



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
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New Web Address: thoi.org

February 2005, Shevat/Adar I 5765

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,
SHALOM!

Another month has passed rapidly. We have had some cold winter weather, but there has been much warmth among us, and the promise of spring was brought into our midst with the Tu Bi'shevat programs at Religious School and a recent Oneg.

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

We are towards the end of the month of Shevat. Soon, on the 9th and 10th of February (the 30th of Shevat and the 1st of Adar) will be Rosh Chodesh (the new Month) for Adar I. In months with 30 days we mark Rosh Chodesh for the next month for two days: the 30th of the current month, and the 1st of the upcoming month. For months with only 29 days, we mark Rosh Chodesh for the next month only on the 1st of that upcoming month.

A (long-ish) word about the calendar. The Jewish calendar is what is called 'luni-solar'. This means that it is based on a lunar cycle, but adjusted for the solar cycle. The lunar cycle is 29.5 days (on average). We have on our calendar six months that are 29 days and six months that are 30 days in length. If you do the math, you will find that 12 months of 29.5 days (the average) is 354 days.

Most of us remember without much effort that a solar cycle is 365.25 days. The '.25' is the reason that we have a leap year every fourth year, when we 'add' an extra day to the calendar to keep it in synchronization with the actual solar movement.

Something similar happens on the Jewish calendar, but instead of an extra day every fourth year, we have a much more complex system. First, we have to recognize that there is a difference each year of 11.25 days between the lunar and solar cycles. If we were to do nothing, the two calendars would fall farther and farther out of synchronization as time passed. Our holidays would move earlier and earlier each year, and we would have spring holidays moving, so that they would fall in the winter sometimes, summer others. This would mean we were celebrating harvest festivals before the planting took place in some years! It would not make much sense.

[Side note: this is the approach that Islam has taken: their holidays move through the secular calendar, so that they have no seasonal connection.]

We don't take the approach of Islam, nor do we do as the secular (Gregorian) calendar does, and simply add 11.25 days somewhere in the cycle each year. Instead, the rabbis in Talmudic times came up with a different approach.

They looked at the calendar not as just a single year unit: instead, they saw it as a system that spanned multiple years. Then they calculated in a sophisticated fashion, down to the part of a minute, the actual times of the lunar and solar cycles, and found a way to harmonize them, without too much disruption to

normal life.

What did they decide? Here goes!

Our calendar is based on a nineteen (19!) year cycle. During that nineteen year period, there are seven years in which an adjustment is made, similar in concept to Leap Year in the solar/secular calendar. Instead of adding a day, however, we add a full MONTH in those years to keep our calendar more closely in synchronization with the solar cycle.

When do we add this month? In the Spring!: after all, why not increase our enjoyment of a good thing? So we add a month between Shevat and Adar. To identify that added month, we call it Adar I, and the usual month that would follow Shevat is called Adar II instead of simply Adar in leap years.

The month of Adar was chosen both because the spring is a wonderful time of year, with all sorts of signs of renewal and growth, and also because it is the month in which we celebrate Purim, our most joyous (and fun) holiday. That is why it is said, "Hu she'nichnas le'Adar be'simchah marbeh simchah ba'olam." {One who enters into the month of Adar in joy increases joy in the world.}

[This year, Purim will fall on March 25th. Keep your eyes open for information on our congregational celebration. This is the holiday to dress up, turn things on their head, and generally have a Fantastic good time, so start planning now for a real blast!]

One question that this intricate system raises concerns anniversaries, birthdays, and yartzheits that fall in Adar I or II. How to handle them?

Suppose, for example, that a person was born during Adar I. Unlike the plot of the Pirates of Penzance, we don't count them as only seven years old after a nineteen year cycle (seven leap years in the nineteen year cycle)! Instead, those events that occurred in Adar I are folded into Adar (II) in years when there is no Adar I, so that the birthday would be celebrated in Adar I in the years when it was included, but in Adar (which would be Adar II in leap years) other years. This way there is truly only a 12-month period between the anniversaries of the birthday. When a birth occurs in Adar II, the birthday is observed in Adar II in leap years, and in Adar (the same month) all other years. The same approach is taken for yartzheits and other anniversaries.

