

**P2 / FOCUS ON BEGINNERS**

NJOP's newest initiative supported communities looking to create High Holidays Beginners Services

**P3 / A CELEBRATION**

NJOP's Annual Dinner was a celebration of 28 years of NJOP strength and Rabbi Buchwald's 70th birthday

**P4 / SUKKOT SUCCESS**

Once again, NJOP's Sukkot Across America inspired creativity and offered unique mitzvah opportunities

**P5 / FROM BUFFALO**

A truly gratifying thank you from a first-time seder maker demonstrates the importance of social media



N J O P

REPORT

JUNE 2016 • SIVAN 5776

Shabbat Party On Location

by Ephraim Z. Buchwald



For years, people have heard me declare, only half in jest, that if I had the opportunity to go down to Washington, D.C., I would tell the President and Congress that our country can address 85% of the problems that we face - violence and drugs, etc. - by legislating Shabbat! I honestly believe that today, more than ever, the world needs “sacred time.” We need sacred time for individuals, sacred time for families, sacred time for businesses, and sacred time for humanity. It is more than obvious that “Quality time cannot exist without quantity time!”

After hearing my call to “legislate Shabbat” dozens of times, and seeing it frequently published in NJOP literature, NJOP’s Program Director, Rabbi Elly Krinsky, came up with the rather clever idea to turn my “legislate Shabbat” fantasy into reality.

“ *Our goal seemed so simple: Let the American people know how important a day of rest is.* ”

As a marketing strategy for SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA 5776-2016, Rabbi Krinsky suggested a full-fledged presidential campaign featuring none other than myself. Thus was born a series of four cutting-edge videos, produced by the multi-talented Mendy Pellin, promoting The Shabbat Party.

Many have commented to us how much they enjoyed the videos, which can be viewed at <http://njop.org/shabbatparty>. Partner locations have informed us of how effectively the videos promoted their SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA programs. Cantor Suzanne Bernstein of Brooklyn’s Progressive Temple Beth Ahavath Shalom kindly noted, “ I thought

Rabbi B. was brilliant. The videos really helped get the point of unity across. *Kol HaKavod!*”

As excited as I was to be involved in this unique initiative, I must admit that the experience of making the videos was far more challenging than I had expected. Our goal seemed so simple: Let the American people know how important a day of rest is. But to do it in an intelligent, engaging and humorous way... takes much talent.

When I arrived at the Jewish Center on the Upper West Side with my wife, Aidel, the film crew was waiting, but the place appeared to be in turmoil. The first scene on the schedule was supposed to be a press conference where I would announce

Focus on the Days of Awe

In the Fall of 2015, NJOP offered financial incentives to locations across North America running High Holidays Beginners Services. Generous subsidies were given to locations that had not run a High Holidays Beginners Service in the last five years (if ever) to help them publicize their Beginners Services. The subsidy, made possible by the generosity of Sylvia Freyer and the Freyer family, also provided funding to produce a new NJOP instructional video series featuring Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald teaching “How to Run a High Holidays Beginners Service.”

NJOP incentives were awarded to 25 locations, which enabled over 1,000 people to attend these special High Holidays services! Were it not for the generous support of the Freyer family, the likelihood is that many of those who participated would not have attended services, heard the shofar or participated Jewishly during the High Holidays. Rabbis and

leaders of the services reported that the vast majority of attendees at the High Holidays Beginners Service were newcomers, not affiliated with their institutions.

The impact of the High Holidays Beginners Service, hosted at locations representing a cross-section of North American Jewish life, was both immediate and powerful. Rabbi Sam Seicol of Temple Israel of Dover, NH informed NJOP that, as a result of the High Holidays Beginners Service, the synagogue will now be holding a monthly 30-minute prayer-study session prior to their Friday night services. He further shared that although “the Jewish population of the New Hampshire seacoast is small, ...we are finding those who were not affiliated coming to us thanks, in part, to your support of community advertising.”

