

The Advantage

A Publication of the FJMC for Men's Club Presidents



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Philadelphia Here We Come! Presidents to Attend Convention 2009

That's right! The President of each Men's Club should be planning to attend Convention July 1-5, 2009 in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, PA! Convention holds program after program designed with a Club President in mind:

- "Dealing Across Demographics" - Making Your Calendar Inviting To All
- "Planning For Today And Tomorrow" - Attracting Younger Members
- "Play Ball!" - Clubs and Sports
- "Share The Effort And Success" - Programming Club To Club
- "Don't be a Madoff" - Managing Club Finances
- "Sell To The Neighborhood" - Public Relations
- "Take this job and..." - Job Networking
- "Is there a Rabbi in the house?" - Working With The Clergy
- And the all-important topic of Succession Planning

This year, Convention is particularly geared to younger Presidents with their families. Check out the line-up: Coach Bruce Pearl of the University of Tennessee and coach of the US Maccabia Basketball Team; Jerry Lawson - the EPA's National Manager of the Energy Star Congregations Network; Golf Tournament; and 4th of July Fireworks at the Art Museum and much more. Yes, of course, they will also be plenty for your spiritual side too, again geared to our younger members and their families - no one to be left on the sidelines at this

Convention. We're expecting 500 men this year, and you will never hear ruach - spirit - like you will with 500 men cheering and praying, like this! (Don't take our word only. See <http://convention.fjmc.org> and the Coach Bruce Pearl interview by HBO's Real Sports. Coach Pearl will be our guest for one-on-one discussions about Volunteerism at Convention.)

Being President of a Men's Club is a position like none other, filled with potential for accomplishment, challenge, conflict, Club growth, spirit, and personal growth. Each President will bring a unique set of experiences and perspective and questions that can benefit other Presidents and be enriched by networking with other Presidents - and our dynamic International Officers and Programming Chairmen. Torch Awards applied for by Clubs across the FJMC for their innovation and energy will be



on display and celebrated. Meet the innovators at Convention and BE an innovator when you return home.

Many of the programs and speakers will not only be valuable for your life as a Club President, but your life in the workplace as well! Many of our attendees have even written off a portion of the Convention as a business expense!

The Early Bird Registration Deadline Is Approaching - **February 15**, so please plan to make your reservation TODAY and SAVE MONEY! Contact your Regional President for Discount Incentives in place to make your attendance at Convention a given, not a challenge. Register NOW at <http://convention.fjmc.org>. And you can WIN a **FREE UPGRADE** to Concierge Floor Rooms - check the back page of this issue!



NOW
There are two things your club
can win in the race ...

A TORCH AWARD
(see inside)

or a

**QUALITY CLUB
AWARD**
(Check out last issue & next)

All the Stuff Inside....

Dr. Arnold Eisen at Convention	2
Programming Ideas for Warmer Weather	2-3
Torch Awards	3-4
February is Yom HaShoah Candle Time	4
New FJMC Web Site to go Live	4
Ask Allan	4-5
Special: Pre-Convention Puzzle	6

Dr. Arnold Eisen at Convention '09

"Traditions only grow by wrestling with, being in tension with and creatively appropriating all sorts of things that scream at them from the outside. They only live century after century if they live in people." - Dr Arnold Eisen.

Dr Arnold M. Eisen is the seventh chancellor of The Jewish Theological Seminary. One of the world's foremost experts on American Judaism, Chancellor Eisen has worked closely for the past twenty years with synagogue and federation leadership around the country to analyze and address the issues of Jewish identity, the revitalization of Jewish tradition, and the redefinition of the American Jewish community.

About the role of Chancellor, Dr Eisen says it "involves getting people excited about a vision, and matching their passions and your excitement." A key goal is to "reenergize the synagogues," which Eisen noted "have nowhere to go but up," in part because "we are wasting our laity and there is no [sense of] community." Another is to inspire Jewish leadership.

"While Conservative Judaism is in no danger of closing up shop, it must redefine and recapture its niche on the contemporary Jewish scene. Rest assured that if not inspired now, tomorrow a large percentage of the children and grandchildren of present-day Conservative Jews will be Jewish in name only."

