



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

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

<http://uahc.org/congs/va/va008/>

February 2004, Shevat/Adar 5764

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends: Shalom!

I cannot believe how time is flying by! Fortunately, when I glance back at the calendar, I can see all the different events and activities that have been going on, and the sense of energy and excitement that permeates the congregation, spreading through the Valley! I am delighted with it all, and I hope you feel the same way.

Upcoming Events

The holiday of Tu Bi'Shevat (the 15th of the month of Shevat, known as the Jewish Arbor day) falls this year on Feb. 7th. We celebrate the holiday for two practical reasons. First, because one is taught not to gather fruit from the tree for the first three years of its' life in order that it can establish a strong and healthy root system. We use the day of Tu Bi'Shevat as the "birthday" of the trees to count the years. Second, because in Israel the first tree to flower is the almond, and this date falls approximately when the sap begins to rise in these trees, raising with it the prospect of spring and the sense of renewal and hope for the future. In Kabbalah (the mystical approach within Judaism), there is also the view that this is a holiday of trees, and the most important tree of all for us as Jews is the Tree of Life that is the Torah (the instructions of G-d). Kabbalists created the custom of holding a Tu Bi'Shevat Seder, just as we have a Pesach (Passover) Seder – a festive meal with foods that remind us of the symbols and significance of the event we are commemorating. Thus, we eat fruits of a variety of kinds with four cups of wine! We will be participating in this experience with our Joint Congregational Tu Bi'Shevat seder Feb. 6th at 6pm at Beth El Congregation (details under "special events"). Only one month after Tu Bi'Shevat, on March 6th this year, we reach PURIM! Don't fail to mark your calendar now for the Joint Congregational Purim Gala at Beth El. You will NOT want to miss it for anything! And not too long after Purim, on March 14th, there will be a workshop with Rabbi Sue Elwell on the use of the Passover Haggadah – a very timely preparation for the next holiday! The work-shop will take place at Beth El in Harrisonburg at 2 pm, and we are inviting congregations from all around our region to participate. Be sure to come!

News

I have noted with pleasure that the variety and number of activities in the congregation have continued to expand, and the feeling of a vital and vibrant Jewish community is tangible every time I walk through the door. All parts of the life of our congregation are contributing to this feeling. Kol Hakavod (all honor) to all of you who are making this happen! Take a look at this very abbreviated summary listing of the other items planned for the coming months! Religious School Shabbat March 19th; Passover Seders April 6th and 7th; the Yeast Feast April 14th; Yom HaShoah service April 18th; Yom Ha'Atzma'ut April 23rd; Family Service May 7th; Religious School picnic May 30th; Shavuot Confirmation service May 26th; Youth Group trip to Jewish New York June 5-9th; and FIVE (5!) B'nai

The
Rabbi's Disk
(Continued)

Mitzvot between now and the end of June! Add in the Men's Club and Sisterhood events, adult education, film series, and Board activities, and we have a FULL CALENDAR! You should shep nachas (feel proud) of our little community!

Adult Education

The weekly Torah study sessions continue to provide lively and interesting conversations about that week's Torah portion. The differing ways in which those attending see the texts in light of today and their own lives provides fascinating insights for our discussion. If you have time, whether for one week, once in a while, or on a more regular basis, please join us at noon on Thursday in Staunton or Friday in Harrisonburg. You can bring a bag meal and take part in our 'lunch and learn' discussion. No preparation, Hebrew or prior experience is needed; this is very much a 'come as you are and share your thoughts' kind of event.

