

SYNAGOGUE

VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 7 WWW.SHALOMPCS.COM MARCH 2013

THE RABBI'S COLUMN: IS CHANGE POSSIBLE? CONTINUING THOUGHTS ON GUN CONTROL

By Mark Sameth

An old joke often told by clergy:

Of course I believe it's possible for folks to change; I have no choice. (I said it was old; I didn't say it was good.)

Most, though not all, religious traditions hold that it is possible – yea necessary – for human beings to change. In religious as well as philosophical circles the possibility of change is grounded on something called the doctrine of free will.

This notion though has come in for a rough time of late, as more and more scientific evidence builds up to suggest that decision making is, to a very great degree, an activity undertaken in the unconscious brain, for which our conscious brain then creates ex post facto rationalizations. (A very good book on this topic is Dan Ariely's *Predictably Irrational*; for a related discussion, see the book I mentioned last week, Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow*.)

One reason it is so hard to change our thinking is that we don't come to our ideas rationally in the first place. Once an idea forms in the mind we are, more or less, stuck with it. That's also why it's so difficult to change activities to which we have grown accustomed, especially if they give us pleasure, or are activities at which we excel, and bring us not only self-satisfaction but peer group status. So

is it possible to change?

I was eight years old when I first learned to shoot. The day camp I attended had a shooting range set up right near the woodworking hut, and so I spent a good deal of time either shooting (22's and BB's) or whittling tikis to the sound of other kids shooting.

And I was a very good shot. I remember the satisfaction when the counselor would pull the paper target in on the wire pulley and you could see up close just how many bulls-eyes, and close-to-bulls-eyes you'd made. It felt good. There was no way you could have told me I wouldn't always love shooting.

Later, at another camp, I continued to excel. I won awards. I was proud of my National Rifle Association certificates; was very happy when I got my Marksman First Class bar (which, if you're not familiar, was hung between the Marksman bar and the medal itself; a work of art!) Had someone gotten preachy with me about shooting I know I would have turned a deaf ear.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Four weeks ago, New York and the Jewish community lost a treasure and one of its very best leaders and spokesman with the passing of former Mayor Ed Koch (a 3-term mayor serving from 1978-1989).

He had many unique qualities, among which were his unabashed pride, loyalty and always aggressive advocacy for New York, the Jewish community and Israel. He made no apologies for it and often was brutally honest, even if delivered with what became his trademark part New York, part Yiddish style of humor (serving him well working his way through law school behind the counter of a Jewish deli).

Humor, so integrally woven in the fabric of Jewish history and heritage throughout time, was a core part of the recollections of Ed Koch from the distinguished speakers delivering eulogies at Manhattan's Temple Emanu-El, among which were President Clinton, Mayor Bloomberg, Israel's Consul General Ambassador Ido Aharoni, as well as longtime staff members.

A quintessential Ed Koch story

was told by Ambassador Aharoni. In 1990, Mayor Koch was in Israel for a government ceremony and was grazed in the head with a rock thrown by a protestor. Although bleeding a bit, he assured everyone that he was fine and wanted the ceremonies to continue uninterrupted. Before they did though, he turned to the dignitary standing next to him and loudly told him, "That was an accident that the rock hit me. He probably was really trying to hit you".

On another occasion, a crew filming commercials in Greenwich Village with Broadway stars singing the one sentence tag line for the "I Love New York" campaign, saw Koch carrying his dry cleaning and groceries. They asked if he would sing the line as well for the commercial. All in one motion, he put his packages down, sang the line, grabbed a bagel from the snack table, picked up his packages and kept walking.

On yet another occasion while serving as mayor, he was on an official visit to Ireland, and during a State Dinner went around the room telling everyone that "You should be eating tuna from Montauk."

An active, courageous and aggressive civil rights advocate in the early 1960's, Ed Koch went to Laurel, Mississippi to provide legal representation for students who were arrested for sitting in at the lunch counter at Kress' Department Store (a dangerous endeavor for a New York Jewish attorney in the deep South given the time, circumstances and local feelings of the day).

