

2007 Torch Award Submission

Part I. Identification Information

Submission Identifier Code: 190

Full Title: Yom HaShoah Candles: From [impersonal] Mailing, To [rewarding] Hand Delivery

Entry Category: 1 – FJMC Programs

Contact Person: David Millman

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Club Number & Name: 969 Brandeis Men's Club

Number of Club Members: 100

Synagogue Name, City, State: Temple Israel, Ridgewood, NJ

Club President Name (current): Denis Vogel

Club President name (July'07): Denis Vogel

Person Preparing Entry: David Millman

Email address of person preparing entry: millman2@optonline.net

Date of entry submission: April 19, 2007

Part II. Summary / Press Release

IIa. Summary Information

The Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle Program (YCP) had always been a one-man operation: the FJMC mailed the candles to synagogue members, and the club broke even from donations. The decision to **HAND DELIVER** the candles introduced a fair amount of **WORK** and **RISK**, but it **PAID OFF** handsomely in a number of ways:

- **INVOLVEMENT** of club and synagogue members: prepping the boxes
- **INVOLVEMENT** of Religious School students: receiving and carrying home the candles
- increased **VISIBILITY** of the YCP: 2 weeks of candle handouts from a table in the synagogue lobby, plus mail/bulletin/bimah announcements for delivery volunteers
- increased YCP **COVERAGE** to synagogue non-members: office and school staff, non-member pre-Aleph school students
- rewarding **PARENT-CHILD ACITVITY**: delivering candles on the 1-hour routes => performing a mitzvah, achieving community service credit
- **GRATEFUL RECIPIENTS**: someone came all the way to their home to hand them a candle
- **INCREASED PROFIT**: lower costs, higher income; looking to expand Holocaust programming (Museum trip?)

Iib. Press Release Body with Title

Yom HaShoah Candles: From [impersonal] Mailing, To [rewarding] Hand Delivery

The Brandeis Men's Club of Temple Israel, Ridgewood, NJ, added a major improvement to their annual Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle Program for Holocaust Remembrance: they've shifted from having the candles mailed out, to hand delivering them to all the local families. This demanded a much greater effort to now prep the candle boxes, manage the synagogue and Religious School handouts, and derive the 1-hour door-to-door routes for the 180+ deliveries. Fortunately, the rewards were worth it:

- visibility of the Yellow Candle Program was significantly expanded, as a variety of people got involved with preparing the candle boxes, carrying them home to their families, and delivering them door-to-door.
- a number of non-members have now receive candles, including the office and school staff, and the pre-Aleph Religious School families.
- delivering candles has become a wonderful parent-child community service event, and recipients are most grateful.

While increasing awareness of Yom HaShoah, the Brandeis Men's Club has also cut its Yellow Candle Program costs by 50%, and hopes this more involved, personal approach will increase donations enough to expand its Holocaust remembrance programming.

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Part III. Self Assessment of Entry

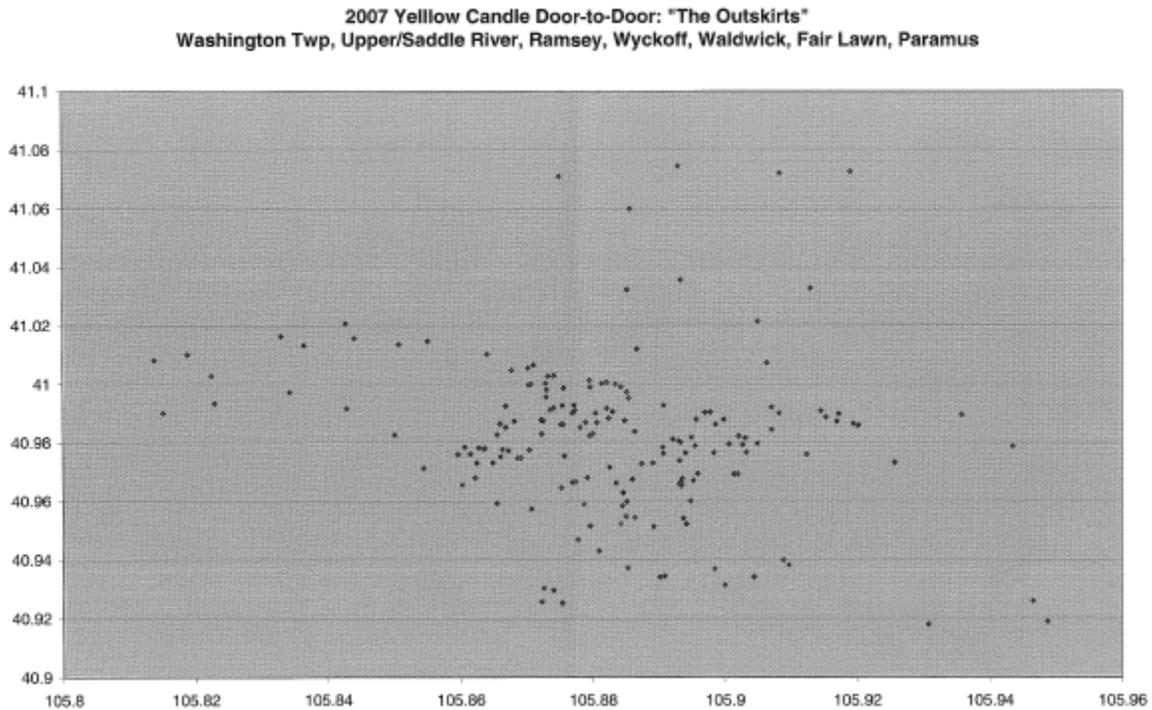
1. Completeness and Goals: The program is complete; all goals were met, including the 2 primary ones: 1 - hand out / hand deliver Yellow Candles to all local members (exceeded: covered the membership and then some), and 2 - reduce the costs of the Yellow Candle Program (went from \$1200 to \$660). Next challenge: offload work of Yellow Candle Chairman by getting more people to prep the delivery routes and maps.

