

2004-2005 5765 Year in Review



Faces of the RAC

Tikkun olam, helping to heal the world, is a major part of the life and focus of Rabbi Jerome Davidson, my role model. He inspired my passion for social justice; eventually I assumed leadership roles to motivate others to become active on the same critical issues.

The CSA sets policy for the entire Movement and provides the mechanism by which the RAC advocates and educates.

We spend long hours at CSA meet-

HONEY HELLER

Vice Chair, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism (CSA)



Board of Trustees, Union for Reform Judaism, and **URJ-Greater New** York Council

Member, Temple **Beth-El of Great Neck, Great Neck NY** ings hearing both sides of these issues and discussing the resolutions that support these policies.

I work with members of Union congregations to carry out the policies on the national level and now - through the Reform Jewish Voice of New York

State – at the state level. Educating congregations to take action is particularly challenging and exciting.

Keith and I support the RAC because we know how important advocacy work is to ensure that the liberal Jewish voice is heard in Washington. We appreciate the outstanding professional staff of the RAC and the wonderful legislative assistants who work incredibly hard and stand ready to help at a moment's notice.

Before I came to Washington, even before I was an elected official, I was an admirer of the Religious Action Center.

As a member of Beth Emet The Free Synagogue, I knew the RAC's work and how Jewish social activists so often draw upon its resources. Since coming to Washington, I have

gotten to see the other side of the RAC, and, especially, its effectiveness as an

advocate for the values I hold dear

Whether a delegation of high school students is visiting my office on one of the RAC's Bernard and Audre Rapoport *L'Taken* Social Justice Seminars, Rabbi Saperstein is calling

about a pressing issue, or I have the

opportunity to speak to one of the Reform Movement's wonderful events, such as the large breakfast prior to the March for Women's Lives, I constantly value our work together.

My professional journey into politics and social justice may still be in its infancy, but it was born at the RAC. There, I grew to understand what the RAC has always preached: that our politics and our religious values can and

My year at the RAC deepened my passion

must be one.

MARK LEVIN Rabbi, Congregation Beth Torah, Overland Park KS

for social justice by connecting it to Jewish values and to the Jewish

people. When I fought against President Bush's faithbased initiative, I was supporting the separation of church and state, which has allowed Judaism and all religions to flourish in America. When I helped draft the Movement's policy supporting Israel's disengagement plan, I was continuing the long tradition of Jewish activists who "seek peace and pursue it."

ROB LEVY

Legislative Correspondent,

U.S. Senator Jon S. Corzine

RAC Eisendrath Legislative

Assistant, 2003-04; RAC

Machon Kaplan

Summer Intern.

Congregation

M'kor Shalom,

Cherry Hill NJ

2002

Member,

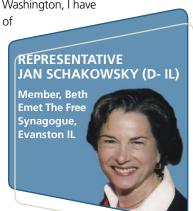
I have been attending RAC events for more than 30 years. While a student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, I attended my

first Consultation on Conscience. For the 17 years my congregation has been in existence, I have brought our Confirmation Class to the Bernard and Audre Rapoport L'Taken Social Justice Seminars.

Congregation Beth Torah has a very active social justice program. Over the years we have consulted with the RAC's Eisendrath Legislative Assistants and utilized RAC

programs to enhance our own programming. We received the Irving J. Fain Social Justice Award a number of years ago, and we continue to attempt innovative social justice programs with an eye toward what is being accomplished by the RAC.

We live in an age in which Jews seek spirituality. Some meditate, some pray, some study, and some find their spirituality in repairing the world. We absolutely require a national and international vision of events and means of acting in order to be most effective in bringing God's vision into the world. The RAC provides that model for bringing God into our lives by becoming God's partner in creating the world as God would prefer it to be.



a message from Rabbi David Saperstein

The RAC's ability to organize leaders and advocates around the nation is unique in the Jewish community, for the RAC represents strong synagogues led in every state and countless communities across North America by committed rabbis and social justice activists.

The Reform Jewish Movement's remarkable network of 900+ congregations and 1,800+ rabbis, with their relationship to other religious and civic leaders in their communities, has been nurtured by the RAC for more than 40 years.

Today, electronic communications are making an incredible difference in our world, and in our work. These new tools represent an information revolution that only a handful of visionaries could have predicted even ten years ago. Study after study – buttressed by our own experiences – demonstrates the importance, power, and potential of electronic communications. What may seem to some a question of mere mechanics has brought about a fundamental change in how information is collected, distributed, and used.

