



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
15 North Market Street, Staunton, VA 24401 (540) 886-4091

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1412, Staunton VA 24402

Web Address: <http://www.thoi.org>

Our mission is to perpetuate Jewish life and identity through a welcoming community of spirituality, learning, service, joy and worship.

January 2008, Tevet/ Shevat 5768

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,

Shalom! The festival of lights has come and gone, with all its' attendant activities, food, and fun. I hope you were able to have your fill of Latkes (also called Levivot, or potato pancakes) and Sufganiyot (jelly filled donuts), and play Dreidel (game played with a top) for gelt (literally, gold, meaning coins or small valuables, treasures, and treats). ☺

We have the secular New Year at hand. In Israel, most people love a party, so they use this as an excuse. They call it Silvester. It is not quite the blow-out event that many here make it, but it is an opportunity for a good time with friends and family.

The Jewish Calendar & Holidays

TEVET → SHEVAT

Rosh Chodesh (the New Month) for Tevet took place on the 10th of December. Tevet ends on January 7th, and Rosh Chodesh for Shevat will be on the 8th of January. Shevat will run until February 6th, and the 6th and 7th are Rosh Chodesh for Adar. This is a leap year, so it is Adar 1, and in March the month of Adar 2 will begin.

The Congregational Calendar – Services

See the website (www.thoi.org) or the calendar for the specific Shabbat services schedule. Our last December Shabbat service at THOI will be on the 28th.

We had a private naming ceremony for Naveah Holloway who was given her Jewish name with her family present on December 2nd.

Please know that we always seek congregant and guest participation in services throughout the year. If you are interested in taking a role in a service, please be in touch with Rabbi Joe. Roles include: reading Torah, reading Haftarah, delivering a Devar Torah, serving as Gabbai (the "MC" for the Torah service), or having an honor. The Honors we usually confer include being called up for an Aliyah (saying the blessings for the Torah or the Haftarah), serving as Hagbah (lift, hold, and carry the Torah), Gelilah (undressing and dressing the Torah), or Petichah Usegurah (opening and closing the Ark).

Coming up soon, we have Tu Bi'Shevat (the 15th of Shevat, also known as the New Year for the Trees). It falls this year on the 22nd of January. The usual celebration is to hold a seder (an ordered liturgy and meal) to talk about it and to use the produce of trees as the main (and symbolic) food at the seder. This is very similar to Passover, in that there too, we have food as symbols, and we consume

the symbols (we are what we eat!). ☺

Tu Bi'Shevat is a way of implementing the Mitzvah (commandment) concerning allowing a tree to establish a healthy root system prior to taking fruit from it for commercial use. It is required to allow a tree to have at least four years to fully establish its root system. Tu Bi'Shevat is the day that trees have their 'birthday' so that their age can be counted. This date was selected because it was thought to be the first day on which the sap is rising in the trees after their dormant period, and it is based on the budding and flowering of the almond tree, because that is the first tree to blossom each year in Israel.

In Judaism, trees are also seen as having spiritual and mystical significance. Torah is described as a tree of life, Kabbalah (mystical thought in Judaism) speaks of the sephirotic tree (the 'tree' that describes the emanations of G-d in our world) as having its' roots in heaven and its' branches and fruit in the world, and humans are described in terms of a tree in many places. Trees are used as symbols of life, and also of connection between heaven and earth.

This regard for trees and other living things goes back to the Torah. We see that it is forbidden to uproot trees when besieging a city, or to poison the ground so it will not grow food for the enemies. It is explained that this is harmful to the world, the earth, and we may not take actions against the earth which G-d created, because it is not ours, only lent to us to use and to care for it.

Tu Bi'Shevat has expanded in recent times to be more widely a celebration of creation, focusing on nature and our relation to it. Ecology and preservation, protection, and care for the earth and its' living components has come to be seen as a central feature for many. An entire range of practices that are ecologically friendly have been incorporated, and there is even an approach to living within Judaism called Eco-Kashrut, which holds that to be kosher (fit) an action must also be low impact on the world, and leave the smallest possible footprint. Today, some people are expanding this idea even further to include the carbon footprint that each of us makes. As you can see, Judaism has always had regard for the environment and ecology. Tu Bi'Shevat is the holiday that most calls this to mind.

The Congregational Calendar – Events

There is a Torah Lishmah at 6:30 on Friday, December 28th. Bring your meal, and eat while we talk about the Torah prior to our Shabbat service.