Because we do not make the adjustments each year, the Jewish holidays seem to 'move' on the secular calendar from year to year. The 11.25 day difference in the lunar and solar calendar means that a holiday can seem as much as 34 days earlier or later on the secular calendar, even though it is on exactly the same date on the Jewish calendar in each of those years. That is why, for example, in some years Chanukah is almost the same date as Christmas, and other times it falls on Thanksgiving.

As complicated as the system seems, it works very well. It is quite amazing to me to recognize just how sophisticated an understanding of astronomy and orbital calculations the rabbis in Talmudic days had, and how they were able to reach such precise measurements despite having none of the benefits of later scientific developments, such as the telescope! Yofeh me'od! [Very nice!]

B'virkat shalom (with Blessings of Peace),

Rabbi Joe Blair
February 2005

<p>Office Hours</p>	<p>The Rabbi will be in Staunton on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He will be in Harrisonburg on Mondays and Fridays. You may email or call for an appointment. Email: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com Beth El Congregation 540-434-2744 Temple House of Israel 540-886-4091 Home 434-971-4741 [For emergencies only, please]</p> <p>Contact Information</p> <p>If you should hear or know of anyone who is ill or hospitalized or who might otherwise wish a visit or call, please leave a message on the telephone answering machine at the temple. Messages are checked frequently.</p>
<p>Noteworthy Congregational News</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adult education committee at Beth El is sponsoring a lecture and discussion on “The Religious Right in the Shenandoah Valley” on January 30th at 7:00 PM. The guest speaker will be Prof. Chris Robinson who is a sociologist at JMU and an active advocate for human rights. Coffee and dessert will be served. • In order to complete the cataloging, PLEASE RETURN ALL LIBRARY BOOKS to the temple by February 10th. Sara Brody is trying to wrap up her Bat Mitzvah project and get our library ready for all of us to readily use. • The social hall continues to progress! Did we say that already? Byron Grove-Humphries is almost done with the painting and will start on staining the bookshelves next, area rugs are on order, and fabric will be found (hopefully by the time you read this) for slipcovers and cloths. The ceiling and floor work are left to be done. THANK YOU for your many generous donations making this renovation possible. If you haven’t been inside the temple recently, come visit and watch our renovation in progress. • The next Temple board meeting is on February 24th at 7:00 in the temple social hall. The more you know about what’s going on, the more connected we’ll all be!
<p>News of our Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elana Brody will performing a 45 minute program of her original music compositions – both piano and voice - on January 28th at Three Hills Studio, 112 North Randolph Street in Lexington. The program begins at 8:00 PM. with another original singer/songwriter performing after Elana. • Byron and Sarah Grove-Humphries are taking students from the Tandem Friends School to a week-long surfing camp in Costa Rica at the end of March! • Sarah Grove-Humphries tells us that Mary Baldwin College is producing “Into The Woods” Feb 11-13 and 16-20 with Wed-Sat performances at 8:00 pm and Sunday performances at 2:00 pm in Fletcher Collins Theater in the Deming Fine Arts Building. Sarah must have something to do with the music or lights! Come and enjoy the show. Tickets are available at the door or at 887-7294.
<p>Film Series</p>	<p>The January movie “Autumn Sun” was a delight for the dozen people who enjoyed the film... and the treats served during the movie. Coming on February 6th at 7:00 we’ll be showing “Hester Street”. (Snow date is February 13th, same time). Set at the turn of the century, “Hester Street” tells the story of a young Jewish immigrant who ventures to NYC to be with her husband. As she re-acquaints with her husband, she finds that he has abandoned old world ideals. The film addresses preserving the heritage of the Jews as well as</p>

cherishing all heritages and cultures.

