



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism

15 North Market Street, Staunton, VA 24401 (540) 886-4091

Web Address: thoi.org

From the Rabbi's Desk

February 2006, Shevat/Adar 5766

Please be sure to read the monthly newsletter regularly to keep up with all that is going on and any changes that may be announced. Check the congregational calendar for the list of upcoming events each month and come join in! Take advantage of all that your congregation and Jewish community offer. There are Holiday celebrations, adult education classes, youth activities, religious school, and social events on the calendar throughout the year. Social action, Tikkun Olam (repair of the world), Gemilut Chasidim (Acts of loving kindness), and Tzedakah (righteous action) project ideas and suggestions are offered continuously. Be a part of it all!

As always, if you have ideas for things that you would like to see, please feel free to let the rabbi know, or contact a member of the Board.

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,
SHALOM!

The month of January has rushed by, and February is here. Deep in the throes of winter, huddled up for warmth, our little Jewish community is thriving.

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

Rosh Chodesh for Shevat is January 30th, and it runs until February 28th. February 28th and March 1st are Rosh Chodesh (New Month) for Adar. The only holiday in this period is Tu Bi'Shevat, which falls on Monday, February 13th. Tu Bi'Shevat, literally the 15th of Shevat, is the New Year for the Trees. It is understood as the day on which the sap begins to rise in the almond trees in Israel, the first trees to bloom.

It may seem a bit silly to have a new year for the trees, but it arises from the Torah. We are taught that we cannot take the fruit of a tree for sale until the tree is old enough to have established a strong and healthy root system. This takes at least four years, but we don't usually know when a tree seedling sprouted, and without cutting down the tree to see the rings, we cannot tell easily how old that tree is. The rabbis of old decreed that every tree would have a 'birthday' for the purpose of counting its age on the same day – Tu Bi'Shevat. Each Tu Bi'shevat a tree would be considered a year older. When a tree had passed the fourth occurrence of Tu Bi'Shevat, it was to be considered old enough to take the fruit for sale.

In commemoration of this day, we eat for the first time in the year the fruits of certain trees (what we usually consider fruits and nuts). Some have the custom of holding a Tu Bi'Shevat seder, somewhat like that at Passover in that it is an ordered arrangement with readings around the foods eaten as symbols.

Kabbalists used this Tu Bi'Shevat seder as an opportunity to explore the relationship of human and creation in a mystical 'four worlds' approach.

For more information on Tu Bi'Shevat, and to experience it for yourself, come to the Kabbalah and Mystical Judaism discussion, part of the Jewish Lecture-Discussion series, at 7 pm on February 12th, and/or the Tu Bi'Shevat seder on February 11th at Beth El.

From
the
Rabbi's
Desk

JEWISH LIFECYCLE: THE CONFIRMATION

Our abbreviated discussion of Jewish Lifecycle continues this month with a relatively new, misunderstood, and often forgotten celebration, the Confirmation.

In the 1800's, with the fact of Emancipation and the Enlightenment allowing Jews access to society outside of the Jewish Ghetto, Reform Judaism began to shape its practice to more closely resemble the society around itself. Thus, Reform Jews tried to look like the dominant society – a Protestant Christian world. The changes of reformers in Germany in the beginning were relatively small – liturgically, delivering sermons in German, and socially, dressing and acting more like their neighbors.

One of the changes was to recognize that for all intents and purposes, a child was not considered an adult at thirteen; as a consequence, the ceremony of Confirmation was imported from the Protestant world into Judaism. This was intended to be a ritual marking the moment when a child was old enough to choose to affiliate with the community and to accept the responsibilities and privileges attendant, and to understand the meaning and significance of the ritual. The German reformers chose the age of sixteen, and it replaced the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony for them.

In American Reform Judaism, the practice of confirmation was also adopted, but it became the custom that it was in addition to the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony, which then served more as a religious coming of age and the confirmation served more as a social and moral coming of age. The age of the youth being confirmed has ranged from sixteen to the early twenties in different communities.