Two fun events in January: the Shorty youth group fund-raising dinner and service on the 11th at THOI, and the Tu Bi'Shevat Seder on January 25th, with our Shabbat service that night to begin at 8 pm.

More fun events will be held in February. On the 3rd at 3 pm we will have a Song Session and dinner. Come, learn old and new melodies and songs for our services, and have a great time. Then, on the 24th, at 3 pm, there will be a concert by Lyrissa. Invite everyone who would enjoy great music in a lovely setting. No tickets required though we suggest a donation of \$10/ person, \$5/ students.

I was asked to prepare a report for the annual meeting in December. I did so, and was amazed at how much is going on, and how much we have accomplished. That report was eleven pages long, typed single-spaced! If you are interested in seeing it, please let me know. I will be putting up smaller segments of it on the blog at our website. Please feel free to visit and read it there.

B'virkat shalom (with blessings for peace),
Rabbi Joe Blair

<p>Reaching the Rabbi</p>	<p>The office is not staffed and the building is generally closed when the rabbi is not there. In the event of an urgent need the rabbi may be contacted by email or telephone. Messages are regularly checked at both congregations, and email is frequently read. Please understand that the rabbi will not be available or reply on Shabbat or on Jewish holidays unless it is an emergency that cannot wait. In that case, please be sure to express the need for an urgent response.</p> <p>The Rabbi is available this year by prior arrangement. If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call for an appointment.</p> <p>Rabbi Joe’s Email: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com Beth El Congregation 540-434-2744 Temple House of Israel 540-886-4091 Cell phone (for emergencies) [Does not have full coverage – leave a message] 434-981-3959</p>														
<p>Message from the President</p>	<p>Dear Congregants:</p> <p>Although this is the secular new year and I am sure that all of you made your new year’s resolutions in September at Rosh Hashonah ☺ this is still a good time of year to reflect on what has gone before and to think about ways to better ourselves and our surroundings.</p> <p>This year has been a superb one for Temple House of Israel: we are financially more sound than we have been in years, we have instituted great new handicapped accessibility projects, we have had successful outreach programs, have gathered many new members, and have generally grown much stronger as a congregation. But (there is always a but...) when I come to Temple on Friday nights or attend mitzvah days, I often see the same dozen families or members joining in, doing the work participating. There are many, many of you out there who pay dues regularly and contribute in other financial ways and for that we thank you greatly but we would love to see you at the synagogue. We would love to talk to you at onegs, see you at special Sabbaths (or even the regular Friday night) and enlist your help for the many things that need doing around the Temple and its grounds.</p> <p>January 11th AT 6 o’clock is a great place to start. SHORTY, the Temple youth group which combines teens from both our congregation and Beth El, is have their annual fundraising chicken dinner at Temple House of Israel. Please come and support our youth group and eat good food and socialize with all of us. We miss you! YOU’VE GOTTEN YOUR INVITATION IN THE MAIL – DON’T TOSS IT. FILL IT OUT AND COME JOIN US!!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">.....<i>Lisa Solod Warren</i></p>														
<p>Noteworthy Congregational News</p>	<p>▪ Our Annual Congregational Meeting was well attended and many who were not able to attend, sent their proxies. Thank you to all. Mazel tov to our newly elected slate of officers!</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>President-elect:</td> <td>Beth Young</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Past President:</td> <td>Lisa Solod Warren</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice President – Membership:</td> <td>Laurie Berman</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice President – Buildings and Ground:</td> <td>Steve Rosenberg</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secretary:</td> <td>Ruth Chodrow</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Treasurer:</td> <td>Ellen Boden</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Member-at-Large:</td> <td>Janet Brody</td> </tr> </table>	President-elect:	Beth Young	Past President:	Lisa Solod Warren	Vice President – Membership:	Laurie Berman	Vice President – Buildings and Ground:	Steve Rosenberg	Secretary:	Ruth Chodrow	Treasurer:	Ellen Boden	Member-at-Large:	Janet Brody
President-elect:	Beth Young														
Past President:	Lisa Solod Warren														
Vice President – Membership:	Laurie Berman														
Vice President – Buildings and Ground:	Steve Rosenberg														
Secretary:	Ruth Chodrow														
Treasurer:	Ellen Boden														
Member-at-Large:	Janet Brody														

Trustees:

**Doug Degen
Alan Goldenberg
Rich Young**

With the passage of the amendments to our By-Laws, **these people will take office on July 1, 2008.** Until that time, Lisa will remain our president and Mike Brown will remain our Vice President of Buildings and Grounds. The exception to that is Ellen Boden taking over the reins of treasurer effective immediately. We owe a **huge debt of gratitude to Laura Jean Brand**, who has been our Treasurer for 4 years and who will now be focusing on her medical practice. Even though they will continue to serve on the board for the next 6 months – or maybe because of - we also want to thank **Paul Klein**, immediate past president, **Rachel Jordan** who is our Member-at-Large and **Mike Brown** who is in charge of buildings and grounds. Our continued gratitude to those continuing on the board and as trustees: Laurie Berman, Ruth Chodrow, Janet Brody, Doug Degen, Alan Goldenberg and Rich Young. And thanks to the nominating committee comprised of Laura Jean Brand, Marsha Pillet, David Waterman and Richard Young for their hours of phone calls and emails.

- There is a **Torah Lishmah at 6:30 on Friday, December 28th**. Bring your meal and engage in Torah study prior to services.
- **Please join us for the annual SHORTY fundraiser on January 11th at 6:00** prior to services. Dinner will be chicken, roasted potatoes, salad, rolls and quiche for vegetarians. Please RSVP to Simone Giovanetti, 439 Sunrise Ave., Harrisonburg 22801 or call Sherri Alt at 249-5463. Cost is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children under 13. SHORTY will be leading services that evening, as well. We look forward to supporting our youth group and enjoying a delicious dinner!
- Come join us for our **Tu B'shevat seder on Friday, January 25th at 6:00 pm**. Laura Jean Brand will be coordinating our seder and providing the seedless and seeded, outer skin and no outer skin fruit and nuts. A potluck dinner will follow, so if your last name begins with ▼ please bring a dish to share
 - A-G....Dessert for the oneg after services
 - H-P....Main dish
 - R-Z....Side Dish or Salad

Please join us for the birthday of the trees
- On **Sunday afternoon, February 3rd at 3:00, Sarah Grove-Humphries will lead a song session at Temple House of Israel**. We will work on any service music folks request help with and hopefully learn some new tunes. It should be a fun afternoon of making music together.
- Our Game Day Social on December 25th was a lot of fun. We ate (of course) and played Boggle and Scattergories and schmoozed and ate and had fun! Thanks to the Rabbi for a great idea!
- There are tangible results from our Mitzvah day in December! With the tremendous help of Natasha Benenson, Janet Brody, Mike Brown, Leah Farmer, Byron Grove-Humphries, Gary Harvey, Jordan Kristoff, Marsha Pillet, Lisa Warren and Beth Young, we collectively cleaned off the roof and cleared the gutters, cleaned the refrigerator, cleared out and reorganized the storage closet, and cleaned and oiled the furniture in the sanctuary.
- The next **board meeting will be January 21st at 7:00 pm**.

<p>News from the MAC</p>	<p>Ruth Chodrow, member of the Mid-Atlantic Region Advisory Council (MAC) of the URJ, recently attended the regional biennial planning meeting and the MAC Board meeting in Washington, DC. Highlights were as follows:</p> <p>The next regional biennial will be held October 24-26, 2008, at Rocky Gap Resort near Cumberland, Maryland. The resort location will offer the opportunity for more outside activities such as nature hikes; there will also be activities for school-age children. Programming ideas from the committee were solicited. There will be an emphasis on the relationship of Judaism to current environmental concerns.</p> <p>At the MAC Board meeting, there was considerable discussion of how best to fulfill the needs of the congregations in the area. Shifting more day-to-day responsibility onto the assistant director might free up time for the regional director to focus on major issues and visit more congregations.</p> <p>NFTY-MAR was represented by its president, who also delivered the d'var Torah. Our regional youth chapter is growing in numbers and in programming for students.</p> <p>A new congregation, Bayt Shalom in Greenville, North Carolina, was approved; pending approval from the URJ, it will become the 71st member congregation of our region.</p>
<p>News of our Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mazel tov to Philip Chodrow who has been accepted Early Decision into Swarthmore College. He plans to double major in math and philosophy. ▪ And kudos to Philip for donating his hair to Locks of Love, a nonprofit that donates hairpieces to children who have lost their hair. (www.locksoflove.com for more information). A 10" ponytail in 3-1/2 years is a great accomplishment and so was the haircut! ▪ Our thoughts and prayers go to Nancy Witt, Rafael Brand, Claire Lerner (Marsha Pillet's mother), Helene Berman-Seidenfeld (Laurie Berman's mother) and Fredi Solod (Lisa Solod Warren's mother), Sue Rosenthal, Ken Schwartz, Lynn Landsberg, Dan Schorsch, AJ Hartung, Janet Phillips and Betty Menaker all of whom are in need of healing. ▪ Steve Guberman is representing the Augusta County area, coordinating a self help group for those with Multiple Sclerosis. If you know anyone who has MS or would like additional information, the group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 at the Mary Switzer Building at the Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center. Please call Steve at 943-3735 for more information. ▪ Congratulations to Steve Rosenberg who has taken a position at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. ▪ Congratulations to Michael Degen who graduated with honors from California Culinary Academy, part of Le Cordon Bleu Schools, in San Francisco. He now works at Acquerello in the City – a fine Italian restaurant. Mazel Tov! ▪ Rachael Brody hosted her mom Laurie, and sisters Sara and Elana in Uruguay Argentina for 2 weeks in December. Rachael continues her year working in Argentina. Sounds wonderful!