Scott Kalmikoff of Congregation Temple Emanu-El (Staten Island, NY) proudly shared with NJOP that two of the children



who attended the service are now registered in the synagogue’s Hebrew School and have begun to attend on a weekly basis. Rabbi Yossi Greenberg of the Chabad of Miami University (Oxford, OH) informed NJOP that one student who had never before attended any of Chabad’s activities told him via Facebook that when he saw that one of his friends had registered for the service, he decided to give it a try as well. Since coming to the service, he has become interested in many programs, especially the NJOP Hebrew Reading Crash Course that is being offered.



Seder table set for PASSOVER ACROSS AMERICA for students at Hillel at Georgia Tech and Georgia State

Perfecting Passover Potential

The Denver/Boulder (Colorado) Jewish community is a hot location for recent college graduates, and, as such, was an excellent venue for PASSOVER ACROSS AMERICA. Rabbi Danny Wolf of the local Jewish Experience, who hosted the seder, reported: *The beautiful thing about our seder, with the tremendous help of NJOP, was that we were able to provide a seder for people new to Colorado, far from their families, and if not for our seder they would not have attended one...One newcomer was so touched by the whole experience, he decided that for the duration of Passover, he was going to do something he had never done: In addition to not eating chametz he also decided he was going to desist from eating shrimp during Passover, for him a huge deal...Fortunately, the seder so graciously sponsored by NJOP also enabled us to meet a new young family -- a young couple who moved here a few months ago with a 3 month old baby. They attended the seder, and the seder enabled us to make a profoundly meaningful connection with them.*

These notes from Denver underscore the incredible impact of NJOP’s PASSOVER ACROSS AMERICA campaign. Hosted in 27 states, as well as in Canada and New Zealand, Jews were given the opportunity to experience a Passover seder. For some participants, this was their very first Passover seder, while for others it was a return to a tradition they recalled from their youth. For the last 12 years, NJOP’s PASSOVER ACROSS AMERICA Seders, which were inspired by Sam Domb and are sponsored by Paul J. Taubman in memory of his father Joseph L. Taubman, z”l, have been a source of inspiration, invigoration and true joy for both tens of thousands of participants and for NJOP’s partners as well.

PASSOVER ACROSS AMERICA is an amazing opportunity for us to be able to reach out to the community, and offer Passover in a traditional and classy way to all who would like, in a true spirit of kohl dichfin (All who are hungry)... It is without question that due to the support of NJOP we are able to operate with more peace of mind and focus on the call of the hour, i.e. touching Jews with the spirit of Pesach! (Rabbi Meir Rivkin, Granada Hills, CA)

20 Shabbat Years

Twenty years ago, the talented, dedicated NJOP staff, seeking to constantly improve upon its programs, renamed and repackaged the very successful “Turn Friday Night Into Shabbat” program. Transforming “TFNIS” into a campaign of continental Jewish unity, it became known as SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA. Since that time, 29 locations have participated every year (though many more locations have a close to perfect record). Two decades and **one million** Shabbat experiences later, NJOP is proud to report on the continued powerful impact of this important annual celebration of Shabbat.

Here are two responses we received from the nearly 550 locations that joined the 2016 SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA campaign.

“There were nine new faces who have never attended a program here or it was their first time attending Shabbat dinner. It was a great combination of “veteran” attendees who helped the new ones feel welcome, and the new ones, who were very moved and stirred by all the rituals and the atmosphere. They have all expressed interest in coming back, and will be our first recruits for Passover Seders.” (Ruthie Benamou, Jewish Rockville Outreach Center, Rockville, MD)

“We held a Beginners Shabbat Service to teach why we use certain prayers in our service and their meanings, followed by dinner and discussion. Our discussion focused on the meaning of Tikkun Olam, our relationship with God, and the meaning of Jewish people-hood. Students were very engaged, asking thought-provoking questions and participating in constructive dialogue with each other over the topics.” (Matt Lorch, Hillel @ Oklahoma University, Norman, OK)

28 Years of Strength and A Birthday Bash!



Clockwise from top left: 1) Rabbi Buchwald with Ellen and Mordecai Lipkis 2) Rabbi Buchwald with Rabbi Daniel and Rachel Kraus 3) Gerald Barad 4) Cantor Sherwood Goffin singing Happy Birthday to Rabbi Buchwald 5) Rabbi Buchwald with Sarah Rochel and David Hewitt 6) Mr. Sam Domb and Rabbi Buchwald