The Level One Read Hebrew American Hebrew literacy course has come to a very successful end. The week of Jan. 19th we finished the workbook and celebrated the accomplishments of those in the class – all of them are reading from the Siddur and can follow in the Plaut Torah Commentary! WOW! Kol Hakavod Lahem! (All honor to them!) The next step: I will conduct a one-night Hebrew Reading Crash Review Class the week of January 26th (Monday in Staunton and Wed. in Harrisonburg, both at 7 pm). This will be open to anyone who wishes to refresh their recollection of the Hebrew alphabet and vowels. No registration is required. The students in Level One Hebrew are such gluttons for punishment that I will be offering the second level in the series, which focuses on more reading, and includes vocabulary and more of the prayers we recite in services. We will begin Level II of the Hebrew class the week of February 1st. If you are interested in joining the class, please feel free to attend the first session (Monday evening in Staunton, Wednesday evening – both at 7 - in Harrisonburg). To get the most out of the class you should know the Hebrew alef-bet, the vowels, and be able to sound out Hebrew text before starting this level. (The Crash Review session is intended to help you be up to speed for this class.). If there is enough demand for it, I can also offer the Level I introductory course again. Please let me know if you would be interested so I can make plans.

The Introduction to Jewish Living course is ongoing. We have met seven times, but the length and nature of the classes is such that if you want to join in now, please come and join us. We meet at 7 pm on Sunday evenings at Beth El.

NEW: Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah group. Sun. March 21st at 4 pm at Beth El, a new group will be meeting for the first time. This is in preparation for beginning our Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. If you are interested in studying for your Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration, please be in touch with me and plan to attend the meeting. This is a really great opportunity to learn and celebrate for those who have not had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or for anyone who wants to celebrate a second time (we know the real reason is that you are a party animal!).

NEW: Jewish Book Club. Want to talk about interesting books and ideas with others? Do you like bagels? Come to our first meeting of the Book Club on **Sun. Feb. 29th at 9:30 at Beth El** and take advantage of the bagel bar! The first book to be discussed will be The DaVinci Code – a very interesting and somewhat controversial book that is now on the best-seller lists. Mona Wolf will present the book, so even if you haven't read it, you can certainly participate in the discussion. Come for a lively, social Sunday morning. If you have any questions call Rabbi Joe at the shul or Mona Wolf at 540-856-2753.

Feedback: I have very much appreciated those of you who have taken the time to

**The
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(Continued)**

let me know how you think things are going, and how we can improve them. Please continue to tell me what you think is working and what I can be doing better. As you may recall, I asked recently how congregants felt about having Sarah Grove-Humphries participate in our services as cantorial soloist. I am delighted to report that the responses I received were in keeping with my own sense, and universally favorable, with the dominant sentiment being that we need to superglue Sarah in place so she will always be there! I am not too sure how Byron might feel about that suggestion, but it does express the sense of appreciation that we all feel at having her as an active participant in our services.

Come On By! Please feel free to call, email, make an appointment or drop in to see me to discuss anything that is on your mind, to ask about something you have always wanted to know, for pastoral counseling, or just to chat. One of my great pleasures is to get to know each of you better.

I am looking forward to celebrating Tu Bi'Shevat with you very soon!
B'virvat Shalom (with blessings of peace),
Rabbi Joe Blair

**Rabbi's Office
Hours, Hospital
Visits and
Chaplaincy
Calls**

Rabbi Blair's office days are Mondays and Thursdays in Staunton and Wednesdays and Fridays in Harrisonburg (540) 434-2744. **Drop In times**, when the Rabbi is available without an appointment, **are those days 2-4 pm at each synagogue.** Other times by appointment. Call 886 - 4091 or email: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

Monday, Feb 2	Thursday, Feb 5	Thursday, Feb 12	Monday, Feb 16
Thursday, Feb 19	Monday, Feb 23	Thursday, Feb 26	Monday, Feb 29

If you should hear or know of anyone who is ill or hospitalized or who might otherwise wish a visit or call, please be sure to let Rabbi Joe know as soon as you can. You can leave a message on the telephone answering machine at the temple - it is checked daily, except Shabbat.

**President's
Message**

At the first Board meeting of the 2004 calendar year, Paul Klein, my fellow board member, succinctly stated our position. "We are a focal point for Jewish life in the Valley." Rabbi Blair is pointing the way starting with weekly Torah sessions every Thursday at noon at the Temple House of Israel. He also offers Hebrew classes every Monday night. With Beth El in Harrisonburg, we provide our young people the opportunity for study and fellowship.