Our community chooses to hold confirmation for those who are seniors in High School, or older. It seems somehow appropriate to ask these young people to look back, to share their learning and life journey so far with the congregation, and to express their connection to Judaism and the Jewish people while they stand on the nearer side of the path that they will soon be following as they prepare to go away to college and to life on their own as adults.

There is no fixed or formal liturgy that is required for a Confirmation, but in most instances, it is a service that includes a reading from the Torah. Often, it incorporates the thoughts and messages that the confirmation students wish to offer to the congregation.

The custom has grown up to hold Confirmation in conjunction with Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks), the holiday celebrating Revelation and the Torah. It is a lovely connection that reminds us that just as the Jewish people have been given the Torah, these young people have also been provided with the most essential teachings of our people, the Torah, and that it will continue to be with them, informing and instructing them for life.

Next month, we will continue with the topic of Marriage.

TZEDAKAH (Righteous Action)

After all the natural disasters and wars, basic needs around the world, in our nation, and locally all continue to be much greater than anyone could ever have imagined. Please donate funds to those in need by going to www.jdc.org, www.ujc.org, www.mazon.org, or at www.urj.org, or send your donations by mail. Please don't forget to support First Step, Mazon, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, the Free clinic, and the many other worthwhile organizations that help those in need in our own area.

The SHORTY youth group is undertaking a Tikkun Olam & Tzedakah effort. Shorty is collecting new pre-school children's books to be given to children in pediatrician's offices to take home. If you have any such books, please bring them to the synagogue anytime between now and June 1st. Thank you for your help!

From

LAST CALL: VOTE in the World Zionist Organization Elections

Don't miss your opportunity to make a difference to world Judaism and to assure that the voices of other viewpoints than Orthodoxy are heard in Israel. Register ONLINE before February 15th, and vote in the elections for the World Zionist Organization before February 28th. You can register online at www.urj.org. It only takes two minutes of your time and \$7.00 (\$5.00 for students 18 and over). When you receive your email to do so, VOTE! If you have any questions, please ask me, or your congregational officers. Help to set the internal agenda and funding priorities for Israel at this crucial time in its history. The URJ is supporting the ARZA slate.

JEWIS ONLINE

A website that I recommend you look at is <http://www.modestneeds.org>. If you are looking for a way to make a difference with your donated dollars, this is a site that seems to be worth visiting. Modest Needs is a non-profit organization reaching out to hard-working individuals and families who suddenly find themselves faced with small, emergency expenses that they have no way to afford on their own. You are able to direct your donation to a specific recipient. This is very much in the mode of 'Think Globally and Act Locally'. For anyone who wants to know more fully what their donations are doing, this is a very easy way to accomplish good and make a positive difference without having megabucks. Sometimes a few hundred dollars to cover an unexpected expense is all that is needed to keep a family on their feet and let them stay afloat.

JEWISH HUMOR: How to make a minyan

A graduate of a forestry school received notice of his first position – a five year posting to a huge forest in the middle of nowhere. Looking through his survival gear, much to his surprise, he found a recipe for Matzoh balls. Confused, he asked his superior, Ranger Goldberg, about it.

Goldberg said, "A few years down the road, when you've had it already with the bears and trees, and you're going a little meshugge (crazy) from the silence and solitude, you'll remember your matzoh ball recipe. When you do, get it out and start making some."

"What will that do?" asked the new graduate.

Goldberg replied, "Listen, before you know it, you'll have ten Jewish women looking over your shoulder, shouting 'You think THAT's the right way to make a matzoh ball?'"

JEWISH WIT AND WISDOM

Gray hair is a sign of age, not wisdom. – Unknown

A man should stay alive if only out of curiosity. –Unknown

One father can support ten children, but it is difficult for ten children to support one father.

- Unknown

'A stingy person and a fat cow are useful only after they are dead.' - Sholom Aleichem

A Day At Shea Stadium

Beginning in 1998, the New York Mets began Jewish heritage day. "We add the Israeli National Anthem, read the lineup in Yiddish, feature Jewish ball players on the scoreboard, and offer a variety of kosher foods and Israeli entertainment" said Ethan Wilson, spokesperson for the Mets, who also provided the following song lyrics. [You already know the tune – Take me out....]

