



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
15 North Market Street, Staunton, VA 24401 (540) 886-4091
New Web Address: thoi.org

April 2005, Adar II/Nisan 5765

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,
SHALOM!

Okay, so winter keeps on hanging on... it has to end sometime, doesn't it? And NOW is a great time!

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

We are heading towards the end of the month of Adar II. Rosh Chodesh (the new Month) for Nisan will fall on April 10th.

In April we have three of the seven specially named Shabbatot (Sabbaths); Shabbat Parah (Sabbath of the Cow/Heifer) on April 2nd on which we read about the Red Heifer; Shabbat HaChodesh (Sabbath of THE Month, in recognition that this is the month of redemption and liberation) on April 9th, at which time we usher in the month of Nisan during which we have Pesach (Passover); and Shabbat Hagadol (the GREAT Sabbath) which immediately precedes Pesach, and this year falls on April 23rd.

Clearly, the biggest event on the calendar in this month is PESACH, which is the eight days from sunset on the evening of the 23rd of April (Nisan 15) to sundown on the 1st of May, which is the 22nd of Nisan. The biblical requirement is for seven days, but with the dispersion and diaspora, the precise day declared as the start of the holiday was harder to assure, so in the diaspora many celebrate with two seders to be absolutely SURE that they have one on the correct day!

We are scheduled to have the model seder in the Religious School on Sunday April the 17th. Be sure to plan to come to that – we have been talking about making that a completely chocolate seder! YUMMMM!

Pesach has several names: Chag Hamatzot (the Holiday of Matzahs – self explanatory); Chag HaAviv (the Spring Holiday – very seasonal); Zeman Cheruteynu (season of our freedom).

Just before Passover starts, generally on the day of Erev Pesach (the eve of Passover) there is a fast that is traditionally observed, the Fast of the Firstborn. With this fast we recall that the final plague in Egypt was the death of all the firstborn males, and the statement by G-d that all firstborn belong to G-d. As a remembrance that the firstborn of the Israelites were spared, they are to fast and thank G-d. Those who do fast find the seder meal all the more delicious!

However, there is a way out of fasting! If there is someone who reaches the end of study of a tractate or a mishnah, there is a special celebration of this event, and even the firstborn present are required to join in the celebration and to eat at the Siyum, so the fast is cancelled for them! This year, because Passover falls on Motzei Shabbat (Saturday night after Shabbat ends) the Fast of the Firstborn is moved back to Thursday, April 21st (we are not permitted to fast on Shabbat because it would diminish our joy in it, so we have to finish the fast before preparing for Shabbat). Anyone who is involved in study can join in a Siyum! I

anticipate completing a block of study on that Thursday at the noontime Torah study that is scheduled at THOI. Anyone who is there is welcome to join in and to celebrate the completion by eating and celebrating with me!

We will celebrate Pesach with the traditional seder (literally, this means order, but it is used to indicate that there is an ordered ritual of which part is the meal, with the story and all the symbols and symbolism). This year, the Congregational seder for the first night will be at Temple House of Israel at 6 pm on the 23rd, and the seder for the second night will be at Beth El at 6 pm on the 24th. Make your reservations early!

The major mitzvah (commandment) for Pesach is to neither eat nor own nor benefit in any way from any chometz (leavened items) in commemoration of the hurried flight of the Israelites from Egypt, without time to allow the dough to rise. In the past this was a major issue, as there was almost nothing available that did not contain leavening agents, but in the last several years many products have become readily available on the internet and through some of the local grocery stores. The items that are biblically proscribed include everything made from wheat, oats, spelt, barley and rye, unless they are prepared in a specific fashion that does not permit any leavening or rising.