News from the Women's Group

- We wish the following members and friends a HAPPY BIRTHDAY in February:
Jesse Brand celebrates on the 2nd
Freddy Goldenberg on the 8th
Miriam Freedman on the 9th
Sara Brody will be 13 on the 13th
Iris Rubin on the 14th
Vera Flint on the 17th
Kasey Goldenberg on the 24th
- **JOIN US ON JANUARY 28th for our TuB'Shevat oneg.** Thanks to Vera Flint, Jan Kaufman and Art Goldsmith, Shirley Brand, Rosalie Waterman, Sarah Grove-Humphries and Beth Young for their help in putting it together
- **The next Women's Group meeting will be Sunday, February 27th at 2:00.** *We're open to new people and new ideas. No "membership" is necessary – just an interest in keeping our community connected. Please come join us!*

Adult Education

- The next monthly Torah study at Beth El will take place on February 4th at 6 pm. Once again, bring your own dinner, eat and join in as we discuss the Torah portion. This is also planned for March 18th, April 15th, and May 9th.
- A weekly Torah study meets on Thursdays (except the first Thursday of the month) at noon at THOI. Everyone is welcome to drop in and take part.
- Hebrew - Intermediate/Advanced classes held in February from 7 to 8:30 pm:
Mondays. @ BE Feb. 14, 21, 28
Thursdays. @ THOI Feb. 3, 10, 17
- The Jewish Lecture Series continues on Sunday evenings from 7 to 8:30 pm, usually on the third Sunday of the month. Come to any or all, and if you have suggestions for topics, please feel free to tell the Rabbi.
Here is a list of the topics currently planned (subject to change).
Feb 20th @ THOI Jewish Ethics: End of Life Issues
Mar 20th @ BE Jewish Lifecycle: Liturgy & Practice
Apr 17th @ THOI Passover: Ritual & Rules
- The Adult B'nai Mitzvah class has shifted into a more individual mode for those who are participating. If you are interested in pursuing this goal, please speak with me. The lead-time to accomplish this milestone is anywhere from a minimum of a year upwards, depending on your free time, flexibility, and knowledge base. It is a very significant undertaking, and certainly worthy of celebrating and acknowledging when it is reached!

Youth Group SHORTY

Youth Group's major event just took place: The Ski Weekend, during which our youth group hosted youth from five other temples for the weekend! Our youth led services Friday, skied all day and then put on a program Saturday evening for all present! There were over 70 young people attending! To top it off, they then went on the following week to lead services at THOI for those who were not able to attend at Beth El.

Kol hakavod (all honor) to Sherri Alt and our Youth group for a fantastic job!

- Youth Group will be serving a spaghetti dinner at 6:00 on Jan 28th prior to the Youth Group led services that evening. Tu Be'Shevat will be celebrated during the oneg, where we'll enjoy the fruits and nuts of the season as well as the 4 glasses of wine – or grape juice, if you prefer.

<p>Confirmation Class</p>	<p>From the Rabbi: “The Confirmation program has gone well, I feel. We have a wonderful group with sixteen participants! Discussions held on a variety of topics, with an overall eye towards Jewish Ethics, have been lively and very interesting. I am truly enjoying working with these young people, and I look forward to meeting with them each month.</p> <p>My goal for the Confirmation program is to develop a deeper and more adult understanding of Judaism and what it offers in the areas of morality and ethics, social interactions, and religious views, and how these inter-relate in a Jewish worldview. The culmination that I envision of this several year-long program is Confirmation – a celebration of the full Adult status of the participants at the end of their High School careers, as they prepare to go off as adults. This year we anticipate celebrating this milestone for Gabie Kalman and Eli Giovanetti at the Shavuot service on June 10th at Beth El. We will also be welcoming the incoming class of Confirmation students (those having their B’nai Mitzvah this year) at our YOUTH Service led by them and all the current Confirmation class members on June 3rd at THOI. I encourage you to hold those dates and attend both of these wonderful events. I know that you will join me in kvelling (filling with pride and joy).</p>
<p>Judaica Shop</p>	<p>Thanks for supporting the Judaica shop! If you have any suggestions for inventory please call Dianne Mason at 885-6254.</p>
<p>Staunton Book Group</p>	<p>Our book group has been re-scheduled for January 26th at 7:00 pm at Natasha Benenson’s home. We’ll discuss <u>White Out</u> written by James Marshall. Based on a true-life story, this is a beautiful, frightening, evocative and pertinent-to-today story, set in Antarctica during World War II. Our informal gatherings are open to members and friends!</p> <p>Directions to Natasha’s house: From downtown, take Frederick Street and turn right on West Beverley Street, continuing west. At the 2nd stoplight, turn left onto Hayes Avenue. (Valley Mission is on the right and Rite Aid is on the left). Take the 2nd right onto Packard Street and it’s the 1st house on the right: 1613 Packard St.</p> <p>The February book will be <u>Freak the Mighty</u> by Rodman Philbrick</p>
<p>Notes from the Editor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note our new website: thoi.org. We no longer need to go through the reform movement’s site address. Quick and easy –so check it out! Thank you to Marcia Conner for doing all that was necessary to accomplish this. • The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month. (March’s bulletin will go to press on February 20th.) I’d love to hear any ideas or suggestions you might have!
<p>Donations</p>	<p>We gratefully acknowledge and thank these generous members and friends who have given to the Temple during the past month:</p> <p>To the social hall building fund..... Phillip Schwartz In memory of Clare Weinberg.....Abram Kronsberg In memory of Edward Menaker.....Betty Menaker In memory of Irvin and Ethel Weinberg..... Ethel Ann Tebell Donations Tzedakah box</p>

