

L'Chaim is the quarterly newsletter of Congregation Etz Chaim, Inc.
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and Robert Wiener Charitable Foundation



לחיים

L'CHAIM

in
this
ISSUE

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SUMMER 2011 · ISSUE 04

June is Pride Month! Celebrations all over the country include this proclamation from President Obama

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
A PROCLAMATION

The story of America's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community is the story of our fathers and sons, our mothers and daughters, and our friends and neighbors who continue the task of making our country a more perfect Union. It is a story about the struggle to realize the great American promise that all people can live with dignity and fairness under the law. Each June, we commemorate the courageous individuals who have fought to achieve this promise for LGBT Americans, and we rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Since taking office, my Administration has made significant progress towards achieving equality for LGBT Americans. Last December, I was proud to sign the repeal of the discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. With this repeal, gay and lesbian Americans will be able to serve openly in our Armed Forces for the first time in our Nation's history. Our national security will be strengthened and the heroic contributions these Americans make to our military, and have made throughout our history, will be fully recognized. **Continued on Page 3**

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CONGREGATION
ETZ CHAIM

Congregation Etz Chaim thanks all those who have contributed to our Chai Society and Habonim Fund campaigns this past year. These annual donations, often significantly surpassing regular membership dues, provide an important financial foundation for our unique community. When so many organizations are

feeling the continued crunch of difficult economic times, it is particularly admirable that these contributors found the means to support our organization with their generous donations. They recognized the significance of Congregation Etz Chaim and committed themselves to help allow it to continue its important work.

President's Message

From the desk of David Yalen,
President of Congregation Etz Chaim

Here is what I am most proud of as I begin my 2nd year as your President. Please help me make the next 12 months as exciting and rewarding as the past 12 months have been. Our proudest accomplishments :

The way our volunteer board of directors has pulled together, especially in the last 6 months since we started to fill all of our positions. Board growth and development will be a key goal for this coming year.

The growth and spirit that Rabbi Noah Kitty has brought to her job as Executive Director. Being the first such professional staff person in our 36 year history, she has had to invent the way forward to meld all the different pieces that being the Director of this organization entails. On top of all that she leads services every Friday and attends too many of the community duties that being a Rabbi entails even though her official job is that of Executive Director.

The changes we have been strong enough to make this year even though some of them meant going forward without some of our key former members. Nothing grows by being stagnant and we made the tough choices both financial and spiritual that needed to be made for the very existence of the organization to continue. Our new found openness and transparency, even examining our very existence was achieved during our many community town halls. Because you voted so, we will continue as a primarily LGBTQ Jewish organization even as the definition of what that means evolves and changes as we go forward.

Finally our commitment to our sacred worship space.

The Jay Frier Sanctuary that we have called home for 7 years: with a lease renewal voted by our members and confirmed by our board, we will be here at least 2 more years (at a major reduction in rental costs). Also, our recent partnership with The Metaphysical Chapel has given us further fiscal stability as we enter a key rebuilding and rebranding year in 2011-2012.

None of this will be easy or quick. A large majority of our members voted last November and again in December to stay the course as a primarily LGBTQ congregation (along with our straight friends and neighbors). However, a lot of those people who voted to do so are not in a position to lend significant financial support for the costs needed to bring about the needed programs and services. Therefore we must grow the size of the congregation by reaching out to previous members and show newcomers to our community that we are a welcoming and nurturing group who are leading the way for change in the Jewish/LGBTQ community. We have an exciting year of changes and new attitudes.

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C & M

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PRESIDENT - CEO

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Membership

It's Time to RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Not a Member Yet?



MEMBERSHIP

Renew your membership now and know that you'll be all set for the exciting New Year at Etz Chaim. We've had many changes this past year, and are enthusiastically anticipating our many new, revised, and continuing programs and events currently being planned that will elevate, entertain, and support all of our loyal members and friends. Etz Chaim is a truly unique community. Our emphasis on diversity creates a warm and welcoming environment for all. Not a member? - why not consider joining! To renew or join for the first time, please go to www.livingthechailife.org or contact the office for a paper form.

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION OF PRIDE MONTH (continued from Cover Page)

My Administration has also taken steps to eliminate discrimination against LGBT Americans in Federal housing programs and to give LGBT Americans the right to visit their loved ones in the hospital. We have made clear through executive branch nondiscrimination policies that discrimination on the basis of gender identity in the Federal workplace will not be tolerated. I have continued to nominate and appoint highly qualified, openly LGBT individuals to executive branch and judicial positions. Because we recognize that LGBT rights are human rights, my Administration stands with advocates of equality around the world in leading the fight against pernicious laws targeting LGBT persons and malicious attempts to exclude LGBT organizations from full participation in the international system. We led a global campaign to ensure "sexual orientation" was included in the United Nations resolution on extrajudicial execution -- the only United Nations resolution that specifically mentions LGBT people -- to send the unequivocal message that no matter where it occurs, state-sanctioned killing of gays and lesbians is indefensible. No one should be harmed because of who they are or who they love, and my Administration has mobilized unprecedented public commitments from countries around the world to join in the fight against hate and homophobia.