2. Presentation and Documentation: Program achievements are all documented. The skeptics are still in awe about the steps used to derive the 15 or so 1-hour routes to hand deliver the remaining 180+ candles (both a major challenge and key to success). Solution involved an 8-digit Latitude and Longitude lookup/normalization of each delivery address, some fancy spreadsheet sorting, scatter-plot charting, “eyeball” sub-optimization into tightly-clustered routes, reverse translation back into route listings, and neighborhood street map highlighting to greatly speed up delivery process. Route clustering from the scatter plots are show below. Is my engineering background starting to show?
3. Achievements: First, we achieved the coverage and cost goals: yellow candle to all synagogue members and beyond, costs down from \$1200 to \$660. Publicity consisted of a school handout and mailed letters to Dalet/Hey, a poster with candles in the lobby, manned table handing out candles for 2 Sundays, *bimah* and email and bulletin announcements. Plus, there were other benefits: cooperative relationship between Men’s Club and the Religious School (new school director this year), opportunity for a wonderful parent-child community service event, increased program visibility, increased program involvement, extra candles for use/handouts at interfaith Holocaust service, and a *kvelling* rabbi. Hopefully: increased income. Marketing key: solicit volunteers by phrasing the program as a *mitzvah*.
4. Enhanced Image: Handouts and hand delivery get more notice than a package simply arriving in the mail. Since “FJMC” is printed on the box, and both FJMC and our club are in the letter, image is enhanced. New approach was enhanced by the experience and feedback of our fellow NNJR members.
5. Info for Others: Yes and No. The delivery routing was always the biggest challenge. We solved it, but it’s quite involved (takes 3 consecutive 6-hour nights to prep the delivery routes). This being the 2nd year, the algorithm was refined and we now intend to document all the steps for future years. This will help others shift from Yellow Candle mailing to hand delivery. Here’s a major piece of the puzzle: go here to perform batch latitude/longitude address conversion (about 50 addresses/minute, but double/check the results): <http://stevemorse.org/jcal/latlon.php>
6. Club Building: Instead of just 1 person, 10 (of the 100 club members) were involved in the box preparation, and 5 in the parent/child delivery. Besides the wonderful feedback, we’ve actually steered 1 of these people into a club officer position within a year.
7. Club Administration: The program directly led one person into a club officer position, and we’re working on several others who have become active since.
8. Program Source and Uniqueness: We always had FJMC mail the candles. Last year we went looking for revenue at a budget meeting, without “fundraising”, so we decided to raise YCP up out of break-even mode: decrease the cost with candle handouts and door-to-door delivery. In theory, latitude-longitude coordinates and some clever spreadsheet sorting could be used to derive workable 1-hour delivery zones comprising 12-15 houses each; fortunately, we found an address conversion site on the web. “Community Service credit” was worked out with the school director for Dalet and Hey students, then we cooked up the mailings and inserts and handouts, and went to work. This year: we moved up the timetable before Pesach, added a return address envelope to the box, and improved the zones (from lat-long 4x4 ranged blocks, to scatter plots manually clustered

with multi-house street optimization). Next year we plan to heavily push a campaign to send candles to out-of-towners (parents, children at college).