As was pointed out by Mayor Bloomberg, it is very fitting that Ed Koch, a Polish Jew and a lifelong proponent of diversity, is being buried at Trinity Church in Washington Heights, in a secular albeit Episcopalian cemetery in a largely Dominican neighborhood. "What could be more New York?"

Given Mayor Koch's pride of being a New Yorker, it was very fitting that "New York, New York" was blaring in the shul at the conclusion of the service, as well as the reference to the next of kin he leaves behind as, "The City of New York."

- Jerry Neuburger

Pleasantville Community Synagogue Mission Statement

Pleasantville Community Synagogue is a transdenominational, inclusive community, a spiritual home deeply rooted in Torah (study), Avodah (prayer), and Gemilut Chasadim (deeds of loving-kindness). We seek to facilitate lifelong spiritual growth by engaging each member wherever that member may be on life's journey, embracing all generations. We encourage Tikkun Middot (repair of the self) and Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) through Jewish education for all ages, social action, Ahavat Yisrael (love of Israel), and a commitment to the understanding and fulfillment of mitzvot. We are a highly participatory community which relies on the commitment of time and energy from all members and which aspires to become an integral part of each member's life and their family's lives.

HEBREW SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Ronni Metzger, Principal

February started off with a wonderful Shabbaton with the Dalet students. Their hard work paid off as they led a beautiful Friday night service. Thank you to their teacher, Jennifer Chervin, and our music instructor, Lisa Lipkin, for preparing them so well.

The Bet class enjoyed their "Ask the Rabbi" session, and the Gimel and Dalet classes had a great time making challah. The Dalet class enjoyed a special pottery program where each child crafted a Kiddush cup, which can be used at their family Seders either as Miriam's cup or Elijah's cup! For Tu B'shvat the students enjoyed tasting the different fruit species, and some of the classes made planters and planted seeds in honor of the holiday. The students learned about Purim and we all enjoyed delicious hamentashen. The younger grades made wonderful masks and graggers (noise makers)!

March promises to be just as eventful, with the Hey class presenting the rabbi with questions for their "Ask the Rabbi" session; the Dalet class's Heritage Day program; the Vav shabbaton on March 16, and we end the month with model Seders for the students!

THE RABBI'S COLUMN, CONTINUED

In time my feelings grew ambivalent. Then a friend of mine from summer camp was shot to death in L.A. and the joy of shooting left me. My brother was accosted with a gun, and moved to another city only to survive a sniper attack on his building there. My feelings about guns darkened. Then I became a rabbi, and within a few years a congregant's beloved mother was gunned down, one of a number of victims in a gruesome mass murder in Binghampton, NY. I strained to find words of solace for the family. Then 20 children and their teachers were massacred in Newtown; multiple wounds to each of the bodies, the body of the youngest riddled with eleven bullets. I felt nauseous; and ashamed that over all of these years I had not done more.

So do I believe change is possible? Yes, I do. But God help us if it takes this much heartache; and God help us if we don't do something positive now with all of the heartache we're all feeling.

Again, I want to emphasize that my purpose here is not to demonize, let alone disrespect, law-abiding gun owners. I hope that's come across. Good people can disagree on many things. But we're also finding that we agree on much more than we might have previously thought.

Consider: A Quinnipiac University survey released last week reports that 92% of respondents support expanding background checks to all gun sales. And in households with guns? The level of support is virtually the same... 91%.

Open House

There's something for everyone at the 3rd annual week-long "PCS Palooza" Open House: Yoga ~ Pajama Shabbat ~ Informational Coffee Dr. Sarah Tauber Lecture ~ Dinner (our treat!) Internarried Forum ~ And Much More!



Sunday March 10 - Sunday March 17

Complete schedule at www.ShalomPCS.com
Pleasantville Community Synagogue...with members from twenty towns,
villages and cities all across Westchester.

Joyful Judaism!

Pajama Shabbat!

Join us Friday, March 15.

Dinner is *free*, but RSVPs a must.

Need we say it? Kids in pajamas welcome!