Book Group	Our next meeting will be on Jan. 30, 2008 at 7:30 pm Janet Brody's home to discuss <u>The World is Flat</u> by Thomas Friedman, the columnist from the New York Times. Leah Farmer will be leading the discussion.		
News from the Women's Group	<i>Birthdays to be happily celebrated in January:</i> Lisa Solod Warren Michael Degen Marty Schwartz Rich Young Riff Blair Rachel Jordan Dennis Ward Doug Degen		
Judaica Shop	During the month of January, there is a special display of Shabbat items. Some items will also be on sale. If you have any specific needs or wish for something else to be displayed, please contact Natasha at 886-1157.		
Notes from the Editor	If you have comments and suggestions, I'd love to hear from you – contact me at bulletin@thoi.org . Also, if you are interested in helping put together the bulletin each month, we would love to hear from you too.		
Religious School	Classes will resume on Sunday, January 6 th .		
Donations	Thank you to these generous people who have made contributions to the Temple during the previous month. We greatly appreciate your donations! In honor of Viola Blazer.....Harriet BaronHoney Hurley Gfroerer Rabbi Judy Beiner Louis Sannino For planting of trees at the cemetery.....Ralph Degen For cemetery renovationDebby Bishop William and Mary Long		
Yahrzeits for January	David Biatch	Arthur Kaufman	Flora Switzer
	Sophie Cohen	Pauline Krause Prince	Solomon Switzer
	Robert Davis	Emily Elias Schorsch	Roberta Cohn Weber
	Morris Degen	Daniel Seligmann	Abraham Weinberg (1943)
	Marjorie Edelman	Morton Sloane	Abraham Weinberg (1986)
	Milton Finkel	Lamartine Gary Strauss	Ethel Weinberg
	Leah Frank	Augusta (Gussie) Switzer	Johanna Barth Weinberg

JANUARY		1	2	3	4	5
6 Religious school resumes	7	8	9	10	11 SHORTY dinner at 6:00 services at 7:30	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Board Meeting at 7:00	22	23	24	25 Tu B'Shevat seder at 6:00 Potluck dinner services at 8:00	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Temple Contacts	Rabbi	Joe Blair	886-4091 or rabbi@thoi.org
	President	Lisa Warren	886-1603 or president@thoi.org
	Past President	Paul Klein	pastpresident@thoi.org
	V. P. of Membership	Laurie Berman	885-2925 or membership@thoi.org
	V. P. of Building/Grounds	Michael Brown	885-3809 or building@thoi.org
	Secretary	Ruth Chodrow	886-2252 or secretary@thoi.org
	Treasurer	Ellen Boden	treasurer@thoi.org
	Directors at large	Rachel Jordan	804-440-5839 or director-at-large@thoi.org
	Trustees	Beth Young	885-1481
		Doug Degen	886-8651 or trustees2@thoi.org
		Alan Goldenberg	trustees3@thoi.org
		Richard Young	885-1481 or trustees@thoi.org
	Cantorial Soloist	Sarah Grove-Humphries	885-4223 or cantor@thoi.org
	Temple Webmaven	Marcia Conner	website@thoi.org
	Bulletin Editor	Beth Young	885-1481 or bulletin@thoi.org
Bulletin Circulation	Janet Brody	851-0877	
SHORTY (youth group)	Sheri Alt	youth-group@thoi.org	
Religious School	Linda Kohn	religious-school@thoi.org	
Young Adults Group	Natasha Benenson	young-adults@thoi.org	
Caring Committee	Lou Boden	caring-committee2@thoi.org or 540-255-5555	
	Rosalie	caring-committee1@thoi.org or 886-1713	
Film Series	Waterman	886-1713	
	Shirley Brand	949-0529 or films@thoi.org	