

Chairman's Message



By Gerald M. Schreck

When each issue of *Jewish Action* hits the newsstands, I eagerly—though somewhat guardedly—await the inevitable feedback from readers. We, of course, thoroughly appreciate the thoughtful praise we receive from our readers throughout the world, though we are not immune from the occasional sharp critique (it certainly keeps us on our toes). But all forms of feedback let us know that we are doing a job well—we are making our readers think and react, both positively and negatively. This brings me to a recent remark made by a *rav* whom I greatly revere. “Do you know why I like *Jewish Action*?” he asked me. “Because it’s unpredictable.”

That same unpredictability is something we have attempted to bring to you in this packed Rosh Hashanah issue. In the season of introspection and renewal, what better way to focus on


growth and accountability to our Creator than by taking a fresh look at those rituals and attitudes that we often take for granted? Featuring insightful articles on the meaning and significance of the blowing of the shofar, this issue draws upon some of our in-house talent. OU Executive Vice President Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb reminds us of ways to make listening to the shofar a spiritually elevating experience. OU National Director of Planning and Communications David Olivestone, a *ba'al tekiah* for the past thirty years, tells us what it's like to get up before hundreds of *mispallelim* and bring forth “wordless animal sound[s]” that he hopes will help inspire the congregation to engage in genuine, heartfelt *teshuvah*.

This issue also includes a special section on prayer, with a magnificent essay by Rabbi David Ebner, *rosh yeshivah* at Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi in Jerusalem, on the poetry within prayer, and a strongly worded article by *Jewish Action* columnist Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski on the disturbing malaise sadly found in many synagogues across the country: talking during *davening*.

And there is more. *Jewish Action* fans should have no problem recalling the controversial articles we published on the Torah Codes nearly a decade

ago. Despite its critics, Torah Codes research is continuing unabated. We revisit this contentious topic in Sarah Shapiro's in-depth interview with Harold Gans, a former cryptanalyst at the US Department of Defense who is currently a Torah Codes researcher. Finally, I invite those seeking inspiration to read Debra Goldberg's deeply personal essay, which recounts her visit to a traditional Navajo reservation in Chinle, Arizona, and how it helped her renew her commitment to become more observant.

As we start the New Year, I also want to welcome Ms. Daisy Maryles to our Board of Contributing Editors. Ms. Maryles is executive editor of *Publishers Weekly*, the industry trade journal, and is highly regarded in the world of book publishing by authors and company executives. Notwithstanding her busy schedule, Ms. Maryles is involved in a number of Orthodox causes and has pledged some of her valuable time and expertise to advance the goals of *Jewish Action*. We look forward to working with her.

Please continue to send us your comments, and be sure to check out our web site at www.ou.org/jewish_action, where you can respond directly to articles. 

OU Thanksgiving Mission

OUR BIGGEST MISSION OF THE YEAR!

Monday, November 19th –
Sunday, November 25th, 2007



**KNESSET OFFICIALS | RESTRICTED MILITARY BASES
OU KOSHER TOUR | LEARN TORAH | ANCIENT SIGHTS
SOCIAL ACTION | KIRUV CENTERS | CHESED | SDEROT
ATTEND A PRIVATE YESHIVA FAIR FOR YOUR GRADUATING SENIOR**

\$ 999/person *Double Occupancy*

\$ 1199/person *Single Occupancy*

Includes 7-night hotel stay with all Shabbat meals, daily breakfasts and lunches, daily touring and programming, and taxes. Flights not included.

Our Next Missions:

JANUARY 2008: OU Yarchei Kallah & Bar/Bat Mitzvah Mission

MAY 2008: OU Yom Ha'atzmaut 60th Anniversary Mission

Space Is Limited

For further information, please visit

www.ou.org/israelmissions

or contact Allyson Gur-Aryeh, 212.613.8124, allysong@ou.org

Orthodox Union