A related issue concerns an individual's Jewish origin. Those who derive from Ashkenazic stock (most of us - Western European areas, such as Germany and France, mainly where the Muslims never conquered the Roman/Christian Empire) are also prohibited from consuming other items that appear to ferment or rise, including rice, corn, legumes (peanuts and beans), and soy. This causes many restrictions because corn starch, corn sweetener, corn oil, and soy are used frequently in many, many commercial products. That restriction is the reason for special products seen only at this time of year - for example, Coca Cola makes Passover soda by using cane sugar instead of corn syrup to sweeten the soda, to allow observant Jews to consume it during Passover! It is hard to find, because many non-Jews who liked the taste of Coca Cola in past (before the first formula change!) far prefer it this way, and snap it up as soon as it appears on the shelves! Ashkenazic Jews make up the vast majority of American Jewry.

On the other hand, those of Sephardic stock (Jews derived from those expelled from Spain, and their descendants, including those living in South America, Scandinavia, Denmark, parts of Central America and the Southwest of this country, and in most Muslim controlled countries such as Morocco, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt) do not have this latter restriction, and can eat rice, corn, and soy products on Passover. Because Israel had a very mixed population following the immigration of Moroccan and Yemenite Jews in the 1950's, the choice was made to follow the Sephardic custom in pronunciation of Hebrew and in customs of observance of Passover for most people (just about everything else followed Ashkenazic custom). Only a small number of Israelis follow the more restrictive Ashkenazic customs, which is allowed in accordance with the ruling of the chief rabbis of Israel. Those rulings, however, are restricted to within the boundaries of the land of Israel, so if you are Ashkenazic and live in the US, you are still supposed to follow the more restrictive customs. So, no peanut butter, no rice, no peas or beans, and nothing with any form of corn in it!

The second mitzvah of Pesach is to feel as if each one was themselves enslaved in Egypt and rescued, and to tell the story to our children of that redemption and liberation. This is a central tenet of our faith, one that informs it each day and week as we recall the 'yitziat mitzrayim' (going out of Egypt/the narrow place) in

From the Rabbi's Desk

daily prayers and the Friday evening Kiddush. The main purpose of the seder is to tell the story with all sorts of visual aides and props, so that it will be remembered. One of the most effective props is the use of the seder plate, on which we have the major symbols, such as the zeroa (lamb shankbone as a reminder of the sacrifice), maror (bitter herb to remember the bitterness of slavery), charoset (chopped apples and nuts with wine to remind us of the mortar to make the bricks for the store cities of Pharaoh), and salt water (symbolizing our tears). These items are not simply left on the table, but are also used or eaten as we tell the story. This is how we Jews embody our history in each generation, year by year – after all, they say, you are what you eat! We are nourished in every sense by our history and sacred story.

Because one is prohibited not just from eating the items proscribed, but from benefiting from them in any way, there is a custom of selling one's Chometz. All Chometz materials that are unopened are placed in a cabinet or closet, and the closet is locked shut in some fashion and the door is taped or otherwise 'sealed' closed. Then the rabbi is authorized to act as the agent of the person/family to sell the contents of the closet to a non-Jewish person. This is an installment sale contract. That means the person pays a small amount up front, and cannot take possession of the goods until later (after Passover). This is a real sale, and if the person wishes to collect those goods after Passover, they could do so! However, often the sale price is set far above the market value of the materials, so the sale is never completed, and the contract becomes null and void for non-performance. If the contract is broken after Passover, ownership of the contents of the closet reverts to the person who sold it. If anyone wishes to participate in the sale of their chometz, I would be happy to facilitate it. Let me know, and I will send you the form with the information I need to make the contract legal and binding.

Of course, in collecting their Chometz and cleaning out their homes, some people choose to make it an opportunity for another mitzvah, and donate these food items to the food bank or other groups that will distribute them to the needy. Others donate the sum of money that they would 'earn' by sale of the Chometz to Mazon or some other group as Tzedakah. It is up to you how you wish to proceed, but it is a very nice way to incorporate a little more Tikun Olam (repair of the world) and Gemilut Chasidim (deeds of loving kindness) into your own Passover practices and celebration.