5:45 pm: Doors open ~ 6:00 pm: Tot Shabbat service (ages infant - 5) ~ 6:15 pm: Family dinner ~ 7:15 pm: If you're not sleepy yet stay for our child-friendly Family Shabbat service (all ages) ~ 8:15 pm: Home to bed!



Part of our week-long Open House:

PCS Palooza Week, March 10 - 17.

Yoga ~ Adult Ed ~ Intermarriage Forum ~ Lectures

Check our web site at www.ShalomPCS.com

for daily offerings.

Joyful Judaism!

ASK THE RABBI:

What do Rabbis do, why Hebrew goes from right to left, and other questions from young minds

On February 2 Rabbi Mark met with the Second Graders (Kitah Bet). It was a snowy day and not all the children were there, but the discussion was wonderful.

Here's a short excerpt:

Emma Leis: (Holding her toy fish) This is Fishy's question: What is the job of a rabbi?

Rabbi Mark: Well, part of my job is answering your questions! (laughter) But seriously, it is answering questions that kids have, and answering questions that grown-ups have, in other words it's helping people. There are lots of parts to a rabbi's job. But I would say helping people, leading services, and teaching are the main parts of a rabbi's job.

Ben Stahl: My dad says he knew you from camp.

Rabbi Mark: I was once a counselor in a day camp and I worked at a sleep away camp one summer. I'll have to find out from your dad which camp that was.

Ben: Here's my question: Why do we wear a kippah?

Rabbi Mark: The kippah covers the head and is a symbol that we are "under God." The Yiddish term is yarmulke, which comes from the words for "awe of the Ruler." Some people wear a kippah when they pray, some also wear it when they study, some also wear it when they're eating, and some folks wear one throughout the day.

Ava Klein: Why do we write Hebrew from right to left?

Rabbi Mark: I'm a righty. So watch as I write these words here in English. Do you see how as I write you can still see all the letters I just wrote? When a lefty writes English their left hand covers up each letter after they write it. Now I'll write a few words in Hebrew. Do you see how my right hand covers up the letters? That's why English writing was probably invented by a righty and Hebrew writing was invented by a lefty.

Emma Leis: This is not Fishy's question, this one is mine: What's your favorite Hebrew letter?

Rabbi Mark: That's a tough one. But I guess I would say the letter "bet."

Ben: That's my favorite letter, too! Because it has a belly button in it! (Note: In Hebrew, some letters, like the bet, include a Hebrew grammatical sign called a dagesh in the form of a "dot".)

Morah Jaime: Yes, and the Hebrew name Ben begins with the letter bet.

Rabbi Mark: Also the way we say "second grade" in Hebrew is "kitah bet," because the letter bet also stands for the number two.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK THE RABBI, CONTINUED

Emma: And the word Baruch (Blessed)!

Rabbi Mark: Very good! I think I would pick bet as my favorite letter as well because it is the first letter of the first word in Torah - Bereishit. Bet means "in" and Bereishit means "in" the beginning..."

Ben: What's your favorite holiday?

Rabbi Mark: It's always the nearest one! So in the fall it's Rosh Hashanna. In December it's Channukah. And the next holiday is... Purim!

Emma: Does it matter what costume you wear?

Rabbi Mark: No, you can wear whatever costume you like.

Emma: Why do we eat challah on Shabbat?

Rabbi Mark: Do you like challah?

Emma: I love it!

Rabbi Mark: That's why we eat it. There's another reason, too. When we bake challah we take a little piece of dough out before we bake it as a symbol of giving. So we always remember to give to the poor and people in need when we're eating. Thanks for all of your great questions today!



DCS DROGRESSIVE DINNER

The evening started with hors d'oeuvres at the home of Jackie and Steven Zucker. Dinners were hosted by several families and we gathered again at the home of Gary Greenwald and Anne Tetenman for dessert.

We thank everyone that offered their homes with such warmth and good cheer.



Rabbi Mark leading Havdallah prayers



Jan Gordon



Steven Zucker, hors d'oeuvres host



Mark Freiheit

Continued on next page



Dinner hosted by Vivian and Mark Freiheit



Gary Greenwald, dessert host, and Oren Cohen



Claire Cohen, Progressive Dinner Committee Chair, with Seth Greenwald and Gaby Golod



Yvette Smolin and
Doug Gordin



Susan and Michael Safranek



Karen Sanders, with Bennett Solnick and Elizabeth Feigelson

Warmest thanks to Cris Martinez for the photos!