At home, we are working to address and eliminate violence against LGBT individuals through our enforcement and implementation of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. We are also working to reduce the threat of bullying against young people, including LGBT youth. My Administration is actively engaged with educators and community leaders across America to reduce violence and discrimination in schools. To help dispel the myth that bullying is a harmless or inevitable part of growing up, the First Lady and I hosted the first White House Conference on Bullying Prevention in March. Many senior Administration officials have also joined me in reaching out to LGBT youth who have been bullied by recording "It Gets Better" video messages to assure them they are not alone.

This month also marks the 30th anniversary of the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has had a profound impact on the LGBT community. Though we have made strides in combatting this devastating disease, more work remains to be done, and I am committed to expanding access to HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

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SUMMER 2011 CALENDAR

june

FRI 3	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM	TUES 7	Meeting: Board of Directors 6:30 PM	FRI 10	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM	FRI 17	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM
WED 22	Introduction to Jewish Meditation 7:30 PM	FRI 24	TORAH Service 8:00 PM				

july

FRI 1	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM	TUES 5	Meeting: Board of Directors 6:30 PM	FRI 8	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM	FRI 15	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM
FRI 22	TORAH Service 8:00 PM	WED 27	Introduction to Jewish Meditation 7:30 PM	FRI 29	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM		

august

TUE 2	Meeting: Board of Directors 6:30 PM	FRI 5	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM	FRI 12	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM	FRI 19	Shabbat Service 8:00 PM
				The Board of Directors is delighted to announce that once again this year we will be returning to Temple Bat Yam for High Holiday services. Erev Rosh Hashanah is Wednesday, September 28th, Rosh Hashanah is Thursday, September 29th, Kol Nidre is Friday, October 7th, and Yom Kippur is Saturday, October 8th.			
WED 24	Introduction to Jewish Meditation 7:30 PM	FRI 26	TORAH Service 8:00 PM				

L'CHAIM NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Editor: Rabbi Noah Kitty

Advertising Director: Richard Appelbaum

Please forward all correspondence and / or advertising requests to:
 Congregation Etz Chaim, 1881 NE 26th St., Suite 100, Wilton Manors, FL 33305,
 Attn: L'Chaim - Telephone: 954-564-9262 - Email: congregation@etz-chaim.com
www.etzchaimflorida.org

Shabbat services are held every Friday night at 8pm at the synagogue:
 1881 NE 26th St., The Wilton Plaza (between Federal Highway and Dixie Highway),
 Wilton Manors, FL 33305

The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Officers, Board of Directors, staff, members, or advertisers.

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Hazzan:

Jerry Berkowitz



ARE WE A REFORM JEWISH SYNAGOGUE?

By David Yalen, President of Etz Chaim.

From the late 1970s to a few years ago, CEC was a proud and active member of the national Reform Jewish movement. We were one of the first Gay and Lesbian synagogues officially recognized and invited to be members of the Reform movement (now known as the URJ).

At the time we first joined the Union, membership to any other branch of Judaism was closed to us because of our LGBT status. It was a different time and a different place. We are honored to have been trailblazers in the movement and we are appreciative that the leadership of the Reform movement let us join. I am sure some of their members at the time were not happy with openly gay and lesbian Jews being part of their movement.

But at CEC, many members were not really connected to Reform Judaism. Many grew up in Conservative or even Orthodox households and went to a very traditional type of Hebrew and religious schools. For them joining a Reform synagogue was foreign and not their first choice. But because CEC was (and is) primarily an LGBT “family” it felt right for them regardless of which denomination the synagogue as a whole belonged.

Over the years CEC outgrew the attachment and need to belong to any one national Jewish movement. Also the annual cost of dues to the Union were quite high, about \$10,000 per year. As our finances dipped over the last 3 to 4 years it became clear that regardless of our past history with the Union, we could not afford to continue. Additionally many people on our Board of Directors felt that we were short changing ourselves by belonging to any one movement, as the Jewish LGBTQ members came from so many “stripes” of the Jewish rainbow. In 2007, your elected Board told the URJ that we could not pay our bills anymore and they could take us off their list of members if they wanted. They kept us on their membership list, and they continued to charge us the membership fee; as of today they claim we owe them over \$33,000.