B'virvat shalom uchag hamatzot sameach
(With Blessings of Peace, and wishes for a happy Passover),
Rabbi Joe

Office Hours

The Rabbi is generally in Staunton on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 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 (for emergencies only, please) 434-971-4741

Contact Information

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 style="text-align: center;">Noteworthy Congregational News</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our traditional Community Passover Seder will be held the first night of Passover, Saturday, April 23rd at 6:00 in the social hall. Many, many thanks to Doug Degen for chairing this event and to Rosalie Waterman for co-chairing! A separate flyer with complete details and a mail-in section for your reservations is included with this bulletin. Reservation deadline: April 16th. • Please be reminded that by the terms of the agreement with the church renting our building, they have <u>exclusive</u> use of the sanctuary and social hall on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. • The next Temple board meeting is on April 28th at 7:00 in the temple social hall. Everyone is welcome to attend.
<p style="text-align: center;">News of our Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ken and Elizabeth Schwartz have sold their home on Berkeley Place and will be moving soon to their new home at the top of Fallon Street. We wish them well- and good health - in their new home! • A huge thank you to Elana Brody for sharing her talent and personal thoughts with us! Elana's program of original music held in March was absolutely fantastic! Her voice, her style, her command of the keyboard, her sound were all spectacular, extremely expressive and impressive to all. In addition to the pleasure of listening and watching Elana perform, the temple benefited from those who bought tickets for the evening and brought in approximately \$275.00. Thanks to Laurie Berman for arranging this program for us and to Janet Brody and Laurie for all the goodies at intermission. • Sarah Young has been accepted to the University of Cape Town for the fall term of her junior year. She'll leave Staunton July 11th for South Africa and will complete her finals there by November 4th. • David Young accompanied the Mary Baldwin trip to Bulgaria and Greece over MBC's spring break, along with most of the members of his Greek Myth and Religion class. It comes as no surprise - he had a fantastic time! • Sara Brody's Destination Imagination Team from Stuart Hall placed 2nd in the latest competition which earns them the right to go on to the state level next month in Richmond. Sara's team also won the Renaissance Award given for extraordinary energy and enthusiasm in performance. • Mazel tov to Nancy Witt who will be celebrating her 50th year reunion from the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond during the weekend of April 22nd! Nancy was one of six women graduating with her class in 1955 and has been practicing psychiatry since then, with a little time out when she founded DeJarnette, now known as the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents.
<p style="text-align: center;">News from the Women's Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We wish the following members and friends a HAPPY BIRTHDAY in April: Eva Blair celebrates on April 4th Kelli Lynn Goldenberg on the 6th Martha Degen on the 7th Amy Goldenberg Fox also on the 7th Joe Blair on the 13th (and it happens to be his day off!) Rafael Brand celebrating on the 14th Sara Blair on the 19th Vicki Goldenberg on the 21st

News from the Women's Group

- Our annual **Bake Sale** will take place at the Staunton Farmer's Market on **Saturday, May 7th from 7:00 am until noon**. We need help! First and foremost, we need people to bake goodies. All baked goods can be dropped off at Ruth Chodrow's screened in back porch at any time before the bake sale. Second, we need people to sell all the goodies you bake. We'll have tables set up and protection from the weather, thanks to Ruth and Marsha Pillet. Please contact Ruth at 886-2252 if you can help in any way. **You are needed!**
Bake sale tips: ethnic food sells well – challah, mandel bread, rugelach, etc. Old-fashioned things and anything different sell well – Ellen's upside-down pineapple cakes are a big hit every year. Avoid things with delicate fillings or frostings – if it's a hot day, these will melt. When you package your items, please wrap them tightly with cling wrap. Do not use ziplock baggies because they condense moisture inside and the baked goods get soggy. Please label and price your items – we will have labels for you, or you can create your own. Package items like cookies to sell in small units of 2-3 rather than by the dozen. Packages worth 50 cents up to \$2 are suggested.