Ruth Chodrow is engaging the Temple House of Israel Women's Group in assembling a cookbook. It should be ready for sale, along with baked goods, at the Staunton Farmer's Market in May. We now have a film discussion group and the next film will be shown in February.

Let's keep up the momentum and involvement of so many members.
- Rafael Brand

Special Events

Our **Congregational Tu Bi'Shevat Seder will be held in Harrisonburg at 6:00pm on Feb. 6th.** Harrisonburg's Sisterhood will be providing the seder foods with a potluck dinner to follow. Last names beginning A-L bring a side dish and dessert and M-Z bring main dishes. Shabbat services will begin at 7:30. Please RSVP to Lisa Giovanetti at (540) 434-6515 or giovanetti@juno.com by Feb. 2nd.

Pre-School

Note a correction: The **Religious School TuB'Shevat Seder** will begin at 10:30 on **Sunday, February 8th.** All children, pre-schoolers as well as religious school

Activities	students, are invited to come. If you don't normally attend religious school, please let Rachel Jordan know before hand at (434) 823-7828 so we can be sure to have enough food available.
Religious School	<p>Following a meeting of the Religious School Steering Committee in January, it was announced that Margee Greenfield and Ellen Defriece have agreed to serve as co-principals of the Religious School beginning with the next school year. They will build on the progress that has been made and achievements attained by the Steering Committee. We all wish them Todah Rabbah Ve'Hatzlachah Rabbah (Many Thanks and Much Success)!</p> <p>Rabbi Joe reports "I am very happy with the progress that I am seeing overall in the Religious School. The student body is working hard and learning a great deal and the teachers have made a lot of progress with them. All that work is paying off in results! Our services on Sunday morning have been vastly broader with many more prayers and songs included. Kitah Aleph is over half-way through the Alef Bet and on track to finish it, Kitah Bet is working on reading many new words and phrases and constructing sentences, and is now beginning to prepare to read prayers; Kitah Gimel has been learning to read and chant many more of the prayers, and Kitah Daled is working on mastery of the Friday evening and Saturday morning services. Tov Me'od, Kulam! (Very Good, all!) Keep up the excellent progress! Kitah Daled 's first of four class trips this year took place in January. The class attended a Renewal service at P'nai Or in Charlottesville. The next two trips will be Saturday mornings to attend Conservative and Orthodox services, also in Charlottesville, on February 14th and 21st (weather postponement date is February 28th). The intent of these trips is to see how Shabbat services are conducted in other denominations of Judaism. The class will be writing a reaction paper about the differences and similarities they find to our own Shabbat services and we will have a discussion after all three trips. The final trip this year will be to the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC on Sunday, March 21st. This will be an all day affair. We will visit the Air and Space museum at the Smithsonian, have lunch and then take our tour of the Holocaust Museum before we return. The next week the class time at Religious School will be devoted to a discussion of the experience. The Kitah Daled Jewish Cooking Experience was a HUGE success! A variety of wonderful and very tasty food was provided for snack for the whole school and the students explained the connection of the dishes they brought to Judaism. It was a huge hit, and I would love to see it take place again.</p> <p>MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND HOLD THE DATE FOR THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SHABBAT, SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 19 AT BETH EL THIS YEAR. All grades will participate – be sure to be there!</p> <p>Note Change for B’Nai Mitzvah families. The planned meeting is rescheduled for Sunday, February 15th at Beth El following Religious School (from 12:45 to 2:15). We can order something to eat if everyone wishes. At that meeting Rabbi Joe will go over scheduled ceremony dates, policies, planning, services and participation, mitzvah projects and answer any questions that parents or students may have. Please put this on your calendar and make every effort to attend.</p>
Youth Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Group services on Jan. 23rd at Beth El and Jan. 30th at Temple House of Israel were a success! The kids put together and led the service beautifully! • The ski weekend was amazing with 82 young adults from around Virginia

registered! Thanks to Sherri Alt for coordinating everything, including finding housing for everyone! Thanks also to all those who housed and fed our teens!

- The Youth Group will be participating in the Shavuot Confirmation Service on May 26th. Please plan to attend and celebrate their accomplishments.

