

## People Power Weekend Held at Temple Israel

Rabbi Rachel Cowan was the 1991 Blumenthal Scholar-in-Residence at Temple Israel, Feb. 1-3 for the annual People Power Weekend. Rabbi Cowan is an expert in working with converts to Judaism and interfaith couples and has presented lectures and workshops widely across the country. She is coauthor of **Mixed Blessings: Overcoming the Stumbling Blocks in an Interfaith Marriage**, a book she and her husband Paul wrote together before his death three years ago. Even after one partner in a marriage has converted to Judaism, she emphasized, there are usually issues which become problematic within the marriage because of differences in each person's religious and cultural background.

Rabbi Cowan was welcomed to the community with Shabbat services Friday night. She talked about her experience as a convert to Judaism and how she came to be a Jew by choice, and an enthusiastic one at that. Her husband described his own highly assimilated family in his book, **An Orphan in History**. She related several stories from their early life together which showed that neither of them originally thought that Judaism would be so important as it came to be later in their lives. Early in their relationship Paul said he would be fasting for Yom Kippur as they both drove across the country. When they reached his sister's house, she drolly informed him that Yom Kippur wasn't until the following week.

They found it important to give their children a feeling of belonging and gradually added more Jewish content to their lives. The Sabbath and holidays became special family times. Rabbi Cowan also talked about her own strong interest in Jewish history and how much she wanted her children to understand their heritage. As she and Paul grew in their own love and appreciation for being Jewish, they passed it on and shared it with their children. Finally she came to feel that supporting her family Jewishly was not enough for her and she decided to convert.

She studied and learned and felt that rabbinical school was



Rabbi Cowan

a way for her to both continue to study and also a way to put her Jewish knowledge into action. She was ordained by Hebrew Union College and is associated with the conservative synagogue where she and Paul helped to develop a school when her children were young.

On Saturday afternoon she led a discussion and workshop for those interested in the topic of interfaith marriage.

At the Sunday morning discussion group Rabbi Cowan discussed many issues related to

synagogue ritual and the need for increasing the level of familiarity and comfort which participants feel with Jewish liturgy and ritual. Women have particular concerns, as their experience with participation in Jewish religious life and their role in synagogue participation has been evolving and changing in recent years. Men also may not be as familiar with ritual as they might like to be. Young people also need opportunities to increase their participation and enjoyment of their Jewishness.

Knowledge, Rabbi Cowan emphasized, is power. If we as individuals and as congregations educate ourselves Jewishly, then we will be more effective in meeting the needs of all, including those who are converts and those who are in intermarriages. The emphasis is on the journey each of us must make, and educating ourselves will help us to make our journey more meaningful.

The community is indeed fortunate that the Blumenthals sponsor this annual People Power Weekend.

— Cynthia Chapman



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## The Knubies Jewish Singles 21-35

### First Quarter Report

By Darren Mond

This is the 1991 first quarter business report on the Knubies. Being in the business of fun, the Knubies have had a successful and productive start for the year. The new year was heralded in with the normal pomp and circumstance at the Mond's abode. Approximately 60 Knubies celebrated to usher in the new year with a few die hards lasting until 4:30 a.m. We reconvened later in January at the Mond's house to cheer for the Bills and Giants in the Super Bowl. Pizza and beer seemed to be everywhere.

February events started on the 20th with a movie night, followed by a games night on the 24th. Many new faces were to be found and everyone felt quite

at home with each other. March events planned are roller skating on the 3rd and dinner at Fridays followed by the Comedy Zone on the 24th.

Thanks go to Mark Gruenburg for editing our newsletter, "Knubies Knews," which informs our members of date changes, details on parties, and updates on ongoing programs such as our bowling league. By the way, we would also like to thank Robyn Drinnen for doing such a good job organizing and officiating the bowling league. If you would like to join us for upcoming events or want more information please contact Robert Gleiberman at 537-5625 or Darren Mond at 847-3959. Let us add you to our mailing list.

### Schedule of Events

March 10 — Bowling League, Centennial Lanes, 7:00 p.m.  
March 24 — Dinner/Comedy; Fridays/Comedy Zone



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