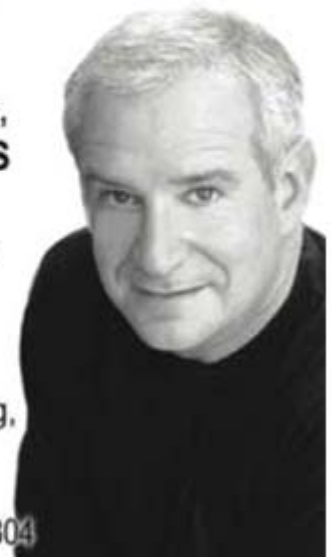
As our restructuring phase at CEC continues, your Board will continue to discuss this issue internally, and bring up for a vote with our entire membership what the final outcome should be going forward. Of course the outcome involves a financial as well as a spiritual discussion. As a congregation, we are an amalgam of religious backgrounds and as such we need to welcome everyone into our tent, not just

Continued on Page 6

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Zie Gesundt

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BIRTHDAYS

June

Dr. Murray Lichtenstein	6/7	Michael Greenspan	7/21
Eduardo Garcia	6/8	Dan Friedman	7/30
Stephanie R. Steinberg	6/11	Lawrence Lewis	7/30
Wayne M. Segal	6/18		
Bruce Borger	6/19	Benjamin Goldberg	8/1
Daniel Smits	6/21	Charles Rube	8/5
Harvey Herman	6/22	Paula Glozer	8/8
Joseph Pallant	6/26	Ellen Slavin	8/8
Noah Kitty	6/30	Sherwin Goldman	8/19

July

Daniel Friedkin	7/1	David Vogel	8/20
Dr. Frank Ploener	7/8	Yale Eisenberg	8/20
Dr. William Fern	7/10	Stuart Stone	8/21
Timothy J. Kuehne	7/10	Lee Rubin	8/23
Rev. John Bliss	7/11	Joel Glass	8/23
		Dr. Melvin Hankin	8/26
		Jeffrey Gross	8/30

YAHARZEITS WITH PLAQUES

June

Peter G. Bodiford	6/3	Harry Hankin	7/18
Charles Charens	6/4	Dr. Lawrence Tublin	7/18
Annette Rittmaster	6/15	Roslyn Essig	7/21
David Langer	6/18	Meyer Cooperberg	7/31

Jackie Naismith

Rena Jess	6/19	Benedict Kuehne	8/1
Hyman Weber	6/23	Maurice Yalen	8/3
		Irving Cooperberg	8/18

July

Samuel Becker	7/5	Sherry Greenspan Perchik	8/22
Mary Rosenberg	7/13	Helen Tommie Bailey	8/25
Myron Jack Greenberg	7/15	Leah Becker	8/27

ANNIVERSARIES

June

Barry Bates & Dr. Melvin Hankin	6/1	17th anniversary
William Becker & Gerald Lapan	6/6	37th anniversary
Michael Greenspan & Jesse Monteaugudo	6/6	26th anniversary
Charles Rube & Eduardo Garcia	6/8	2nd anniversary
Sharon & Joseph Kaboff	6/10	46th anniversary

July

Sy Robin & Chuck Roeder	7/4	34th anniversary
Wayne Lampert & Ricardo Bustamante IV	7/9	15th anniversary
Howard Cheiken & Daniel Smits	7/23	23rd anniversary

August

Dr. Murray Lichtenstein & Paul Guzzardo	8/3	37th anniversary
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President's Message

(continued from Page 2)

Additionally we must continue to seek out additional funding sources, both by increasing the size of our Chai Society and Habonim Fund members as well as from well meaning "friends of Etz Chaim." We can no longer rely on five or six well meaning and wealthy members and families to pay our bills. We all have to take financial responsibility for the CEC that we all want to have. One way for everyone to help, is to join our "Kenneth Burnell Legacy Society", a group who remember CEC in their wills and estate planning. As our founding generation sadly begins to pass on, this Legacy Society will ensure that the next generation of CEC members have a good and strong financial base in which to carry on our mission for the future well being of LGBTQ Jews and allies here in South Florida.

ARE WE STILL A REFORM JEWISH SYNAGOGUE?