Noteworthy Congregational News

- The temple would like to sell the large oak secretary's desk that is now in the storage area. It's in very good condition. Ruth would be happy to show it to anyone who is interested – asking price is \$150. If nobody from temple wants the desk, we will attempt to sell it to someone outside. Contact Ruth at 886-2252.
- The first meeting of the **Book Club will be Sunday, Feb. 29th at 9:30 am** in Harrisonburg. The DaVinci Code will be presented by Mona Wolf, so even if you haven't read it, you can participate in the discussion.
- Check out our website! Marcia Conner has done an exceptional job of putting new pictures and additional links on our Temple Web Site. Thanks to Marcia, we look great!
- **Our film series continues:** On **Sunday, February 15th at 7:30** we will be showing **The Slingshot** – Set in Stockholm, Sweden in 1920, this is the tale of a 12 year old boy coming of age with his Russian- Jewish mother and his slightly unusual father. Swedish with subtitles. Thanks to Shirley Brand and Debby Bishop for making the arrangements and to the Women of the Temple for purchasing a 25" TV that we'll be able to use for all our future films.
- **The next board meeting will be Monday, February 16th at 7:00 PM at Temple House of Israel.** At 7:30 the board will carpool to Harrisonburg for a joint meeting beginning at 8:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to take part in these meetings.

News from the Women of the Temple

- In order to have our temple cookbook ready for sale at our spring bake sale, **THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING YOUR RECIPES IS MARCH 1ST**. Ruth has checked copyright laws and informs us that single recipes can be re-printed from other cookbooks. So send your favorite recipes to Ruth at rchodrow@cfw.com or 811 Selma Blvd., Staunton 24401. Thanks to Marsha Pillet and Beth Young for their graphic design advice on the cookbook. All proceeds will go toward the education of our youth.
- We're planning our 3rd annual bake sale at the Staunton Farmer's Market on Saturday, May 8th, the day before Mother's Day. Thanks to Ellen Schorsch for making the necessary arrangements and to Ruth Chodrow and Marsha Pillet for agreeing to set up and provide for the possibility of rain and/or wind.
- **PLEASE COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 29TH AT 2:00.** We'll confirm our cookbook order and get ready for the next activities.
- We'd like to say **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to the known February birthdays:
Jesse Brand on the February 2nd
Freddy Goldenberg on the 8th
Miriam Freedman on the 9th
Iris Rubin on the 14th
Kasey Goldenberg on the 24th

<p>News of our Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This month Marcia L. Conner, publishes her first book. <i>Learn More Now: 10 Simple Steps to Learning Better, Faster and Smarter</i> is available in February through local bookstores and online book outlets. Marcia will sign copies of the book at the Bookstack in Staunton on February 14th from 1-3 pm. Through her innovative learning programs, Marcia has helped business leaders, parents, children, teens, teachers and retirees to rediscover the joy of learning and to expand their personal and professional productivity. In this book she distills the learning solutions she honed while working with organizations such as Microsoft, PeopleSoft and the UN Development Programme, into an easy-to-use ten-step program. We can all benefit from learning better, faster and smarter! • Nancy Witt had abdominal surgery on January 23rd. Hillel said “If not for myself, who am I?” and Nancy says “There’s nothing more important than taking care of yourself.” Your prayers and good wishes are welcome. • The Annual King Day Community Vesper Service held on January 19th at Central United Methodist Church was a multicultural affair. David Young represented Temple House of Israel well when he blew the shofar as the call to worship. The tributes paid to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us of the progress made since the 1960s and what we have yet to achieve – and of course the music was outstanding! • Beth Young talked with a Sunday school class from First Presbyterian Church at the end of January. The children and their adult chaperones were interested, attentive, and very pleased to sit in our beautiful sanctuary and learn a little about Judaism.
<p>Judaica Shop</p>	<p>We have books, cards, mezuzot, gift items and many Judaica catalog items from which to choose. Please let Dianne Mason know of any items that you would like stocked. The shop is normally open during Friday night services and Dianne can be reached at 885-6254.</p>
<p>Notes from the Editor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Any address and/or email address changes and updates for our files would be very much appreciated.</u> Please send them on to me. Thanks! • Especially now that we’re up to 8 pages, if you would prefer to receive this bulletin via e-mail, please let me know and I’ll be happy to send it in that format. Thanks to those who have responded! • The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month. Any suggestions you may have for new items or changes are always welcome. I look forward to hearing from you at templenews@ntelos.net.
<p>Bulletin and Membership</p>	<p>If you are not currently a member and would like to continue receiving this bulletin, the subscription rate is \$15 per year (August-June) made payable to Temple House of Israel. Please contact Laura Jean Brand, our treasurer, at 942-3656 or mail your check to THOI, PO Box 1412, Staunton, VA 24401.</p>