This past February, at its annual Dinner, NJOP celebrated 28 years of profoundly impacting on Jewish life in North America. The occasion had added significance because 28 is the numeric value of the Hebrew word **קֹחַ** (*koach*), strength. The occasion also marked the celebration of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald’s 70th birthday, who founded NJOP 28 years ago with the hope of fulfilling his dream to provide positive, joyous Jewish experiences to every Jew. The rabbi was particularly moved when the over 400 people in attendance marked the occasion with a rousing rendition of “Happy Birthday,” led by longtime friend and colleague, Cantor Sherwood Goffin.

At the Dinner, this year’s *Elli and Israel Krakowski Memorial Award* was presented to Ellen and Mordecai Lipkis, longtime friends and supporters of both Rabbi Buchwald and NJOP. Rachel and Rabbi Daniel Kraus, both highly-

successful Jewish educators and Jewish engagement professionals, were honored with the *Carl and Sylvia Freyer Young Leadership Award*. The *Leslie Nelkin Special Service Award* was awarded to the amazing and tireless Publications Coordinator and the author of *Jewish Treats*, NJOP’s own Sarah Rochel Hewitt.

The highlight of the evening was a video of the official launch of Rabbi Buchwald’s “candidacy” for President on the newly created “Shabbat Party.” The video of the press conference was one of four incredibly clever and entertaining marketing spots that were specially created for the upcoming SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA.

The wonderful evening, which took place at the Grand Hyatt New York, was beautifully and tastefully coordinated by Renee Erreich.

Sukkot Success

One student came up during the BBQ and asked 'What is this for?' I responded that this is for them, and that every Jew deserves an amazing experience on Sukkot. The student was a junior and said that for the past few years, he hasn't felt that there was a place for him here at BU. He sat, had some BBQ, and made the blessing for sitting in the Sukkah. He is one of the students who is [now] taking the Hebrew class and joining a weekly study group that I've started.

Rabbi YD Schwartz, Boston University JLIC, Boston, MA



Preparing for SUKKOT ACROSS AMERICA 2015, NJOP accepted 79 locations to receive the special stipend sponsored by Paul J. Taubman in memory of his father Joseph L. Taubman, ז"ל (the project was inspired by Sam Domb). Due to unforeseen circumstances, including Hurricane Joaquin on the East Coast, only 59 locations (in 20 U.S. states and 2 Canadian provinces) were able to run their planned program. These locations, however, were incredibly successful. According to the feedback that NJOP received from its partners, over 3,500 men, women and children attended a broad variety of outstanding

SUKKOT ACROSS AMERICA celebrations. About 500 of those were individuals who did not generally participate in programs at our partner locations. NJOP has also identified approximately 200 attendees who had never before sat in a sukkah or waved the four species!

This program along with other NJOP programs also serve an important purpose in reinvigorating our donors (of both time and money)... To have an event supported by outside funding always triggers a new spirit of giving because the congregation doesn't feel like it is all on its own.

Rabbi Eve Eichenholtz
Beth Israel Congregation
Fayetteville, NC

Hebrew Happenings

The ability to read Hebrew is a critical way of connecting with one's Jewish heritage. Each year NJOP takes advantage of the inspiration of the High Holiday season to encourage Jews to join a Hebrew Reading Crash Course as part of our annual Hebrew literacy campaign, READ HEBREW AMERICA AND CANADA. Since its founding in 1987, NJOP has helped over **250,000** North American Jews learn to read Hebrew.

Last year, during the 18th annual READ HEBREW AMERICA AND CANADA campaign, there were 500 classes

offered in over 400 participating locations. READ HEBREW AMERICA AND CANADA courses took place in 37 U.S. states and 6 Canadian provinces. Additionally, Hebrew Reading Crash Courses were offered in South Africa and the United Kingdom.



Florence Wiener and Hebrew teachers at the NJOP office.

Dedication Opportunities

Support NJOP by making one of the following dedications in honor or memory of a loved one.