Nem Mikh Tsu Der Ball Geym

Tsum Oylem Lomir Dokh Geyn

Koyf Mir Di Neslekh Un Krekerjek

Vilikh Keyn Mol Fun Dort Nit Avek

Git Zey Mut, Mut, Mut, Di Ball Shplier

Es Past Nit Az Men Farshpilt

Bayl S'iz Eyns, Tsvey, Dray Strikes, Un Oys

**From the
Rabbi's Desk**

JEWISH HISTORY

One of the first Jews to arrive in the 'wilderness' of Ohio was a watchmaker named Joseph Jonas. It took him two difficult months to make the journey from New York to Cincinnati, and another two years to persuade his brothers and two others, also Jews, to join him. In 1819, prayers rang out in the wilderness as this tiny group of Jews celebrated Rosh Hashanah.

The first shots in recognition of the United States as a sovereign power were fired on November 16, 1776. In a congratulatory exchange between the American brigantine Andrea Doria, and a tiny island in the Dutch Antilles, St. Eustatious (Statia). The island was the overseas arsenal for the American Revolution. Ships unloaded munitions and supplies at Orangetown, which were then sent to the patriots. As a hundred Jewish families were the basis of the island's commercial establishment, the success of the revolution can be partly attributed to the Jews of St. Eustatius.

In Honor of President's Day – George Washington's Birthday (February 22nd, observed this year on February 20th): "Sir: Permit the children of the stock of Abraham to approach you with the most cordial affection.... We reflect on those times of ... danger when the God of Israel, who delivered David from the peril of the sword, shielded your head in ... battle; and we rejoice to think that the same spirit ...will rest upon you, enabling you to discharge the arduous duties of the Chief Magistrate of these States."

- Moses Seixas, President, Hebrew Congregation of

Newport, Rhode Island, upon the visit of President George Washington on August 17, 1790.

B'virkat shalom (with Blessings of Peace),
Rabbi Joe

**Office Hours
and
Contact
Information**

RABBI'S AVAILABILITY & OFFICE DAYS

Rabbi Joe is available *by appointment*. Simply leave a message at the congregation, or email him to arrange a time to meet. In the event of an emergency, if you can't reach him through the synagogues, please contact the rabbi at home by phone.

Email: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

Beth El Congregation 540-434-2744

Temple House of Israel 540-886-4091

Home [Emergencies only, please] 434-971-4741

**Noteworthy
Congregational
News**

- **CONGRATULATIONS to the new temple board!** I said that in January, but I forgot to mention our new "At Large" member of the board. Welcome, Rachel Jordan! Thank you to Rachel and to the rest of the new Board members for agreeing to work diligently on behalf of the entire congregation.
- We are still in need of additional funds to complete the floor refinishing of the social hall. If you would like to donate money to be used specifically for this purpose, we would welcome your contributions.
- The **Youth Group Spaghetti Dinner and Service will be on Friday, January 27th**. Come at 6:30 for dinner and stay for the Youth-Group led services at 7:30. This event helps to fund the activities of SHORTY. **Call Beth Young (885-1481) for reservations.** Adults' dinners are \$10; Children under b'nait mitzvah age will get

dinner for \$5.

- The **next Temple Board meeting** will be held on **Thursday, February 9th at 7:00.** All members are invited all Board meetings.

