

COMMUNITY MESSENGER

Community Messenger features spiritual announcements from Oakland County religious institutions. Ten days before the desired publication date, please write: Community Messenger, c/o Beliefs & Values Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Fifth Lutheran Church, 37635 Dequindre, Troy, is the first stop for the Rebecca St. James Christmas Tour at 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 28. The concert is sponsored by "Focus on the Family" and features music from St. James' albums, "Christmas," and "God." The guest speaker is Susie Sheltonberger, editor of "Brio," a religious magazine for teens. Admission is \$10 for groups of 10 or more or \$14 per person at the door. For information, call the church at (248) 689-4664.

FASHIONS FOLLOW
The Rev. Renaye Coles and the Peaceful Waters Ministry family, in celebration of their "first" House of worship, announce their pre-holiday "Fashionable" Fellowship at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 30, at the Zion's Cultural Building, 18451 W. 10 Mile, two blocks west of Southfield Road, in Southfield. This special service includes a light buffet and an array of fashions from B's Closet. Special guest is Hugh Burrell, formerly with the Blue Pigs. The message, "I Can See Clearly," will be delivered by the Rev. Renaye Coles, a native Detroit and the spiritual leader of the non-denominational Peaceful Waters Ministry. All are welcome. For information, call (248) 569-1459.

SWEDISH SERVICE
St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 6255 Telegraph, just north of Maple, Bloomfield Township, is hosting a Swedish service at 1:15 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7. Pastor Kenneth Johnson from New Baltimore is serving as leader/preacher. Pastor Richard Chilcote, soloist, and a Scandinavian Choir will provide special music. A Swedish luncheon will be served at 11:30 a.m. For information, call (248) 646-5207.

HANUKKAH THEME
"Eilu v' Eilu," the joint adult Jew-

ish learning project sponsored by Cong. Beth Abraham Hill, Moses (West Bloomfield), Beth Shalom (Oak Park) and Brini Mashe (West Bloomfield), Hill Day School (Farmington Hills) and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism-Michigan Branch, is offering a Roah Hodesh study session in honor of the new month of Kislev. The free program begins at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, at Borders Books and Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Community educator Aviva Silverman will discuss, "The Hanukkah Song We Sing: What Do They Really Mean?" Advance registration is not required and no knowledge of Hebrew is necessary. For information, leave a message for Nancy Kaplan or Rita Abramson at (248) 788-3600, or e-mail rita@bnaimoshe.org.

VOLUNTEER EXTRAVAGANZA
Individuals, families, children and grandparents are invited to comfort the elderly, fix up a shelter, serve food to the hungry or perform other tasks at the annual Volunteer Extravaganza on Thursday, Dec. 25. Starting from the Max M. Fisher Building, 6735 Telegraph, Bloomfield Township, groups will head out to agencies and institutions in the Metro Detroit area to lend a hand or to relieve workers who wish to spend the holiday with their families. Chaired by the event are Lisa Hanson, Jeff Busch and Roni Sakwa. The volunteer network is a cooperative venture of the Jewish Federation's Community Outreach and Education Department, Young Adult Division, Women's Campaign and Education Department and Business and Professional Women. NADIV, a group of teens and young adults who have had an Israel experience and want to volunteer in the community, also participates in the program. Space is limited. Register by Monday, Dec. 8, by calling Joanie Berger at (248) 203-1470.

VILE GIFTS NEEDED
The children in Judson Center's programs have suffered abuse or neglect and usually have one wish — to have a happy and whole family. In some cases this can be achieved. In others, the best way to give a child hope is to grant a special wish for Christ-

mas. With the help of 200 plus participants each year, the Royal Oak-based Judson Center has distributed one desired gift to each child in the agency's care. Contributors are needed to purchase, wrap and send the highly treasured gifts, valued at \$30, to Judson Center for the holidays. To make a difference to those less fortunate this Christmas season by calling (248) 837-1217.

SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE
Christian Scientists will celebrate the spirit of gratitude at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 28, at First Church of Christ, 33825 Grand River, in Farmington, as part of a Thanksgiving Day service. An expression of gratitude will be offered during the latter part of the hour-long service. No collection. Child care is provided. All denominations are invited.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE
A Thanksgiving service, including testimonies of spiritual healing by Christian Scientists, will take place at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 27, at First Church of Christ, Scientist, 191 N. Chester, in downtown Birmingham and First Church of Christ, Scientist, 4975 W. Maple, Bloomfield Township. Child care will be available. All are welcome.