HEBREW READING APP

Sponsor the development of NJOP's Hebrew Reading App and enable students to learn Hebrew at their own pace. (\$50,000)

MULTIMEDIA CRASH COURSE IN JEWISH HISTORY (CCJH)

Help NJOP create a digital version of the CCJH. Bring Jewish history to life in a whole new way. (\$36,000)

JEWISH TREATS HOLIDAY EGUIDES

Enable NJOP to continue enhancing the celebration of the Jewish festivals with Jewish Treats holiday eGuides. (\$1,800)



JEWISH TREATS

Dedicate a dose of "Juicy Bits of Judaism, Daily," and share the beauty of Jewish life by sponsoring Jewish Treats on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. (Daily \$180, Weekly \$500, Monthly \$1,800)

Contact Larry Greenman at 646-871-0113 or lgreenman@njop.org.

See page 6 for additional dedication opportunities.

Social Media Makes A Mark

NJOP's [Jewish Treats](#) and [@JewishTweets](#) continue to make their mark as an important presence on social media. Via Twitter and Facebook, [Jewish Treats](#) enables Jews to discover, explore and ask questions about an incredible range of topics. From Jewish law to Jewish celebrities, [Jewish Treats](#) connects Jews to Jewish life.

One of this year's social media highlights, indeed a highlight of all of NJOP's programming, was the launch of Rabbi Buchwald's "presidential candidacy" on the Shabbat Party Ticket. The campaign, which was first announced at the NJOP Dinner on February 3, 2016, consisted of four marketing videos that were released during the weeks leading up to the 20th annual SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA. These videos, which spoofed the typical ads that air during a Presidential campaign, were intended to assert the importance of Shabbat observance and the critical need to designate sacred time into one's life, outside of the hustle-and-bustle of daily life.

NJOP's social media department also made the most out of the of graphic campaigns that are popular today on the internet. NJOP's [Jewish Treats](#) team created a number of exciting poster series



this year, including "[Seven Ways Judaism Talks About Giving Thanks](#)" for Thanksgiving on Huffington Post, and "[Eight Things You May Not Know About Chanukah](#)" on BuzzFeed. Most recently, a series of Instagram posters were posted featuring the sage advice to be found in *Pirkei Avot*/Ethics of the Fathers. The last of these, promoted with the #JewishWisdom hashtag, were posted at regular intervals during the weeks between Passover and Shavuot.

In an effort to work with the constantly-changing Facebook algorithms and expand the reach of [Jewish Treats](#), NJOP has increased its use of boosted posts and Facebook ads. These tools allow NJOP to reach more people with whom there would likely be no other possible connection. As a result of constantly evaluating our "product," [Jewish Treats](#) continues to grow, with 3,100 regular subscribers to the [Jewish Treats](#) YouTube channel, 8,560+ Facebook fans and nearly 60,000 [@JewishTweets](#) followers!



While there are many aspects to NJOP's social media branch, [Jewish Treats](#)' YouTube videos are excellent sources of both inspiration and education. Each year, before the Passover holiday, [Jewish Treats](#) promotes Rabbi Buchwald's Passover preparation videos. This year the special Facebook ad boosting the Passover instructional videos caught the attention of a young woman from Buffalo, N.Y.. She clicked on the ad, she later told NJOP, because she recognized Rabbi Buchwald's name from a High Holiday service she had attended some years earlier. The night before Passover, NJOP received the following note:

*I'm hosting a Passover Seder for my family this year. I honestly have no idea what I'm doing. I've only experienced Passover myself the past six years. No one in my family has been to a Seder even though we're Jewish. Two weeks ago when I was being wheeled into heart surgery, I promised God that if he brought me through it okay, then I would make a Passover Seder. I spent the past five days preparing as much as I could, but this morning I realized I didn't really have the confidence. So I prayed... "God please show me what to do!" I went to Barnes and Noble and bought a few copies of the Haggadah. I drove two hours to the kosher super-market to get a shank bone. I made a brisket that it took me two months to save for. I spent hours kashering my kitchen and covering everything with foil... But, late tonight I arrive home, and I was still feeling unsure of myself. Your post was 'suggested' for me and it read 'need help preparing your Passover Seder?' Or something to that effect. I laughed. Yes, I do. Now I've watched your series of YouTube videos, and I couldn't go to bed without reaching out to say thank you. **There are moments in life when even a small amount of learning can give you the courage to do great things.** Thank you for giving me that courage, knowledge and for taking the time to post those videos (in a way that anyone could relate to).*

Jami Rose Furnagiev

As we were leaving [SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA], my husband said that he would love for us to host Shabbat at our home. He very much enjoyed the atmosphere and the company.