Dr. Eisen goes on to say: "For me, chief among the concerns is that Conservative congregations — entrenched in institutional leadership and programming — are struggling to make themselves relevant to large numbers of teens, young adults and young families. Yes, there are efforts to stem this tide. And yes, some people with children find deep purpose in synagogue life. (I'm one of them.) Yet the numbers in study after study speak for

themselves. Those surveys show that what works with younger Jews is volunteerism and social action."

Join Dr Eisen and more than 500 men and women as we wrestle with these challenges and more at the 2009 FJMC International Convention in Philadelphia from July 1 to 5, 2009. Dr. Eisen will be the Scholar-In-Residence at the FJMC's Geffen Academy.

Don't miss this international experience; register now at <http://convention.fjmc.org>. [Editor's Note: Dr. Eisen came to my synagogue this past fall, & he was as good as they claim!]

It's Time to Plan For the Warmer Months

Just because blossoms aren't appearing on the trees doesn't mean that your Men's Club planning should stop. There are lots of programs ideally suited for the warmer weather: most of the ideas don't require a large crowd or many members helping to put them on, and appeal to the younger members of the congregation. Here are a few:

***Golf Tournament.** Not only is this a great recreational activity, but many clubs have turned this into a successful fundraiser.

***5 or 10 kilometer run / walk / bicycle.** This can be an enormous amount of work to organize, especially if you're going to turn it into a fund raiser. But it can be as simple as a bunch of guys meeting every Sunday to bike through the park. One club has called it Bike and Bagel.

***Camp-out.** This is a great family activity that the Men's Club can sponsor, and it will certainly be a memorable one for all involved.

Camping out under the stars, preparing food over the camp fire, swimming, hiking. Now that's an activity that no other group in the



synagogue will attempt!

***Speaker from a nursery or the garden department of a Home Depot type of store.** You're sure to attract the urban/suburban gardener with a workshop on how to care for the lawn and how to do plantings. You might even join this with a plant sale.

***Tennis ladder.** Have a sign-up for tennis and be sure you ask for ability levels. Then pair off people within a particular ability level and give them one or two weeks to hold their match. Continue the matching until everyone has a chance to play at least 3 or 4 matches.

***Mini-Maccabiah.** Set up a series of races in conjunction with a congregational picnic, Lag B'Omer event or for Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day). Hand out ribbons to the winners.



***Cookout for Men's Club Board members.** This would be a great idea for every Men's Club as a social kick-off for the 2009-10 program year. Frequently, the club president holds it at his house.

***Clean-up the grounds of the synagogue.** A lot of smaller clubs have programs of this nature.

***Dancing Under the Stars.** Have Israeli dancing and a dinner in the synagogue parking lot. Of course, you'll either need a rain date or inside arrangements if the weatherman isn't looking out for you.



***Post-Shavuot Progressive Dinner.** Shavuot this year starts on a Thursday evening (May 28th) through Saturday night. Why not have a progressive dinner on Sunday and have a *d'var Torah* at each stop? For those unfamiliar with how a progressive dinner works, you have hors d'oeuvres at one house, the

Planning for Warmer Weather p. 3

main course at another, and dessert at a third. Lots of fun, but try to avoid big distances between houses.

***Afternoon with Abba.** After Religious School have a hot dog lunch in the synagogue followed by dads and their kids playing miniature golf.

***Treasure Hunt.** Set up a series of clues all leading to a park for picnic dinner.

And be creative with the clubs.... make them funny, creative and memorable.



***Softball Challenge.** Have your Men's Club challenge a nearby club in a friendly game of softball, and then get together with a hot dog lunch. Or have the various children and adults divide up into equal teams. The primary objective is to have fun, and sneak in a little exercise when no one is looking.



**Torch
Award
Time:**

Why Your Club Should Be Submitting An Entry for an Award!

- Do you strive for recognition of your great idea(s)?
- Has your club done a program that you know would be great for other clubs?

Each convention, the FJMC awards excellence in programming at the club level with Torch Awards. The purpose of the Torch Award Program is to: Promote development of new or enhanced club programming and practices; Reward programs and practices that achieve excellence. Awards are based on the individual quality of programs with awards given at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels in broad categories; they promote

dissemination of club programming and practices; and assemble club leaders at Convention 2009 and educate and stimulate them with these program ideas. The best entries are displayed at the Convention 2009 Program Fair.