SAVE THE DATE

UJA-Federation of New York's
Westchester Celebration

Thursday, May 30, 2013 6:30 p.m.

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Formal invitation to follow

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WHOSE ETERNAL CITY?

JERUSALEM: PAST AND PRESENT



An exciting evening of lecture and discussion at PCS with

Prof. Sarah Tauber

Professor of Jewish
Education at the Jewish
Theological Seminary

Wed., Feb. 27, 7:30 pm: From Roman Imperialism to Ottoman Sovereignty

Thurs., March 14, 7:30 pm: From European Imperialism to Israeli Sovereignty

Prof. Tauber's past lecture series, "Visions of Modern Israel" and "Battle Lines: Great Schisms in Jewish History" have garnered her an enthusiastic following. We invite the PCS community and anyone interested to join us for this lively educational series and discussion.

Light refreshments will be served.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue
219 Bedford Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570
Contact: Ofri Felder at ofelder@optonline.net or call PCS at 769-2672.

Sponsored by the PCS Israel Action Committee

PROJECT EZRA

PCS will once again be collecting Passover food for Project Ezra, an organization that provides services to the frail elderly on the Lower East Side.



In many cases, this food is the only source of Passover food for Ezra's Elderly.

The following list comprises a Passover package. You can contribute any or all of them. Please pay close attention to the **foods in bold** that are most often missing from the packages. Project Ezra would appreciate your paying extra attention to obtaining them:

2 BOXES MATZO
1 CAN OR JAR OF SOUP (low sodium if possible)
1 JAR BORSCHT
1 JAR OR CAN OF GEFILTE FISH
JAM OR JELLY
1 DESSERT ITEM (CAKE, COOKIES, MACAROONS...)
2 CANS OF TUNA, SALMON OR SARDINES
1 BOTTLE GRAPE JUICE
1 BOTTLE VEGETABLE OIL
1 BOX MATZO FARFEL
INSTANT COFFEE OR TEA
1 SMALL JAR OF HONEY
2 CANNED FRUITS
2 CANNED VEGETABLES

All food must be current, marked **KOSHER FOR PASSOVER** (e.g., UP) and 2013. The kosher sign only is not acceptable for Passover use. Items must be brought to **PCS** by **noon on March 10** and placed in the boxes in the last row of pews that are marked for this purpose. **If you are interested in helping to make deliveries to Project Ezra recipients on the Lower East Side on Sunday, March 17, please e-mail Dalia Abott at daliakabott@gmail.com. Thank you for responding generously.**

NUTS OR DRIED FRUIT (Or anything special you'd like to add)



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Boys U14 Basketball (must be 13, but not 15 by July 31)

■ Sunday, Feb. 10, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

■ Sunday, Mar. 3, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Girls U16 Soccer (must be 13, but not 17 by July 31)

■ Sunday, Feb. 10, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

■ Sunday, Mar. 3, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Boys Soccer, Boys or Girls Tennis, Swimming, Table Tennis, Bowling, Track and Field, or Dance (must be 13, but not 17 by July 31) ■ By appointment, call for information

*** Tryouts are at the Rosenthal JCC, 600 Bear Ridge Rd., Pleasantville. Please arrive 15 minutes early to register. Attendance at multiple tryout dates is strongly encouraged! *** Parent information meetings will take place during tryouts.

AUDITIONS FOR JCC MACCABI ARTSFEST:

- Acting/Musical Theater Rock/Jazz Bands Dance
 - Visual arts Vocal Music Sports Broadcasting
 - By appointment, call for information

The JCC Maccabi Games is an Olympic-style sporting event that offers Jewish teens (13 - 16 years) the opportunity to compete in one of14 team/individual sports. The JCC Maccabi ArtsFest brings together Jewish teens to create, perform, immerse themselves in the arts, and learn from professional artists-inresidence. Teens in both events have the opportunity to participate in Days of Caring & Sharing community

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RSVP is required! Contact Lisa Roberts at (914) 741-0333 x24 or Lisa@rosenthaljcc.org



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To All PCS Members:

If you or another member suffer personal tragedy or loss or are otherwise in need of help, please immediately call Rabbi Mark at 769-2672, and Michael Gold at 238-9219.