**Lynasky Family, quoted by Rabbi Elana Baird
Addison-Penzak JCC
Los Gatos, CA**



Thank You For Telling Us!

This was a wonderful course for the beginner. The way the letters were grouped made it easier to learn. I didn't think that I could do it but it works.

Natalie M.

Thanks to NJOP, Temple Emanuel and Melinda Freed for offering this fulfilling Hebrew Reading Crash Course. It is a great pleasure attending the classes, learning Hebrew and connecting with everyone in class. This will greatly enhance my Jewish education. It is well worth the time and effort. Melinda Freed is an excellent teacher and communicator and keeps everyone engaged and motivated.

Anthony K.

NJOP wants to hear from you! Please share with us stories of how NJOP has affected your life. Your words can be an inspiration to so many. You may share your story by visiting njop.org/yourstory.

I had a table filled with 25 college students. When I told them that it was the NJOP Shabbat Across America, they were inspired to participate in such a wide-spread event, and be a part of something bigger than themselves. Five of the students had never been to my Shabbat table before. And 3 out of those 5 had never been to a shabbos meal! Thank you NJOP Shabbat Across America!

Rabbi Eric Ertel
San Diego Jewish Experience
La Jolla, CA

The evening was fantastic and the educational material very helpful. We explained a lot, incorporated some wine tasting. There was one lady who had her first Friday night dinner. I created a Shabbat CD and accompanying booklet which I gave out to people before the event (I'm still giving it out now). It's to promote Shabbat.

Ori Berman
Stony Brook Hebrew Congregation
Stony Brook, N.Y.

Dedication Opportunities

DEDICATIONS in honor of someone important in your life are an excellent means of supporting NJOP's vital work.

REISHITH BINAH

Dedicate a printing of *Reishith Binah*, NJOP's FREE, widely-acclaimed Hebrew reading primer used in conjunction with the Hebrew Reading Crash Course. (\$3,000 - 1,500 copies)

SPECIAL EDITION MINI-REISHITH BINAH BOOKLETS

Facilitate the printing of a special edition of the mini-*Reishith Binah* that will include either a selection of High Holiday prayers or the Mourner's Kaddish. (\$7,500 - 10,000 copies)



RABBI BUCHWALD'S WEEKLY VIDEO ON YOUTUBE

Sponsor Rabbi Buchwald as he shares fascinating insights connecting Jewish life with contemporary and timely topics. (1 video - \$180, 1 month - \$500, 1 year - \$3,600)

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTERS & VIDEOS

Enable NJOP to create more inspiring virtual posters and videos to be shared on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. These Jewish-themed graphics and videos generate thousands of shares, while instilling Jewish pride and spreading both inspiration and the *Jewish Treats* brand. (Posters \$2,500, Videos \$7,500)

Contact Larry Greenman at 646-871-0113 or lgreenman@njop.org.

See page 4 for further dedication opportunities.

Shabbat Party On Location

my campaign for presidency. There were actors, makeup artists, a wardrobe crew, camera and lighting crews, members of the NJOP staff and Mendy.

I had met the director, Mendy Pellin, in 2014, when he performed at an NJOP Comedy Night event. I knew him as a very funny comedian, but I had no idea that he was an extraordinary video producer as well. Mendy shoved a few pages in front of me, and said, "You don't really have to keep to the script. It's just a basic outline, etc., etc.." I was not sure whether I should be more nervous or less.

On the surface nothing appeared to be coordinated. When I was instructed to say a line, I simply did as told. If I was told to move to the right, I moved to the right. Move to the left, I moved to the left. Fix my tie, take off my tie. I couldn't imagine for the life of me that a coherent video could emerge from this exercise!