As the Internet and electronic communications have changed the wider world, so too have they played a powerful role in organizing and empowering the Reform Jewish community, both internally and in relation to that wider world. As the reach of e-mail in particular continues to grow, our community leaders have become sophisticated consumers of information. To be effective, we must reach them in ways that command their attention.

Thankfully, many of our most generous supporters understand the need for new communications tools. With support from the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, the Lois & Richard England Family Foundation, the Gus and Barbara Kuhn Fund, and the Robert Sillins Family Foundation, we launched our newly designed website in October 2004, and in June 2005, we unveiled an updated e-mail system that allows us to graphically design and customize messages based on an individual's congressional district, state, and personal preferences.

In early 2005, we also launched our Cell Phone Advocacy Network (RAC CAN), which sends a text message to subscribers' cell phones informing them of crucial and pending legislation when their representatives are "undecided" or important "swing votes" on a specific piece of legislation. The RAC now has more than 6,500 subscribers to these e-mail and advocacy networks.

Have these new tools been effective? Absolutely. In 2004, more than 12,500 letters were sent to members of Congress and other government leaders using RAC's online Legislative Action Center; as I write this in September 2005, more than 17,000 letters already have been sent since January 1.

Together, the RAC and the Union for Reform Judaism also have installed a system that enables our staff to easily update and manage our websites and share information among other Reform Jewish Movement and congregational websites by using "news feeds," increasing communication dramatically throughout the Reform



Jewish world. Our newly redesigned website, launched in October 2004, has more than 1,000 pages and downloadable publications. Visits to the site continue to increase, with thousands of individuals accessing the site on a monthly basis.

One of the most exciting additions to our website is the RACBlog, a new weblog featuring commentary and insight by the staff of the RAC and guest bloggers from throughout the Reform Jewish Movement. The blog enables our web users to experience a more personal interaction with the RAC.

As a result of all these innovations, we have greatly increased our ability to serve as a rich resource for program ideas and essential practical information, as well as a gateway to the resources of our many coalition partners. In February 2005, we hosted a State of the Union Wrap-Up webcast with our Associate Director, Mark Pelavin. This live interactive program followed the President's State of the Union Address and the Democratic response. Reform Jews from across the country participated in this "first" for our Movement, posing questions to Mark during the webcast.

Recently, when Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor announced her retirement and Chief Justice Rehnquist died, the RAC created a variety of resources concerning judicial nominations, including www.AskJohnRoberts.com and www.askHarrietMiers.com. These initiatives – another first for the RAC – are web-based question banks that provide an opportunity for all who share an active interest in the future of our Supreme Court to suggest questions to share with Senate Judiciary Committee members and the media prior to the confirmation hearings.

I am very proud that members of the Jewish community and many of our non-Jewish colleagues rely on the RAC's electronic resources to help them turn convictions into action. And I am very grateful for your support in all our work.

Social Action in Action



Participants of the Tzevet Mitzvot: Adult Mitzvah Corps in Israel



Rabbi David Saperstein with Eric Stillman, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, rescuing Torahs from Touro Synagogue in New Orleans



Naomi Greenspan, Program Associate for the Commission on Interreligious Affairs, assisting at the Union for Reform Judaism Jacobs' Ladder Hurricane Relief Distribution Warehouse in Utica. MS



Mark Pelavin, Associate Director of the RAC, at the Vatican with Pope Benedict XVI as part of a delegation of Jewish leaders



Rabbi David Saperstein speaking to the press at the Supreme Court following the rulings on the Ten Commandments



Participants in *Machon* Kaplan, RAC's summer college program, enjoy an afternoon at the World War II Memorial



Bernard and Audre Rapoport *L'Taken* Seminar participants from Congregation Albert in Albuquerque, NM, meeting with Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM)

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism Consultation

Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS) speaks to participants concerning sex trafficking and Sudan



Ben Cohen, co-founder of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, uses Oreos cookies to demonstrate U.S. budgetary priority concerns



Michael J. Fox with RAC's Rabbi Lynne Landsberg, Senior Advisor on Disability Issues

Consultation ON CONSCIENCE



Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-PA), far left, with members of Women of Reform Judaism

Nearly five hundred rabbis and synagogue activists from across North America gathered in Washington in March for the RAC's Consultation on Conscience. Featured speakers included actor/activist Michael J. Fox, author Irshad Manji, activist and ice-cream maker Ben Cohen, and seven U.S. Senators and Representatives, including Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and Sen. Mike De Wine (R-OH).