Contributions

Thank you to these generous people who have recently supported our Temple: We do appreciate your contributions!

In Memory of Beryl Gutnick:

Don and Ruth Chodrow
 Leah Farmer
 Art Goldsmith and Jan Kaufman
 Jacqueline Jacobs
 Paul Klein
 Patricia Menk
 Betty Menaker
 Ray and Diane Witorsch
 Marsha Pillet

In memory of Ethel and Irvin Weinberg:

Ethel Anne Tebell

Yahrzeits for February


Melvin James Berman	Hyman Greenstone	Dorothy Sragovitz
Moshe Cohen	Oscar Mindell	Regina Barth Strauss
B. Edelman	Hiah Neuger	Mae Hare Suskins
Irving Goldberg	Betty Robins	Minnie C. Switzer
Henrietta Frankfurt Goldstein	Leah Schneider	Albert Williams
Fannie Greenstone	Beckie Greenberg Shapiro	Rose Zultowski

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Call them, nudge them, introduce yourself, get involved...
 All the people listed above would welcome your input. You get from the temple an equal measure to that which you contribute – and much more!

February 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9 Shevat	2 Rabbi's office day 10 Shevat	3 11 Shevat	4 12 Shevat	5 12:00a Torah discuss Rabbi's office day 13 Shevat	6 L 5:26p  6:00p TuB'Shevat Seder and Services in H'burg 14 Shevat	7 Tu B'Shvat 15 Shevat
8 10:30a Rel. Sch. TuB'Shevat 16 Shevat	9 Rabbi's office day 17 Shevat	10 18 Shevat	11 19 Shevat	12 12:00a Torah discuss Rabbi's office day 20 Shevat	13 L 5:34p  7:30p Shabbat Services 21 Shevat	14 22 Shevat
15 12:40p B'nai Mitzvah meet 7:30p Film Series 23 Shevat	16 7:00p Board Meet Rabbi's office day 24 Shevat	17 25 Shevat	18 26 Shevat	19 12:00a Torah discuss Rabbi's office day 27 Shevat	20 L 5:42p  28 Shevat	21 29 Shevat
22 Rosh Chodesh 30 Shevat	23 Rosh Chodesh Rabbi's office day 1 Adar	24 2 Adar	25 3 Adar	26 12:00a Torah discuss Rabbi's office day 4 Adar	27 L 5:49p  7:30p Shabbat Services 5 Adar	28 6 Adar
29 9:30a Book Club in H'burg 2:00p Women of the Temple 7 Adar						

Feb. 6	Dinner and Tu Bi'Shevat seder at 6 pm at Beth El with services immediately following
Feb. 13	Shabbat Services at 7:30 PM – Byron & Sarah Grove-Humphries and Chodrows, hosts
Feb. 15	Film Series at 7:30 pm – The Sling Shot
Feb. 16	Temple Board Meeting at 7:00 PM and then to Harrisonburg for a joint meeting at 8:00 pm
Feb. 27	Shabbat Services at 7:30 PM – Benn & Bonnie Legum and Dan & Ellen Schorsch, hosts
Feb. 29	Book Club <u>The DaVinci Code</u> discussion at 9:30 am in Harrisonburg Women of the Temple Meeting at 2:00 PM