JEWS IN AMERICAN CULTURE
"Latte and Learning," the adult Jewish study group led by Rabbi Aaron Bergman and sponsored by the "Eilu v' Eilu" adult Jewish education consortium, is offering an eight-part series entitled, "Images of Jews in American Popular Culture," at Borders Books & Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Sessions meet from 10 to 11 a.m. on Mondays, beginning Dec. 1. The series explores the phenomenon of Jewish stereotypes in contemporary American television and film and analyzes to what extent these images are created by Jews themselves and reflect internalized stereotypes. Tuition is \$40 for the series for members and \$56 for non-members. To register, leave a message for Nancy Kaplan at (248) 788-3600, or e-mail rita@bnaimoshe.org. (248) 356-1120. Nancy Kruger is mission developer. — Compiled by special writer Rena Fulka

Rabbi from page B8

Park nearly 40 years ago. "To me, it was important to be involved in a synagogue," said Elkus, who has devoted a great deal of his time to fund-raising ventures. "At the time, Beth Shalom was the only Conservative synagogue in Oak Park."

Though he eventually moved to Farmington Hills, Elkus never considered leaving the congregation he fondly calls his second home.

"What's kept me here is that there is a terrific warmth and closeness with members," said the retired representative for Levi Strauss Co. "And I think it's important to have somebody you can look up to in the clergy. Through good times, and unfortunately when we have bad times, he's always there to support us."

Dinner co-chairwoman Anaruth Bernard of Southfield said she appreciates Nelson's warmth and his evolving approach to Conservative Judaism — especially his push for a fully egalitarian congregation allowing equal participation by men and women.

"We had three daughters and the synagogue provided a spiritual outlet for our daughters as well as our son," said Bernard, who works as a money manager. "He certainly had an impact because our daughter became a rabbi."

In fact, Rabbi Greta Bernard Brown is one of 10 congregants to enter rabbinical school from the congregation that has swelled from 400 to 700 families in the last 25 years.

Born in Bridgeport, Conn., Nelson earned a bachelor's degree in history from Brandeis

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Phil Elkus
Beth Shalom

University in Massachusetts before meeting Alicia in New York. "I was an undergraduate student and David was at NYU Law School," said Alicia, who hails from Chattanooga, Tenn. "I was going to marry a lawyer."

But it wasn't long before Alicia's husband-to-be dropped his major and enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary to make a deeper commitment to Jewish life. After ordination, the couple headed for Brazil, where Nelson led a congregation of 1,200 families for two years.

The pair continues to visit and correspond with their Portuguese-speaking friends and recently led a 17-member tour group there. Nelson's second, three-year stint in Baltimore came to a close in 1972, when he met the Beth Shalom congregation, founded 14 years prior.

"When I first came to Beth Shalom, there was a certain spirit and vitality I didn't notice in the other congregations," recalled Nelson. "I think there's more excitement today than when I came. What we're seeing is tremendous enthusiasm. You announce a class today and people fill it. People want a more

spiritual experience in their lives."

The Nelsons, who have been married 33 years, team-teach "Institute for Judaism" at the synagogue at 14601 W. Lincoln. Individually they pursue interests in the synagogue and beyond.

Alicia taught seventh grade at Hill Day School in Farmington Hills for 14 years and Beth Shalom High School for two before opening her home-based business, Tradition! Tradition!, featuring unique Judaica. She has also been involved with the Jewish Vocational Service, Keshet, the National Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah.

Nelson has served as a chaplain for the Detroit Police Department, board member of the Southfield-based Anti-Defamation League, president of both the Michigan Board of Rabbis and the Conservative Rabbis of Metropolitan Detroit and a member of the Southfield-based Jewish Association for Residential Care, the Bloomfield Hills-based Jewish Community Council and the Greater Detroit Interfaith Round Table.

Together, the Nelsons have been known to unofficially take on the role of a "Shadchan," or Jewish matchmaker. "We have 10 couples that we've fixed up," said Alicia. "In Judaism, there's a teaching that if you make three matches, you earn a place in heaven."

With his "RAV" sign still aglow behind him, Nelson quipped, "We're there."

For information on Cong. Beth Shalom's "Rededication and Dedication" weekend, call (248) 547-7970.

Chapter II

THE NEW JEWELRY

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