I was also particularly nervous for Aidel, who had never really appeared before a video camera. However, she took to the production like a fish in water (should I say gefilte fish?). The presentation of her chicken soup recipe stole the show, but it was really the editing and the timing that made it all come together.

Our next filming session was a street scene. It was mid-winter, and I practically froze as we proceeded to shoot scene after scene and take after take of me inviting people off the street to a Shabbat table that we had set up in the middle of bustling Broadway, offering challah and hot chicken soup. In addition to the drifting snow and biting winds, the film crew and I had to navigate the natural patterns of chaotic pedestrian traffic on the streets of Midtown Manhattan. We received more than a few strange looks, I can assure you!

I was given a break for video number three: the mock press interview of two candidates. Having previously filmed

what I needed to say, it was simply inserted into the prepared video footage, and it was good to go. This video, however, became particularly dear to me when the actor who played the opposing candidate showed up at our SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA event at Lincoln Square Synagogue!

The filming for the final video was the most demanding. Aidel and I opened our home to a retinue of actors and film techs. Our apartment became a labyrinth of Shabbat scenes. We were instructed to try to make the Shabbat experience look natural and spontaneous. There was Shabbat in the kitchen, Shabbat in the dining room, Shabbat in the living room. Some of the actors were even dressed for bedtime. I had no idea what was flying. Five and six year old kids were playing games on my dining room table! This will never work, I said to myself.

We did all of this filming over the course of just two days and it was only many weeks later that I was able to preview the videos in their completed form. It was truly amazing to see how it all came together!



Contrary to my concerns on that first day of filming, it turned out to be lots of fun. As a result of Mendy's exceptional creativity and hard work, many North American Jews benefitted from these entertaining and meaningful videos. Through the videos, he succeeded in transmitting the vital importance of coming to SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA and experiencing a real Shabbat.

Looking back at the experience, it reminds me of the early years of NJOP. We really didn't know what would grow out of our endeavors, and here we are today having reached hundreds of thousands of North American Jews through our diversified programs and social networking.

I'm sure many of you are thinking, "How is NJOP going to top this?" We can only do so by mobilizing NJOP's supporters to serve as ambassadors for Shabbat and Jewish learning, enabling us to reach ever-greater numbers of Jews.

For me, the thrill of finally being able to realize one of my personal fantasies left me with a great sense of fulfillment. As they say, "When you wish upon a star..."

NJOP

989 Sixth Avenue, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018
646-871-4444 • 800-44-HEBRE(W) • info@njop.org • www.njop.org

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NJOP
 989 Sixth Avenue, 10th Floor
 New York, NY 10018

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All About NJOP

NJOP*, an independent, non-denominational, non-profit organization, was established in 1987 by Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald in response to the spiraling losses of Jews from Jewish life due to assimilation and lack of Jewish knowledge. Through its highly innovative and stimulating educational programming and influential social media platforms, NJOP conveys the relevance and vibrancy of Judaism to contemporary Jews by providing a greater understanding and knowledge of the basics of Judaism and Jewish life. Over the last 28 years, more than 1,558,574** North American Jews have been engaged Jewishly through NJOP's positive, joyous Jewish programs and experiences.

NJOP's renowned programs, such as READ HEBREW AMERICA AND CANADA, SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA, Shabbat and High Holiday Beginners Services and Crash Courses in Basic

Judaism and Jewish History, have been offered at nearly 5,000 synagogues and Jewish organizations across North America and in 40 additional countries around the globe. NJOP's ever-expanding efforts, and its keen ability to recognize the most current cultural trends, have allowed it to become an acclaimed leader in Jewish social media. Every day, tens of thousands of fans and followers are presented with a means to positively and joyously participate in Jewish life through @JewishTweets on Twitter, NJOP's *Jewish Treats* daily email and Facebook fan page. NJOP's *Jewish Treats*' YouTube channel boasts more than 1.7 million views.

Since its founding, NJOP has become one of the largest and most successful organizations, impacting broadly on Jewish engagement throughout the world .

**as of June 2016

*National Jewish Outreach Program is now NJOP.

Here's Where You Can Find NJOP Online



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