Board Meeting Summary

At the board meeting of January 12th, the board discussed the need to set priorities for the many improvements that the temple needs. These include improving accessibility for handicapped persons, finishing the social hall renovations, repairing the stained glass windows, replacing our front lawn trees, and several others. • It was decided to establish a line in our budget for a dedicated building fund and an initial amount of \$2,000 was set aside. The Board will be asking for future donations to the building fund so that we can start some of these projects. • It has been noted that often the front door stays locked during services, inconveniencing people who might want to attend. The Board is asking that the oneg hostess for the evening make sure that the front door is open when we are having services, and that it is locked after services are over. • Our next Mitzvah Day will be March 5, and we will try to finish up the ceiling tiles in the social hall. All hands are needed! • If you have not received the updated by-laws that we voted on at our congregational meeting, please ask Ruth for an e-copy.
Submitted by Ruth Chodrow, secretary

News of our Community

- Susan and Tom Pereles, Rabbi Joe and Riff Blair and Riff's friend Julia Carlson and Laura Jean Brand provided babysitting for First Baptist Church in Waynesboro during their candlelight service on Christmas Eve. One of the church members said that she hadn't been to a candlelight service for years because she always provided the childcare. Mitzvahs are always appreciated!
- Lynn Hewitt and Raymond have decided to marry this spring. They will be living in Greenbrier County. Although we will miss Lynn, we certainly share in her happiness and wish them both a hearty Mazel Tov!
- Ruth Chodrow has eight (8) virtually-new tie-on chair pads. The pads are in a leaf pattern of green and brown, stuffed with fiberfill and very comfy. Pads of this quality sell for \$15 each and up. Make a donation to the Temple of \$50 or your best offer and they can be yours! Call Ruth at 886-2252.
- Thank you to Flora Haas who has donated 6 years worth of back issues of *The New Yorker* magazine.
- Ellen Schorsch had a fall at her home on January 7th and has cracked her left knee-cap as well as breaking the metatarsal bones in her right foot. And a sprained right ankle goes along with all this, too. We wish Ellen a speedy recovery – she's hoping not the full 6 weeks the doctors say!

News from the Women's Group

- *Happy Birthdays to be celebrated in February :*
Jesse Brand will be 6 years old on February 2nd
Freddy Goldenberg celebrating on February 8th
Miriam Freedman celebrating on the 9th
Sara Brody will be 15 years old on the 13th
Iris Rubin on the 14th
Vera Flint on the 17th
Kasey Goldenberg on the 24th

Religious School

The Religious school has been very active! The Chanukah celebration in December was fun. We've had a whole month to get back in the swing of things in January, and a good thing too! Here in the middle of the winter we have the fun holiday of Tu Bi'shevat

(Jewish Arbor Day) and a seder to enjoy in the Religious School on February 12th - a foretaste of the better-known seder to come in April. ☺

Tot Shabbat

The next **Tot Shabbat** will be on **Saturday January 28th at 10 AM** at the synagogue. Families with their children ages 6 and under are welcome to attend for stories, singing and a crafts project. New families are always welcome! Contact Shelby at 943-6934 or shelbyapple@yahoo.com for further information.

and related information

Are you looking for a fun, exciting place for your child to spend his or her summer? Would you like to send your child to a Jewish summer camp? Does your child enjoy activities such as karate, gymnastics, hip hop dancing, martial arts, cheerleading, line dancing and many more? These activities in addition to swimming, crafts, Shabbat celebrations and wonderful field trips are all part of the year's Camp Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville.

The 6-week camp period runs from June 12th until July 21st from 9:00-3:15 for grades K-9. Before and after camp care will be available. If you would like to receive the brochure and registration materials, please call the CBI office at 434-295-6382. If you have questions about Camp CBI, please contact Shelby Apple, Camp Director.

Film Series

Our film series continues on **January 15th at 7:00 pm**. After experiencing a trauma in his life, a Mossad agent ignores his superiors' advice to take time off, and accepts a new assignment to investigate the whereabouts of an elderly ex-Nazi whose unwitting grandson will soon arrive in Israel to visit his sister. She is exercising her liberal tendencies on a Kibbutz.... Intrigue leads to Germany.... There is a happy ending. Screenwriter Gal Uchovsky makes a fine effort of exploring the conflict in modern Israel between tradition and modernity, the past and the present.

Adult Education

B'NAI MITZVAH

Our next B'nai Mitzvah event is the Bar Mitzvah of Devin Oberdorff at Beth El in April, followed by the B'not Mitzvah of Laura Jean Brand, Riff Blair, and Grace Lambeth at Temple House of Israel, coming in May and June. We are all looking forward to celebrating these Smachot (joyous occasions)!