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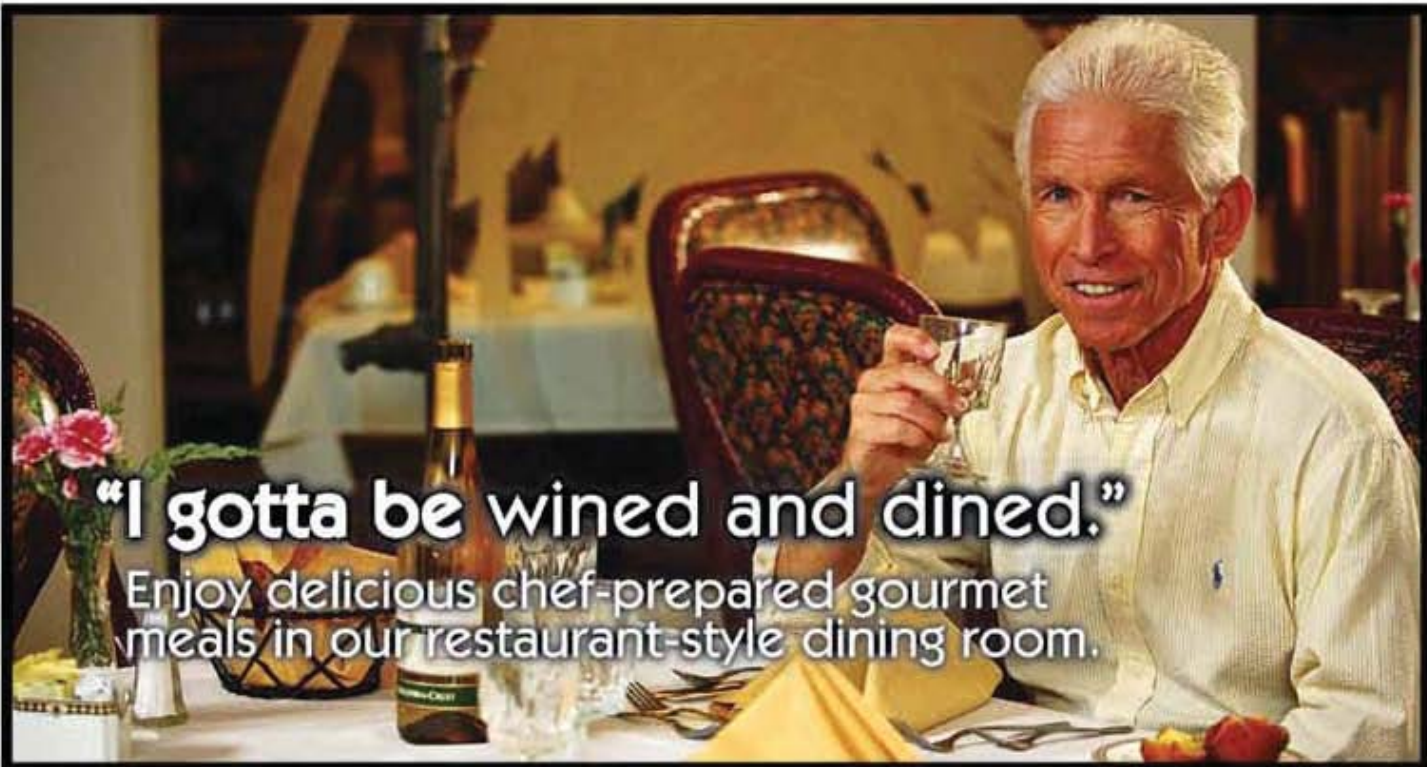
those who identify as members of one denomination over another. In closing, we are proud of our long relationship with Reform Judaism, and our past affiliation with the BART Shabbat program (Broward Area Reform Temples). While in the past several of our members attended this special service, we always held our own regular Shabbat service on that night for those who did not care to attend BART. As a sign of our members' interest, less than a handful of us attended the BART service this past year. I invite feedback on this issue. Please email your thoughts to: congregation@etz-chaim.com and use the subject line: Reform Judaism. Thank you!

It's never too early to think about the High Holidays!

The Board of Directors is delighted to announce that once again this year we will be returning to Temple Bat Yam for High Holiday services. Erev Rosh Hashanah is Wednesday, September 28th, Rosh Hashanah is Thursday, September 29th, Kol Nidre is Friday, October 7th, and Yom Kippur is Saturday, October 8th.

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PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION OF PRIDE MONTH

(continued from Page 3)

Last year, I announced the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States. This strategy focuses on combinations of evidence-based approaches to decrease new HIV infections in high risk communities, improve care for people living with HIV/AIDS, and reduce health disparities. My Administration also increased domestic HIV/AIDS funding to support the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and HIV prevention, and to invest in HIV/AIDS-related research. However, government cannot take on this disease alone. This landmark anniversary is an opportunity for the LGBT community and allies to recommit to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and continuing the fight against this deadly pandemic.

Every generation of Americans has brought our Nation closer to fulfilling its promise of equality. While progress has taken time, our achievements in advancing the rights of

LGBT Americans remind us that history is on our side, and that the American people will never stop striving toward liberty and justice for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2011 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. I call upon the people of the United States to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

Join Us for the High Holidays

www.EtzChaimFlorida.org
www.facebook.com/CongregationEtzChaim
www.LivingTheChaiLife.org

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