Adult Education

- The next monthly Torah study at Beth El will take place on April 15th at 6 pm. Once again, bring your own dinner, eat and join in as we discuss the Torah portion. This is also planned for May 9th.
- A weekly Torah study meets on Thursdays (except the first Thursday of the month) at noon at THOI. All congregants are welcome to drop in and take part. Don't forget the Siyum on April 21st.
- Hebrew – intermediate classes are held from 7-8:30 pm
 Mondays at Beth El April 11, 18, 25
 Thursdays at THOI April 7, 14, 21
- 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.
 The topic currently planned (subject to change).
 April 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 to the Rabbi. The lead-time to accomplish this milestone is anywhere from about 8 months upwards, depending on your free time, flexibility, commitment and knowledge base. It is a very significant undertaking, and certainly worthy of celebrating and acknowledging when it is reached! Several people are in the process now.

**Youth Group
SHORTY**

SHORTY has been incredibly active lately. We had two members go to the Winter Kallah, three go to the National Kallah in LA, five go to THEVENT in March, and three are going to Spring Kallah in April. More information on Youth Group will come from Sherri Alt, SHORTY's advisor. Kol hakavod (all honor) to Sherri and the members of our youth group for their ruach (spirit)!
 The next event after the Purim celebration is April 15-16th – a Shul-in with BITY in Charlottesville. We are tentatively planning day trips to services in Charlottesville at the Renewal and Orthodox services on May 7th and 14th.

- Our next meeting is April 17th at Temple House of Israel.
- The following meeting will be May 15th at Beth El

Confirmation

From the Rabbi: "We had a bang up discussion of interdating, interfaith marriage,

<p>Class</p>	<p>universalism and particularity at our last meeting. What a great conversation! The next topic we will discuss is Kabbalah (Madonna and Britney, get a life!) We will be welcoming the incoming class of Confirmation students (those having their b'nai mitzvah this year) at the May meeting, and asking them to participate at the Youth Service led by all the current and incoming Confirmation class members on June 3rd at Temple House of Israel, perhaps to be followed by a Cosmic bowling and Shul-in (be on the lookout for more details)! This year we anticipate celebrating the confirmation of Gabie Kalman and Eli Giovanetti at the Shavuot Shabbat service on June 10th at Beth El. 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>Tot Shabbat</p>	<p>A Tot Shabbat is scheduled for Saturday April 16th at 10:00 at the Temple. Thank you to Shelby Apple (new to the area and now a regular at the Women's Group) who has agreed to organize songs, stories and craft projects for our pre-school-aged children and their families. Please contact Shelby at 943-6934 or shelbyapple@yahoo.com if you're interested or know of someone who might be.</p>
<p>Judaica Shop</p>	<p>If you have any suggestions for inventory at our Judaica Shop, please call Dianne Mason at 885-6254.</p>
<p>Staunton Book Group</p>	<p>From AJ Hartung: "As we meet late in the month, we are trying to look ahead so that we all have time to read, digest and share the chosen books thoughtfully. Here are the next two selections. Pat Warner chose <u>Shades of Gray</u> by Carolyn Reeder. This is a young readers book that has won the Newberry award – an easy read about the civil war and a young man who says 'you can't make me fight in a war I don't believe in'. Pat was inspired by the evocativeness of <u>Freak the Mighty</u> which we read last month. Join us at the home of Pat Warner, 70 Lime Kiln Rd., Churchville. Take 250 into Churchville and turn left onto Rt. 42 south in the middle of town. Go 1 mile to Lime Kiln Road of the left. Warner's is a white Cape Cod at the corner of Lime Kiln and Greenlee and the drive is lined with flower-pots! In case you get lost, the number there is 337-8680. See you on April 21st at 7:30 pm.</p> <p>Beth Young's choice for May is <u>My Forbidden Face: Growing up under the Taliban</u>, a selection from the current AAUW list – our first adventure into a previously unread book, as a group! Even so, each reading has led us to the next. Our group is open to you and your friends, soooo please join us."</p>
<p>Notes from the Editor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note our new website: thoi.org. 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. (May's bulletin will go to press on April 20th.) Your suggestions are welcome!
<p>Corrections and Additions to Member/Friend List</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom and Susan Pereles have 3 beautiful children: Zach, Rebecca and Sammy. The Pereles family can be reached at 943-9040 • The Schorsch family's phone number was inadvertently left off: 942-3149 ➤ If your information is not correct or is incomplete, please let me know at bydesign@ntelos.net.
<p>Donations</p>	<p>We gratefully acknowledge and thank these generous members and friends who</p>