If you would be interested in having a B'nai Mitzvah, or in learning to read Torah, chant Haftarah, lead services, or to serve as Gabbai, please be in touch with the rabbi.

ADULT HEBREW CLASS

Intermediate Hebrew begins/began in January. This course is a chance to practice reading Hebrew, to improve prayer service skills, and to build Hebrew vocabulary to better understand the liturgy. In February we will meet at THOI on the 13th and 27th at 6 to 7 pm, and at BE on the 12th and 26th at 2:30 to 3:30 pm. You can still join the group! There is no cost to members for this course. Please call the synagogue to sign up or for more information.

(RE-)INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM COURSE

This course begins/began Monday, January 30th, at 7 pm at THOI in Staunton. The full schedule of fifteen sessions was provided at the first class. It is not too late to join this class! This course is intended to offer an overview of Judaism. It can serve as a reminder for those who have had some, or even quite a bit of exposure in past, or as a first introduction for those who have not studied the topic before. This course is also a prerequisite for anyone who may wish to convert to Judaism.

There is a \$25 fee for this course to cover photocopying charges, payable at the first session you attend. The course is open to all congregational members, and to members of

Adult Education

the public with permission of the instructor (Rabbi Joe). There will be a few textbooks to be purchased during the course (generally available at local bookstores), and several 'field trips' will be assigned. You can still join the class. Please call for further information or to register at 540-886-4091.

JEWISH LECTURE & DISCUSSION SERIES

By popular demand, we will have a return to the topic of The Zohar and Kabbalah. February 12th, Sunday, at 7 pm we will enter into the mystical groves of the Pardes (Orchard) and begin a discussion on The Zohar and Kabbalah. Our focus will be on the 'Four Worlds'. There is no prerequisite, but those attending are requested not to dematerialize. ☺ Our first meeting will include a brief kabbalistic seder for Tu Bi'Shevat to offer a hands-on example of the kabbalistic approach. Please RSVP at 886-4091 so I can be sure to have enough items for all attending.

PARASHAT HASHAVUAH

The weekly Parashat Hashavuah (weekly Torah portion) discussion continues at noon on Fridays at THOI on days when the office is open. All members of both congregations are invited to bring your lunch and join the discussion. No prior knowledge or experience required.

THE HARRISONBURG INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Interfaith Association meets on the first Thursday of each month at noon. The group is open to individuals and religious institutions, and all are welcome to attend. The February program, to be held on the 2nd at the West Dining Room of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, will be a presentation by the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank on fighting hunger in our area. A buffet style lunch will be available in the cafeteria, at \$3.50/person.

Programs for the rest of this year include: volunteering to farm to raise and harvest food to fight hunger in Virginia, presented by the Volunteer Farm (March 2nd); an Interfaith Chocolate Seder (April 6th); a presentation on Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training (May 4th); and a presentation on Immigrants in our growing and changing area (June 1st). The topic for the annual retreat has not yet been set, but it is planned for a Friday sometime in later April. If you would like to attend any of the meetings, please be in touch with Rabbi Joe for details.

AN ISRAEL TRIP OPTION

Rabbi Joe has been gathering responses to his idea of planning a congregational trip to Israel. Unless we can put together a group of twenty or more people, the costs will be prohibitive. The results to date are that there are several people who have expressed interest, but far too few to proceed with this idea. If you might be interested, please let Rabbi Joe know before March 31st so he can take the next step towards making this trip a reality.

Book Group

For January, as previously stated, I get my ten cents worth in Bel Canto by Ann Patchett and The Industry of Souls by Martin Booth. We'll meet at **Dianne Mason's house on Thursday, Jan 19th** – with a snow date of Wednesday, Jan 25th at **7:30 pm**.