Irshad Manji, the best-selling author of *The Trouble with Islam Today*, addresses the conference



Doug Cotler, Grammy awardwinning songwriter and musician, song-leading for *Shacharit* (morning service)

RAC Donors

40th Anniversary Capital Campaign

In 2001, the RAC embarked upon an ambitious campaign to renovate its historic building and increase its endowment. We are grateful to these generous donors whose names are listed on the Wall of Honor in the RAC's lobby in recognition of their gifts of \$10,000 or more to the Capital Campaign.

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In memory of our beloved parents
& grandparents
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Jocelyn Dan Wurzburg & her children Cheryl, Minda, & Richard

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Lynn & Michael Reichgott

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Judith Lasker Kaufman

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In memory of Rabbi Harold Saperstein from his family, friends, & students

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Member, Commission on Social
Action

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Rabbi Bennett F. Miller & Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick NJ

Rabbi James & Julie Mirel In memory of Rabbi Harold I. Saperstein

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North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods

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In honor of Ernest M. Solomon, M.D., Social Action Commission Member, 1957-84 From his family

Rabbi Jeffrey B. Stiffman Temple Shaare Emeth, St. Louis MO

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Temple Isaiah Lafayette CA

Temple Rodef Shalom Clergy Falls Church VA

Temple Rodef Shalom Social Action Committee Falls Church VA

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Women of Reform Judaism

Marilynn & Paul Yentis

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The RAC's loyal and generous supporters help us sustain the essential social justice work in which we are engaged, day in and day out. Our contributors understand the biblical imperative to pursue justice, and they know that turning religious belief into action requires significant financial support. Truly a grassroots organization, the RAC depends on many hundreds of individual donors and foundations to help us meet our programming needs through gifts to the *Tzedek* Society.

Amcha for Tsedakah The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, Inc. Temple B'nai Shalom of Fairfax Station VA, Rabbi's Discretionary The Samuel Bronfman Foundation The Nathan Cummings Foundation The David Geffen Fund Gus and Barbara Kuhn Fund The Lear Family Foundation The Lincy Foundation Metzger-Price Fund Open Society Institute Righteous Persons Foundation Robert Sillins Family Foundation Stone Charitable Fund United Jewish Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh Betty and Bernard Werthan Foundation Women of Reform Judaism

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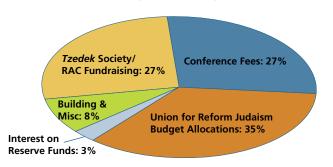
Lois Zoller

Rabbi Peter and Sheila Kasdan

RAC budget summary 5765

Our goal in presenting these charts is to provide a meaningful picture of the RAC's budget. To accomplish that we have allocated salaries and benefits expenses according to program areas in which staff members have responsibilities.

Income for Year 5765 (\$2,294,943)



Expenses for 5765 (\$2,294,943)



RAC Staff 5765

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director and Counsel ® Mark J. Pelavin, Associate Director Leroy Bailey, Jr., Maintenance ® Jonetta Copeland, Assistant to the Associate Director ® Stanley Cowan, Administrative Director ® Jacob Fain, Senior Legislative Assistant ® Joshua Friedman, Eisendrath Legislative Assistant ® Eric Gold, Eisendrath Legislative Assistant ® Jonathan Laden, Development Associate ® Rabbi Lynne Landsberg, Senior Advisor, Disability Issues ® Dr. Sherry Levy-Reiner, Director of Development ® Emily Kane, Eisendrath Legislative Assistant ® Rabbi Michael Namath, Program Director ® Daphne Price, Assistant to the Director ® David Reiner, Machon Kaplan Program Coordinator ® Alexis Rice, Communications Director ® Stefani Rozen, Conference Manager ® Erin Scharff, Eisendrath Legislative Assistant ® David Segal, Program Associate, Commission on Interreligious Affairs ® Sean Thibault, Web Manager ® Sandra TooGood, Receptionist ® Tali Weinberg, Eisendrath Legislative Assistant ® Barbara Weinstein, Legislative Director ® Dena Wigder, Eisendrath Legislative Assistant

Eisendrath Summer Legislative Rabbinic Assistants: Judy Bachrach • Ana Bonheim

Interns: Emily Einsohn • Elayna Fremes • Arielle Gingold • Adam Greenwald • Noah Gronlund-Jacob • Aaron Gunning • Victor Levin • Alexander Raileanu

Design /Layout: Nayman Design www.naymandesign.com ©2005 Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism



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