



March 24, 2005
What's new with JSPAN?

As spring nears, JSPAN has planned several exciting and educational events for our members and friends. See below for more information about our spring Parlor Meetings, our upcoming Annual Event for members, and JSPAN's Death Penalty Policy Center's "Live from Death Row" presentation.

As an organization for change, JSPAN strives to advance progressive social policies on the critical issues of our time. Help spread the news about us by forwarding this email and the link to our website <http://www.jspan.org> to your family, friends, and colleagues who might have an interest in joining JSPAN or serving on any of JSPAN's projects. If you haven't joined JSPAN, please do so now at <http://www.jspan.org>.

Read more below about opportunities to educate yourself and to get involved.

- 1) JSPAN invites our members and prospective members to our first Parlor Meeting to introduce JSPAN! [Click here](#) for more information!
 - 2) [Click here](#) to read articles JSPAN recommends regarding the Terri Schiavo case.
 - 3) Read about what JSPAN and Hadassah accomplished on March 15 in the State of Stem Cells March on the State Capitol, part of a nationwide effort to promote federal funding for stem cell research. [Click here!](#)
 - 4) Read JSPAN's OpEd sent to the Jewish Exponent on capital punishment. [Click here!](#)
 - 5) Learn more about why JSPAN opposes the death penalty in the United States. JSPAN's debut of our presentation "Live From Death Row" is coming up soon! [Click here](#) to find out where!
 - 6) JSPAN is excited to announce our first ever Annual Meeting for members. See below for preliminary information. [Click here!](#)
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JSPAN's first Parlor Meeting to introduce JSPAN to prospective members!

Members may attend with a prospective member. .

The Spring JSPAN Parlor Meeting will be held on April 10th, 2:00-4:00 pm, in the Northeastern Philadelphia suburbs. Later meeting dates will follow in the western suburbs and at a downtown location.

The speaker on April 10th will be JSPAN board member, **Theodore Mann**, who will present JSPAN's goals and policies.

Theodore Mann: Philadelphia lawyer, 1952 to date. National Chairman, Jewish Council on Public Affairs (JCPA) (1976-80), Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (1978-80), National Conference on Soviet Jewry (1981-83), American Jewish Congress (1984-88), MAZON - A Jewish Response to Hunger (Founding Chair, 1985-90), Project Nishma (1988-97), Israel Policy Forum (1997-2001-Executive Committee Chairman).

Please target people you know in the northeast region who might be interested in attending.

Please RSVP by Monday, April 4. Upon RSVP, the exact location of the parlor meeting will be provided. Space is limited, so contact us soon!

RSVP to jspan@jspan.org (Or call Emily Broad at 610-952-0393 with questions.)

Please forward this email to anyone who might be interested!



JSPAN recommends several articles on the Terri Schiavo Case

The Schiavo Tragedy

Editorial from *The Jewish Week*

Thursday, March 24, 2005

Under all the political static and legal maneuvering, it's important to remember that the case of Terri Schiavo, the Florida woman judged to be in a persistent vegetative state, is an unimaginable human tragedy. It is a tragedy for the parents who hold out hope she could someday recover, and it's a tragedy for the husband who claims to be respecting her wish not to linger in a twilight world between life and death.

Increasingly that point is getting lost as Terri Schiavo's case becomes a cause for "pro-life" zealots who hyperbolically denounce a court's decision to remove her feeding tube as a victory for the "culture of death," and for those who see the campaign to preserve her life as nothing more than religious opportunism.

Congress didn't help matters with its extraordinary intervention in the case, focusing its legislation on a single individual. From the beginning, the congressional effort smacked of partisan politics. That only added to widespread public doubts about the motives of lawmakers, as several polls early in the week showed.

The late-night congressional decision overriding a state court's ruling in the case also undermines the independence of the judiciary at a time when that fundamental precept of American democracy is under mounting attack from groups that claim "judicial terrorism" is laying siege to marriage and religion.

This isn't to say that Congress should remain mute on the growing number of controversies involving medical ethics. On the contrary, the advance of medical technology has far outpaced laws that regulate its use. Congress can and should play a constructive role by listening to religious leaders and ethicists, as well as doctors and scientists, and writing laws that address both moral and medical concerns.

That's a tough assignment and it requires a thoughtful, sober and well-informed approach. That's not what we saw this week, as Congress plunged headlong into the Terri Schiavo case. That's a shame for a nation that needs updated guideposts for this brave new world of science and medicine. And it doesn't help a family that needs our compassion and understanding, not a political free-for-all.

JSPAN also recommends the following link to an excellent article in *The Jewish Week* giving the views of Rabbis and other Jewish scholars on the removal of the feeding tube:

<http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=10682>

For additional background, on the ever-evolving situation involving Terri Schiavo, JSPAN Bioethics Policy Center Liaison, Dave Lubin [cell - 609-790-4228; EchelonDave@comcast.net] is at your disposal.

Meanwhile, once again, as a reminder, the Bioethics Policy Center of JSPAN invites all members and supporters of JSPAN to get involved in the formulation of working groups that will make recommendations regarding positions JSPAN ought to take on issues relating to technological advances in the medical field that are of special concern to the Jewish community. Please send an e-mail to jspan@jspan.org to advise us of your interest.