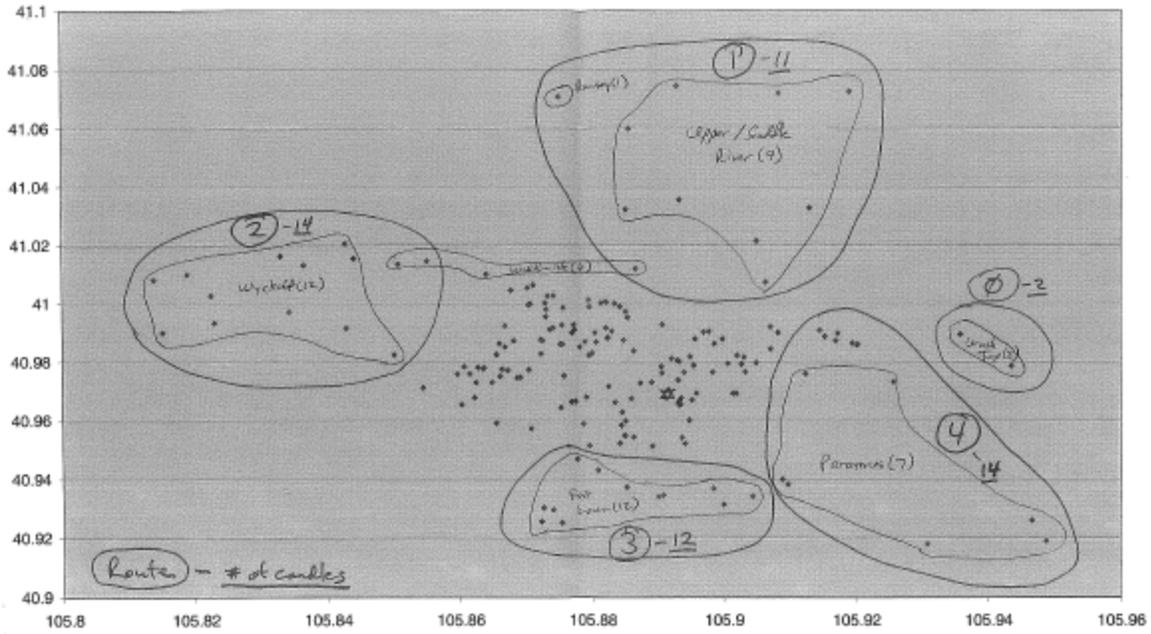
- 9. Program Adaptation: The program is obviously adapted from the traditional FJMC Yellow Candle Program. Although Torch Awards have been given for a variety of Yellow Candle Program improvements, we haven't seen the approach we took for delivery routing.
- 10. Joint Credit: The program is completely funded and managed by the Brandeis Men's Club. In addition, School and Synagogue families volunteered to do some of the door-to-door candle deliveries.

Scatter Plot of all 177 Delivery Addresses (latitude-longitude coordinates)



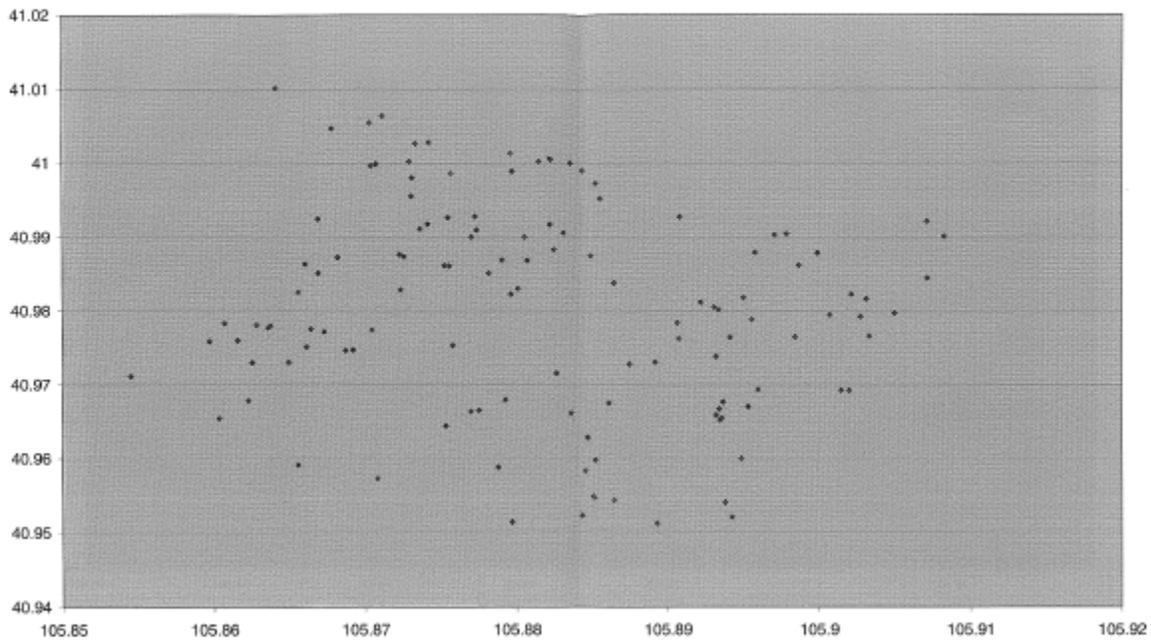
Route Clustering of the "Outer Towns"

2007 Yellow Candle Door-to-Door: "The Outskirts"
Washington Twp, Upper/Saddle River, Ramsey, Wyckoff, Waldwick, Fair Lawn, Paramus



Scatter Plot of Remaining 124 Delivery Addresses

2007 Yellow Candle Door-to-Door: "Local Towns"
Ridgewood, Glen Rock, Midland Park



Route Clustering of the "Local Towns"

2007 Yellow Candle Door-to-Door: "Local Towns"
Ridgewood, Glen Rock, Midland Park