NEWSLETTER ACCEPTS ADS!

The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June, and it is emailed to every member family as well as to prospective members and some Jewish organizations.

If you provide professional or business services in the area, the PCS newsletter might provide some extra, valuable visibility. To arrange for your ad to appear in the newsletter, here's what you need to know:

* Deadlines:

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month. They can be emailed to Judy Chinitz at judyhope@ optonline.net or cristina@lightbodymusic.com.

* Ad Specifications:

Ads will be published in one size only: one-quarter page, which is approximately 3 $1/2 \times 4 3/4$ inches. The artwork should be provided by the advertiser.

*Advertising Rates:

The cost per ad (for 10 issues - no bulletin published in July and August) is \$100 for 1/4 page. Note: Checks preferred. Can be mailed to Pleasantville Community Synagogue, PO Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570 with "newsletter ad" in the memo section. To pay by credit card, please call the synagogue office at 914-769-2672.



SAVE THE DATE!

Please join the Westchester Jewish community at these Westchester Jewish Council events!

Tuesday, April 16, 2013/Israel Independence Day - 7:30pm Westchester Jewish Council Israel Movie Night at the Jewish Film Festival Held at Jacob Burns Film Center

> Sunday, April 28, 2013 - 12:00pm Westchester Celebrates Israel at 65 Held at Westchester Day School

Wednesday, May 22, 2013 - 7:30pm Annual Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Awards Held at the Jewish Community Center of Harrison

This annual event which represents the true meaning of community service honors 18 honorees chosen from among the Westchester Jewish Council's member organizations. The event is free and open to all.

Sunday, June 2, 2013 Join us at the Celebrate Israel Day Parade

The Westchester Jewish Council is coordinating a Westchester wide marching delegation. All synagogues and organizations joining us will be able to march with your delegation and banner.

For more information contact the Westchester Jewish Council at (914) 328-7001 or info@wjcouncil.org or visit us at www.wjcouncil.org

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All the Committees of The Pleasantville Community Synagogue are eager for your participation and suggestions. If you'd like to get more involved in the life of the PCS community, this is the way to begin! Below are the names of the committees, their chairs, and contact information.

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Adults

Contact us: Chuck Nuccio sensei

914-497-2903

Or email: gojuryu@kokorokenkyukai.com



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⇒ The perfect camp for PCS families! ←

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For more information contact:
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adam@naaleh.org or 212-229-2700
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CONTRIBUTIONS

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who support the Pleasantville Community Synagogue by remembering and honoring their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions.

FAIR SHARE/GENERAL FUND

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ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER.

The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June. Articles and photos should be submitted by the 24th of the month. They can be e-mailed to Judith Chinitz, Editor, at judyhope@optonline.net or dropped off at the newsletter box in the Synagogue office.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue * 219 Bedford Road * Pleasantville, NY 10570 phone (914) 769 - 2672 fax (914) 769 - 1795

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SUPPORT

General Fund

Finances any need of the synagogue considered necessary by the Board of Trustees. All unspecified gifts are credited to the General Fund.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Supports various individuals, organizations and/or programs at the discretion of the Rabbi.

Building Fund

To preserve the beauty and functionality of our physical plant, and to build reserves for future expansion.

Hebrew School Emergency Scholarship Fund

Provides scholarships to children who would like to attend our Hebrew School and may not currently have the financial resources to do so.

Kiddush Fund

Your donation provides lunch after services on Shabbat morning: salads, bagels and pastry.

Ed Sperling Fund

Pleasantville Community Synagogue is collecting funds for Ed Sperling to help pay for equipment necessary and vital for his continued recuperation and rehabilitation.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PLEAS	ANTVILLE CC	MMUNITY S	YNAGOGUE
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PLEASE NOTE: To help our bookkeeper, please issue separate checks for dues or other special events. All donations should be made payable to Pleasantville Community Synagogue (please indicate which fund in the memo section of your check).