Lest you be concerned that your successful program idea won't fit into one of the categories, awards are given out in the following categories:

► **FJMC Programs** including (but not limited to) • the World Wide Wrap • Hearing Men's Voices • Yom Hashoah Yellow Candle Remembrance Program • Keruv • Brotherhood Shabbat

► **Club Administration** which includes fundraising, publicity, membership enhancement and more

► **Israel / Masorti Programs** including programs that spread understanding or raise funds for Israel or Masorti causes worldwide

► **Non-FJMC Programs** including social functions and social action programming ranging from softball to feeding the homeless; and

► **Youth Programming** for college age and younger.

For those clubs who think the scope of their programming might make them the 'Best Men's Club / Brotherhood' in the world, there is the "**Best Overall Activities**" reflecting a club's high standard of planning and implementation of a full year's activities as judged by the sum of the club's overall activities.

And, this year, there are three new categories in which to submit an entry: **Men's Health Programs** including physical and mental health, and other fitness and wellness programs; **Shomrei Ha'aretz Programs** are those programs which involve environmental concerns; and A **Special Torch Award** is being offered to clubs that have a plan to implement a solar *ner tamid* and / or have created one for their community.

The Rules for submitting a Torch Award entry are found at <http://torchaward.fjmc.info>.

Award levels are **Gold, Silver and Bronze**. The **Gold level** will recognize not only excellence in programming, but innovative programming ideas. There may not be a Gold Award in each of the categories. **Silver and Bronze Awards** are intended to provide acknowledgement of excellent programming, motivation for future efforts, as well as to focus the attention of other club leaders on opportunities for future programming. There may be multiple awards at each level to permit acknowledgment of entries for their level of excellence. All qualifying entries not winning an award will receive a Certificate of Accomplishment.

Clubs participating must be in good standing as of March 31, 2009. The programs to be considered for an award must have taken place between March 1, 2007 and March 31, 2009. Entries will be accepted beginning November 2008. Entries, whether written or electronic, must be received by **Sunday, April 5, 2009** (up to 11:59 pm). Additionally, one electronic entry per club submitted as late as midnight **Thursday, April 16, 2009**, will still be judged.

Dates to Remember:

Deadline: **Sunday, April 5, 2009**

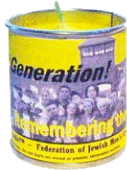
Program held:

Between March 1, 2007 and March 31, 2009

Questions:



TorchAward@fjmc.org or AllanKahanFJMC@gmail.com, since both will be responded to by Allan Kahan, Torch Award Chairperson.



If this is February You MUST Be Planning the Club's Yellow Candle™ Program.

As most of you probably know, the Yellow Candle™ was conceived in 1981 by the FJMC Beth Tzedec Men's Club in Toronto and Ner Tamid in Peabody, MA, to help keep alive the memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Modeled after the traditional Jewish memorial candle that burns for 24 hours during periods of mourning and on the anniversary of the death of a family member, the candle's yellow wax reminds us of the yellow arm band which Jews were forced to wear during the Nazi regime. *[It was a Gold Torch Award Winning Program!]*

Since Yom HaShoah is on **April 20-21, 2009**, you don't have too much time to put together a program, but it can be done. If you haven't already ordered your candles, you're in luck. The order deadline is **March 20, 2009** (5:00 pm) to order candles *[if you failed to take advantage of the discount by ordering early – something to remember for next year].*

And, a quick visit to <http://YellowCandles.org/documents>, will allow you to download a Program Guide, if you currently have a 'senior moment' and can't think of the things you have to do to make your Yellow Candle program a success.

Just check the newspapers - genocide is not a matter limited to the Jewish community. For Jews especially, world events (including never-ending occurrences of anti-Semitism) make memorializing the Holocaust more important than ever. It is today's news.

In the fall of 2008, there were six Holocaust related films that were released, including *The Reader*, *Defiance*, *The Boy in the Striped*

Pajamas, *Adam Resurrected*, and *Valkyrie*.

The lessons of the Holocaust are as timely and relevant in the year 2009 as they were a half century ago - and it is critical that these lessons be learned by the Next Generation.



New FJMC Web Site

To Go Live... While you're reading this

As part of its effort to enhance and upgrade its infrastructure as well as to put a "new face" to the Jewish and broader worlds, FJMC has embarked on the creation of a totally new web site: <http://www.fjmc.org>. This is not a revision or rewriting of the current site but the development of a new site designed to better display FJMC's extraordinary programs and activities and to educate web visitors to the work of the organization, its regions, and its clubs. The new look of the new web site will feature ease of navigation, links throughout to other pages within the site, links to the web sites of related organizations, a common appearance on all pages, and a security-enhanced e-commerce on-line store.