have given to the Temple during the past month:
 To the social hall building fund.....Asher and Laura Jean
 Brand Lynne
 LandsbergMatthew and Daniela Printz
 In Memory of Claire WeinbergJeffrey and Miriam
 Rosenblum
 General DonationKen Schwartz

Yahrzeits for April	Herman L. Barber	Walter E. Cohen	Arthur H. Printz
	Ella Hirsch Barth	Samuel Duken	Harold Ely Shapiro
	David Wayne Bishop	David Gelberg	Maurice Siegel
	Sim Brand	Jacob H. Klotz	Henry Switzer
	Alfred Brettner	Sylvia Kramer	Sopie Switzer
	Evelyn Brettner	Joseph Masinkoff	Jack Witt
	Isadore Cohen	Joann Neuman	

Temple Contacts	Rabbi	Joe Blair	886-4091 or rabbioeb@hotmail.com
	President	Rafael Brand	949-0529 or rafa@ntelos.com
	V. P. - Membership	Paul Klein	396-6169 or mediamat@ntelos.net
	V. P. – Bldgs. Grds.	Michael Brown	885-3809 or mcbrown@uaix.net
	Secretary	Ruth Chodrow	886-2252 or rchodrow@ntelos.net
	Treasurer	Laura Jean Brand	942-3656 or ljvp@adelphia.net
	Director at large	Lisa Solod	463-7637 or lisa@rockbridge.net
	Past President	Doug Degen	886-8651 or dbdegen@ntelos.net
	Trustees	Ralph Degen	886-5434
		Alan Goldenberg	adg1221@aol.com
		Richard Young	885-1481 or younghdwe@ntelos.net
	Bulletin Editor	Beth Young	885-1481 or bydesign@ntelos.net
Bulletin Circulation	A.J. Hartung	337-6836	

April					1	2
3	4	5 Rabbi's office day	6	7 Rabbi's office day; Hebrew 7-8:30 pm	8 Shabbat services at 7:30	9
10	11	12 Rabbi's office day	13	14 Rabbi's office day; Torah study noon; Hebrew 7-8:30 pm	15	16
17 Youth Group & Confirmation@ 1:00 , THOI Lecture / Passover Rituals 7-8:30 @ THOI	18	19 Rabbi's office day	20	21 Rabbi's office day: Torah study noon; Book Club @ 7:00 at Pat Warner's; Hebrew 7- 8:30	22 Shabbat Services at 7:30	23 Community Seder at 6:00
24	25	26 Rabbi's office day	27	28 Rabbi's office day; Torah study noon; Board Meet @ 7:00	29	30

April 5	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
April 7	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Hebrew 7-8:30 pm
April 8	Shabbat Services at 7:30 Parashat Tazria – Joan Robins 463-2017 and Marsha Pillet 249-4946 hostesses
April 12	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
April 14	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Hebrew 7-8:30 pm
April 17	Youth Group and Confirmation Class at 1:00 in the social hall Lecture Series: Passover Rituals and Rules 7:00-8:30 pm in the social hall
April 19	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
April 21	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Hebrew 7-8:30 pm Book Club at Pat Warner's house "Shades of Gray" by Carolyn Reeder
April 22	Shabbat Services at 7:30 Parashat Acharei Mot – David & Paula Chernoff 886-6212 and Laurie Berman 885-2925 hosts
April 23	Community Passover Seder at 6:00 pm Send your reservations to Doug Degen by April 16th
April 26	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
April 28	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Temple Board Meeting at 7:00 pm in the social hall