<p>Yahrzeits for February</p>	<p>Melvin James Berman Moshe Cohen B. Edelman Irving Goldberg Henrietta Frankfort Goldstein David Goldstein Fannie Greenstone</p>	<p>Hyman Greenstone Oscar Mindell Hiah Neuger Betty Robins Leah Schneider Beckie Greenberg Shapiro</p>	<p>Dorothy Sragovitz Regina Barth Strauss Mae Hare Suskins Minnie C. Switzer Albert Williams Rose Zultowski</p>
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<p>Last Minute Addition</p>	<p>UNC-Chapel Hill Hillel is offering a weekend at the university for juniors and seniors in high school. Prospective students will be invited to stay in a dorm with a Jewish student, spend Shabbat with North Carolina Hillel, receive a campus tour and more. For further information, contact Michelle Krebs, Program Director for North Carolina Hillel at (919) 942-4057 or email at michelle@nchillel.org. Deadline for applications is February 11.</p>		
<p>Because I forgot to mention it...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our condolences to Paula and David Chernoff on the death of Paula's father, Dr. Zultowski. • We wish a speedy recovery to AJ Hartung who was run over by her dogs and broke her wrist in the ensuing fall. • Speedy recoveries to Shirley Brand, Janet Brody and Beth Young, all of whom have been afflicted with winter's creeping crud/bronchitis. • We wish Mike Brown a continued smooth recovery after a glitch in his liver transplant healing which sent him back to the Mayo Clinic for a brief stay. 		

February		1 Rabbi's office day	2	3 Rabbi's office day; Torah study noon; Hebrew 7- 8:30	4	5
6 Film Series: "Hester Street" 7:00 pm	7	8 Rabbi's office day	9	10 Rabbi's office day; Torah study noon; Hebrew 7- 8:30	11 Upper religious school students conduct Shabbat services at 7:30	12
13 Snow date for "Hester Street"	14	15 Rabbi's office day	16	17 Rabbi's office day; Torah study noon; Hebrew 7-8:30 pm	18	19
20 Lecture / End of Life Issues 7-8:30 @ THOI	21	22 Rabbi's office day	23 Book Club at 7:00 at	24 Rabbi's office day: Torah study noon; Hebrew 7-8:30 pm Board Meet @ 7:00	25 Shabbat Services at 7:30	26
27 Women's Group @ 2:00	28					

Feb 1	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Feb 3	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Hebrew 7-8:30 pm
Feb 6	Film Series: "Hester Street" at 7:00 pm
Feb 8	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Feb 10	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Hebrew 7-8:30 pm
Feb 11	Upper Religious School Students conduct Shabbat Services at 7:30 - Parashat Terumah Linda and Gordon Bowen 885-3192 and Barry Kolman 886-7529 hosts
Feb 13	Snow Date for "Hester Street"
Feb 15	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Feb 17	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Hebrew 7-8:30 pm
Feb 20	Lecture Series: End of Life Issues 7:00-8:30 pm in the social hall
Feb 22	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Feb 24	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Temple Board Meeting at 7:00 pm
Feb 25	Shabbat Services at 7:30 – Parashat Ki Tisa Susan and Tom Pereles 943-9040 and Walapa and Richard Marks 463-9574 hosts