FJMC contracted with hodgsonConsulting, a strategic web development and interactive technology firm located in Kensington, Maryland, to assist in the development of the new FJMC web site, scheduled for launch in mid-February 2009.

Scott Swirling, a member of FJMC's Executive Committee, is leading this effort and chairs the Web Site Development Committee comprised of Mark Berlin, Bob Braitman, Allan Kahan, and Neil Melman.



Always on the Lookout for Interesting programs FJMCAdvantage@fjmc.org

Ask Allan

Dear Allan:

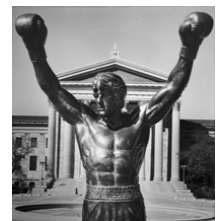
The Regional President is bugging me about coming to the Convention in Philadelphia. Is it really worth my personal vacation time to go?

- Questioning Whether To Go

Dear Questioning:

You know how a child sometimes says they are sounding like their parent? Well, you're sounding a lot like I was many years ago. I had NEVER planned to get involved with Men's Club, much less become the President of one. A number of events led me to become President of my synagogue's club, which had been defunct, non-existent, for a dozen years. My regional president also told me that I needed to go, and although money was very tight, he made me an offer I couldn't refuse, so that between region and club money, it was very little out-of-pocket cost to me.

He even arranged transportation for me to the convention – in those days in the Pocono's - and off I went. To



put it in simple words, it was a wonderful experience: the *Ruach*, meeting men who were in the same 'boat' as I, the learning, the laughter and experience was just great. I've thanked that Regional President, who has stayed involved, a number of times.

I don't think you'll regret it, and as a bonus, you'll get to meet me.

Dear Allan:

OK, you've given me some good reasons to go, but in these difficult economic times, how can I justify it to my significant other, and how can I afford it?

-Dwindling Dollars

Dear Dwindling:

I hear you. First, since you're going to learn things which will directly benefit your Men's Club, the Men's Club treasury may be able to subsidize your trip for a couple of hundred dollars. Many of the Regions provide generous subsidies to help you go. If you're still hurting financially, see if one of the components of your synagogue might be able to add to the pie, and if asked, they might be willing to do the same for your Men's Club, as it will benefit the congregation. And, if you can make the argument, the Rabbi may be willing to assist with his discretionary fund.

But since this experience will also enrich you, see if you can find that small stash you may have been saving for a rainy day.



Going to your first convention is like orange juice – it's adding a little sunshine in your life, and that is always worth paying a little something for.

But there is another way to justify it to your 'significant other.' Check out the letter which follows...

Dear Allan:

If I want to have my wife and 3 teenage children attend with me, what would be the cost?

I try to make the Convention week coincide with my family vacation week because (1) taking a week of vacation without my family in the middle of the summer costs me of 1/3 of my professional vacation days and 1 week of personal time with my

family; (2) paying for two separate vacations (Convention and personal family vacation) is just too expensive for me; and (3) exposing my apathetic teenagers to vibrant and engaged Jews and Jewish values is a good thing.

-Family Man

Dear Family Man:

Attracting families is one of the prime goals of this convention committee. To do that, we've initiated the following pricing structure, which I am sure you will find attractive.

First, we have priced our women or spousal delegates 15% less than our male delegates' price. For a couple, the price is virtually the same as in 2007, and apart from the fact that it's 2 years later, you'll see that hotel itself is the nicest place we have ever been.

As for children under 18, if they stay in your room, the cost is just \$200 each, which is below our cost of food. You might have trouble shoe-horning 3 into a room unless 2 will take one double bed, but if that's a problem, we can offer you an additional room at our cost, which is \$159/night. We'll make a note to ensure that you'll have adjoining rooms if you choose to do that.

The Philadelphia Loews Hotel is the best to date; a 4 ½ star full-service hotel. It was once a bank building – see if you notice the safe in the lobby when you arrive - and a 15,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art spa and fitness wellness facility. The hotel is located in walking distance of historic



attractions and great shops. There's easy transportation to and from the airports and trains.

