOGUE)

WANTED 12 YEAR OLDS

The Network UJA Partnership 2000 Program, who has linked our Altoona Federation up with the city of Dimona, Israel, is looking for 8-12 year olds who would like to have e-mail pen pals in Israel.

Call the Federation Office to receive an e-mail address of your pen-pal@ 944-4072.

Final Bar Mitzvahs of This Century

BRIAN LEE THALER

Bar Mitzvah
August 28th, 1999

Brian Lee Thaler, son of Eric M. Thaler and Sherry L. Thaler will celebrate his Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, August 28th at Agudath Achim Congregation.

Brian will lead Saturday morning services and chant his Haftorah. His brother Kevin and cousins Andrea and Adam Seltzer and Brittany and Mark Thaler will also participate in the service.

Brian will be in 7th grade at Roosevelt Jr. High School this fall. He loves baseball, golfing, tennis and fishing.

For his mitzvah project Brian is going to be volunteering at the Blair County Humane Society. He loves animals and is looking forward to this experience. He is planning on continuing his volunteer work each summer.



JASON CLAYTON

Bar Mitzvah
October 2, 1999

My name is Jason Clayton. I am fifteen years old and I attend Hollidaysburg St. High. I am in tenth grade. I play the trombone and I'm currently included in the Main-stream Jazz Band, the wind ensemble, marching band and the orchestra in my high school. I am ranked as an advanced Brown Belt and I am set up for a Black Belt test at the end of the summer. I converted to Judaism in December of 1998 and I'm having my Bar Mitzvah this October. My parents are Michael and Lynn Rosen. I have a six year-old sister named Haley and we attend Temple Beth Israel.





The 1998-1999 Altoona Community Sunday School mugged for the camera on the last day.

Altoona Federation of
Jewish Philanthropies
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Altoona, PA 16601

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