ADAR - NISSAN 5773

March 2013 - PCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
No Hebrew School Purim	25 NO YOGA CLASS	26	7:30pm Jerusalem Lecture Series with Dr. Sarah Tauber	Board meeting, 7:30 pm	7:00pm Tot Shabbat 5:27pm-5:45pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Bar Mitzvah - Zachary Jacobus-Oseroff Parashat Ki Tisa
Kita Zayin, 11 am Ask the Rabbi, 5th grade, 11:30 am Pre- and Post-Adoptive Parent Group at PCS - 6 pm, ametz@jccan	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	5	6	7:30pm 5th grade parents' meeting,	Children's Service PCS House Band 5:35pm-5:53pm - Candle lighting	9 9:00am Morning Meditation,; Shabbat Service, Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei Shabbat HaChodesh 7:06pm-7:07pm - Havdalah (72 min)
PCS Palooza Week begins Hebrew School Heritage Day Hebrew High School/Rabbi's Comparative Religion Class, 11:30 am Pre- and	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	Rosh Chodesh event Rosh Chodesh Nisan	13	7:30pm Jerusalem Lecture Series with Dr. Sarah Tauber	Children's Service Pajama Shabbat PCS House Band 6:43pm-7:01pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, Family Education Shabbat Kita Vav Shabbaton Parashat Vayikra 8:14pm-8:15pm - Havdalah (72 min)
10:00am Coffee for Prospective Members 11:30am Intermarried Forum Model Seder Kita Zayin, 11 am	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	19	Spiritual Life Committee meeting, 7:30 pm	Model Seder Board meeting, 7:30 pm	7:15pm Children's Service 6:51pm-7:09pm - Candle lighting	Bar Mitzvah - Gabriel Welch Parashat Tzav Shabbat HaGadol 8:22pm-8:23pm - Havdalah (72 min)
No Hebrew School Hebrew High School/Rabbi's Comparative Religion Class, 11:30 am	Erev Pesach Ta'anit Bechorot, Fast of the First Born NO YOGA CLASS 6:54pm-7:12pm - Candle lighting	Pesach I	Pesach II 8:26pm-8:27pm - Havdalah (72 min)	Pesach III (CH"M) No Hebrew School	Pesach IV (CH"M) 6:58pm-7:16pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Pesach V (CH"M) 8:29pm-8:30pm - Havdalah (72 min)
Pesach VI (CH"M) No Hebrew School 7:00pm-7:18pm - Candle lighting	Pesach VII Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	Pesach VIII 8:33pm-8:34pm - Havdalah (72 min)	3	4	7:00pm Tot Shabbat Children's Service PCS House Band 7:06pm-7:24pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Bat Mitzvah - Kyra Schulz Parashat Shmini 8:37pm-8:38pm - Havdalah (72 min)

Note: Times and dates of events may change after the newsletter has come out. To get the latest information on any possible changes, please check the calendar on our website: www.ShalomPCS.com. Future months are also on the website.

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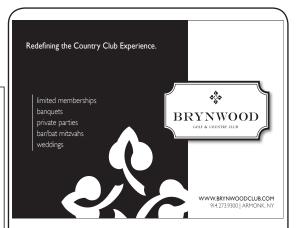




Parties of all sizes welcome One affair per day Kosher catering available



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SAVE THE DATES:

Saturday, March 2: Adult Purim Shpiel



Sunday March 10 – Sunday March 17: "PCS Palooza" Open House Week (see website for complete schedule of events)

Friday, March 15: Pajama Shabbat (6:00 pm) Dinner (6:15 pm) and Family Service (7:15 pm)

Sunday, March 17: Prospective Member Coffee at private home 10:00 am (contact PCS for details) followed by Intermarried Forum (to be held at PCS, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm)

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 26 and 27: First and second day of Pesach (Passover) services, 10 am

Sunday, April 7: Yom HaShoa Commemoration at PCS