We really want to make sure you have the best possible convention experience with your family. If you'd like to talk about these or any other arrangements, please do not hesitate to give Stan Greenspan, the Convention Chairman, a call. His number is, 416 822 5671 or email stangreenspan@fjmc.org.

Both Stan and I hope to hear from you soon, and look forward to meeting the entire family at the Convention.

Editor's Note: *A bunch of years ago, my wife suggested that our son, Jared, who wasn't near bar mitzvah age, 10 or 11 I believe, come with me as the Convention was being held in the Catskills. She reasoned that it was only a couple hours drive to Cooperstown, New York, where we could go to see the Baseball Hall of Fame afterwards. He wasn't too keen, but I dragged him anyway, and when we checked in, he just wanted to watch TV, since he didn't know any of the children. I let him 'decompress' from the drive.*

The next morning, the Convention had scheduled programming for the children, so I dragged him to a kid's version of 'Its Academic' a game of both Jewish and general knowledge questions, and he was assigned to a team. By the time the hour program was over, he no longer wanted to go back to his room and watch TV. Rather, he hung out with the kids he had met only an hour earlier. From that point on, I didn't see him except for dinner each evening, and he wasn't in the room, as I would occasionally check. He had a great time, which was topped off by the visit to Cooperstown, but during the ride back, he had to admit that he had a good time at the Convention.

Although he is now in his third year of college, when I mention my going to the FJMC Convention, he smiles, and often reminds me that he had a pretty good time. And now, after attending her first convention, my wife has already put in for leave so to attend in Philadelphia.

The Moral of this Story: *Yes, even your wife and family will have a great time attending FJMC's Philadelphia Convention 2009!*

Convention 2009 Convention Puzzle

T R E A D I N G R E K A E P S
 F R U J O C O N V E N T I O N
 I E A A U N H S I W E J L A I
 R E S I C L I I N G T O N C K
 E S C N N H Y L N S G E G A S
 W U M N O I T A R A L C E D W
 O O T I E G N S N E T T M E E
 R H E L N D Q G R P B O S M O
 K N L K O T N E O E V N W Y L
 S E U N M E T E S L T P A N I
 H T R A I H H C P I L A R B B
 T T W R S O M E Q E P E E O E
 U I L F U J N Y A J D X Y H R
 O R L S F N E S N F U N Y V T
 S B E T S Y E Z T R U K I L Y
 T Y E L L A V G P V U R E K A

IT'S PHILADELPHIA FOR THE FJMC'S 2009 CONVENTION!
Tourists have always loved Philadelphia for packing more than two centuries of history into eight square blocks. But there's more to see than just the Liberty Bell, and the FJMC convention will be jam-packed full of terrific speakers and training – not to mention activities for the entire family. Can you find the words below that are in all caps on the grid on the left? Words in the grid can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal and can be either frontward or backward.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. ANTIQUE shops | 18. PENN'S Landing |
| 2. Incoming President Mark BERLIN | 19. PLEASE Touch Children's Museum |
| 3. BETSY Ross' home | 20. Edgar Allan POE HOUSE |
| 4. CHINATOWN | 21. READING Terminal |
| 5. CONVENTION | 22. RITTENHOUSE Square |
| 6. DECLARATION house | 23. RUACH |
| 7. FIREWORKS | 24. Executive Director Charles SIMON |
| 8. FJMC | 25. SOUTH Street |
| 9. FRANKLIN Institute | 26. SPEAKER |
| 10. FUN | 27. THEATERS |
| 11. INDEPENDENCE Hall | 28. TRAINING |
| 12. Museum of American JEWISH History | 29. VALLEY Forge |
| 13. KERUV | |
| 14. Outgoing President Norm KURTZ | |
| 15. LIBERTY Bell | |
| 16. LOEW'S Hotel | |
| 17. MINT | |

BE A WINNER!
BE A WINNER!
BE A WINNER!

The first TEN (10) Club Presidents to submit the correct solution to the puzzle will be awarded a **FREE upgrade to the Concierge Floor.**

The first five (5) will also get their choice of one (1) FJMC program book from either the Hearing Men's Voices series or the Art of Jewish Living Series.

You can submit it either way:

By email to

FJMCAvantage@FJMC.ORG

By fax to

301-989-2551

There is still time to get your **Early Registration Discount for Convention 2009.**

Sign up at the FJMC.org web site... and be paid in full by **February 15, 2009** ... but you'll have to hurry!