**Report from SOS: State of Stem Cells-
Date with the State**



March 15th, 2005- Harrisburg, PA

Ninety Philadelphia participants were joined by other Hadassah members from Harrisburg and Pittsburgh at the morning session and were addressed by Representatives Josephs and Frankel, who had introduced House Bill 864 the previous day. To view the text of this Act, known as the Stem Cell Research Act, [click here.](#)

The participants then broke into groups to meet with their own Senators and Representatives. The purpose was to educate their legislators about the importance of embryonic stem cell research, which has the potential to result in the cure of such diseases as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson's, and more. Emphasis was placed on the need for non-partisan broad-based support. Economic advantages were also discussed. Governor Rendell also addressed these issues when the group reassembled. His goal is to have this enacted by the end of 2005.

Nationally, advocates of Stem Cell Research marched on every states capital this month.

JSPAN Death Penalty Op Ed Exponent Letter

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To the Editor:

We, the Jewish Social Policy Action Network ("JSPAN"), are writing in reply to Joshua Runyan's article "Pros and Cons of a Sniper, Suddenly Saved."

As we understand the facts of the Lee Boyd Malvo case, the observation of Ken Karbeling presented in Mr. Runyan's article suggesting that Mr. Malvo would have been subjected to the death penalty under traditional Jewish law is simply wrong.

Apart from the troubling circumstances of his youth and background, and beyond concerns for compassion and tshuvah that under Jewish law surpass the importance of retribution, ancient Jewish law required eyewitnesses to the crime. Those eyewitnesses were required to warn the person about to commit a capital offense of the consequences of his actions.

And, the person about to commit the crime was required to be competent and to acknowledge explicitly that he understood that he would be put to death if he proceeded to commit the offense. The deterrent effect of capital punishment, thus, rested in the witnesses' clear and present warning, the potential criminal's overt manifestation of his understanding of the consequences, and the immediate opportunity presented to the potential criminal to reconsider and refrain from engaging in the wrongful conduct. As we understand the facts, none of this was present in the Malvo case. Under the stringent ancient Jewish procedural standards, Mr. Malvo would not have been executed. We are disappointed that Mr. Runyan and The Jewish Exponent failed to explain this to their readers.

We believe educating Mr. Karbeling and the rest of the public, including educating people about what our faith actually teaches, is an urgent priority. That is why JSPAN has committed itself to educating the Jewish community about the realities of the death penalty as applied in the United States and, in particular, Jewish perspectives on the death penalty.

We encourage your readers to visit our website www.jspan.org for more information.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Fox
JSPAN Vice President

JSPAN's Death Penalty Policy Center Presents: **"Live from Death Row"**

JSPAN is proud to announce the first date for its series of presentations about why we oppose the death penalty in the United States. This presentation will take place on Saturday, April 16 at the Shabbat Services at Congregation Beth Am Israel. Beth Am Israel is located at 49 Haverford Road in Ardmore.

We will keep you posted about upcoming presentations in other locations. Let us know if you have a venue that you think would be good for this type of forum!

LIVE FROM DEATH ROW:

As part of its mission to promote the Jewish value of social justice, JSPAN would like to offer people the opportunity to hear directly from lawyers who have represented men and women sentenced to death. JSPAN will arrange for audiences to hear directly from a former death row inmate who has been exonerated. The presentation will address the use of the death penalty in the United States (and here in Philadelphia); the issues of race, poverty, mental illness and poor legal representation in determining who is sentenced to death; the conditions of confinement that death row inmates face; and finally, about the strong Talmudic tradition counseling against the use of the death penalty.

JSPAN's First ANNUAL MEETING!

JSPAN will host **Reverend Cedric A. Harmon**, Associate Director for Religious Outreach at Americans United for Separation of Church and State, for our first ever Annual Meeting. This meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 25** at a downtown location TBA.

This meeting will be for all JSPAN members. If you're not a member yet, [join now!](#)

Rev. Cedric A. Harmon: Cedric A. Harmon is the Associate Field Director for Religious Outreach at Americans United for Separation of Church and State in Washington, DC.

Cedric acts as the liaison between Americans United and various religious communities, religious leaders, clergy and congregations nationwide. He encourages active and vocal involvement in matters of religion in public life. He is committed to basic human rights, dignity and equality for each person. Cedric is a licensed and ordained minister affiliated with both the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America.

Cedric is a graduate of Emerson College, Boston, MA and is pursuing a theological degree from Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC. His past work experience includes the National Association of Broadcasters, Dance/USA, and the Close Up Foundation. Cedric also serves on the National Religious Leadership Roundtable, the Black Church Initiative DC Organizing Committee, Advisory Committee of the National Black Religious Summit on Sexuality and has worked in church led HIV/AIDS Ministry for over eight years among many other community activities.

Cedric is a native of the St. Louis metropolitan area and currently resides in the District of Columbia.

To learn more about Americans United, view their website at www.au.org.

Thank you for your continued involvement in JSPAN. We look forward to working with you and seeing you at future JSPAN events!

Please visit us at <http://www.jspan.org> to find out about all the new things going on at JSPAN.

If you have received this email multiple times in error, please let us know!