Dianne can be reached at 885-6254. Jerry Warner wants to join us for our February meeting that will be at his and Pat's home on **Wednesday 22 February at 7:30 pm**, because he would like to share with us the New York Times bestseller The End of Faith by Sam Harris. According to him religion, terror and the future of reason. Won't we enjoy reading this in front of the fire? The Warners can be reached at 337-8680.

Submitted by A.J. Hartung

Judaica

Check out our stock in the Judaica Shop! If we don't have what you'd like, please

Shop

contact Dianne Mason at 885-6254 so she can get it (whatever that may be...) for you.

**Youth
Group
and
Confirmation
Class**

The Youth Group, Shorty, had the most amazing month in January! They held their regular meeting at BE in Harrisonburg on the 8th. On the 13th and 14th they went to Roanoke for a shul-in and a concert by Dan Nichols. That wasn't enough, so they met again on the 15th at THOI in Staunton to finalize preparations for the ski weekend. On the 20th-22nd was the fifth annual ski weekend, with youth groups from five other synagogues attending! A truly wonderful time was had by all! And if that was not enough, on the 27th, Shorty led services at THOI, and cooked and served a dinner as a fund-raiser beforehand.

The collection of cleaning supplies for victims of the hurricanes concluded in January. Shorty was able to send more than five large boxes of cleaning supplies to help with the clean up efforts. Thanks to all who donated supplies.

Don't forget to bring children's books as donations to help Shorty with their Tzedakah efforts for the Reach out and Read project. This is intended to provide books to be given in pediatrician's offices for young children who would not otherwise have any. You can leave these donations in the office or the social hall. Shorty will continue this project until June 1st.

DON'T FORGET the Shorty Fundraising Spaghetti Dinner and Youth Group Service on Friday January 27th! Come at 6:30 pm for dinner, stay for the Youth-Group-led Shabbat service at 7:30. This helps to fund the activities of our Shorty youth group. RSVP (That means Call) Beth Young at 885-1481. Clip this form and bring it with your check or cash.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Number attending:

_____ Adults (\$10) _____ Pre-B'nai Mitzvah (\$5)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Donations

Thank you to these generous people who have made contributions to the Temple during the past month. Your donations are very much appreciated!

In memory of Kenneth Lusser, Karen Blair's father.....Tony and Rachel Jordan

In honor of Liam's naming ceremonyBarry and Diane Goluboff

For the High Holidays Howard Dobin and Bonnie Bernstein

General donationsLaurie

Berman

Notes
from
the

- Your comments and suggestions are welcome and need to be received by me before February 20th for the March newsletter.
- **Thanks to those who have said “yes” to email. Anyone else interested in receiving your bulletin via email, let me know at templenews@ntelos.net .**

Editor

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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26	27 Intro to Judaism 7-9 pm	28				29
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Jan 6	Weekly Torah Study at noon. Everyone is welcome!
Jan 8	Youth Group and Confirmation Meetings at Beth El 4:00pm
Jan 12	Temple Board Meeting at 7:00 pm in the social hall
Jan 13	Weekly Torah Study at noon. Everyone is welcome! Shabbat Services at 7:30 pm - oneg hosts: Marcia Conner 885-5111 and Vera Flint 886-1899
Jan 15	In Staunton: Our Film Series at 7:00 pm
Jan 19	Book Group at Dianne Mason's; <i>The Fantasticks</i> dinner theatre @ Fairfax Hall, 7:00 pm
Jan 20	Weekly Torah Study at noon. Everyone is welcome! <i>The Fantasticks</i> dinner theatre, 7:00 pm
Jan 21	Youth Group Ski-Weekend; <i>The Fantasticks</i> dinner theatre, 7:00 pm
Jan 23	Adult Hebrew 6:00 pm
Jan 27	Weekly Torah Study at noon. Everyone is welcome! Youth Group Spaghetti Dinner at 6:00; Shabbat Services at 7:30 – oneg hosts: Ellen and Dan Schorsch 942-3149 and Joan Robins 463-2017
Jan 28	Tot Shabbat at 10:00
Jan 30	Introduction to Judaism class at 7:00 pm @ THOI