



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

September 2005, Av/Elul 5765

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,
SHALOM! WELCOME BACK!

I hope your summer has been refreshing and a relaxing change of pace. I have had a busy but rewarding summer, and I hope that you feel similarly. I am ready to jump back into congregational life (and finish painting already!) The congregational year is about to take off again! Summer is ending, and the excitement and activity of the fall and our more regular schedule is just ahead.

I am writing this in August. The annual congregational calendar has already been distributed (ed note: enclosed with this newsletter) and you can see the outline of a busy year ahead of us. In addition to our usual activities that appear on the calendar, there will be some additions, a few changes to things we have done previously, and a few new events that we will add to the calendar to see if they are of interest and worth pursuing.

Looking ahead to the major milestones for this year, we are looking forward to three B'nei Mitzvah (Bar and Bat Mitzvah); three adult B'nei Mitzvah; an active youth group and Confirmation program; adult education, including Hebrew classes, Limud Torah (Learning), Lectures, Discussions, and an Introduction to Judaism course; a very busy Religious School year, including implementation of a new curriculum in both Judaics and Hebrew; observance of the Holidays and Shabbatot (Sabbaths); Sisterhood/Women of the Temple activities; the Beth El Men's Club programs; Interfaith activities; and so much more. Please be sure to read the monthly newsletter regularly to be sure you are keeping up with all that is going on! And, as always, if you have ideas for things that you would like to see me add, please feel free to let me know.

THE RABBI'S DESK

Last year in my articles I walked through the calendar month by month, describing the cycle of months, when the Holidays fall, and how the Jewish luni-solar calendar is reconciled with the secular solar calendar. This year I plan to change the focus of my articles and look primarily at life cycle events. I will certainly point out the upcoming holidays and special calendar events, but will not spend much space on explanations of calendar items.

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

Rosh Chodesh for the month of Av fell on August 6th. On July 24th, we observed the fast of Shivah Asar Be'Tamuz (the 17th of Tammuz) which kicked off the 'three weeks' – a period of mourning-like behaviors during which we traditionally hold no celebrations or weddings and do not cut our hair. The three weeks ended very recently with the arrival of Tisha Be'Av (the 9th day of Av) on August 14th. Tisha Be'Av is the saddest day in the Jewish calendar. The traditional practice for Tisha Be'Av is to gather late in the evening, often at midnight, sitting on the floor or on low stools as in a house of mourning, and to read the book of Eicha (Lamentations).

Over Labor Day weekend, we will arrive at Rosh Chodesh for Elul. Elul is the last

month of the year before we come to Rosh Hashanah. Elul is the month in which we are encouraged to take time to do some introspection and self-examination in preparation for the Yamim Noraim (days of Awe). This is known as a Cheshbon Nefesh (accounting of the soul). If taken seriously, this is a powerful practice.

Rosh Hashanah is Rosh Chodesh for the month of Tishrei, which this year falls on the 4th of October (meaning that Erev Rosh Hashanah is the evening of the 3rd). Tishrei is our most intense month of holidays with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah all in the course of that single month. We will talk more about the holidays next month. For the time being, mark them on your calendar!

JEWISH LIFECYCLE: BIRTH

We begin our look at lifecycle events as we began life: with birth. Birth is a momentous event, both for the child and for the parents. The child is unable to make choices or take action, so all of the ritual activity is done by the parents on behalf of the child, or for themselves.

There is great joy at news of a birth. Historically, birth was a terribly dangerous passage, both for the mother and the child. Maternal mortality was high, but nowhere near the rate of infant mortality. A healthy child being born and the mother surviving was a cause for a double dose of joy and celebration.

Many minhagim (customs) are associated with birth, often absorbed from the surrounding cultures. Here are a few of them.

One of the oldest of the practices surrounding birth was that the father was not present at the birth in many cultures. It was generally thought that it was unseemly for a man to be in the room, and in the Jewish world this was reinforced for reasons of modesty. In addition, for Jewish men, the fact that there was blood involved in a birth meant that those present were rendered ritually impure, and most Jews would avoid this if possible. Cohanim (The male cohens, those of priestly or Aaronide descent) especially, were forbidden to have contact with such an event, just as they could not be in contact with the dead or enter a cemetery. The upshot was that women attended the mother through the birth, and the father would only see the child later, after it had been cleaned and dressed. This may be part of the background for the old-style hospital deliveries, earlier last century, when the father would be allowed to view the child after it had been taken from the mother and prepared, through the window of the nursery, but not hold the baby and certainly could not be present for the birth. It is a little different today, with the father in the delivery room, and in some instances taking an active role by coaching or even cutting the umbilical cord!

Another such minhag (custom) is that for children born with a crown (a segment of the amniotic sack remaining on the head) the crown was removed, saved, and later burned to ashes, and then the ashes were buried in the soil, often where a tree was planted in honor of that child. A crown was thought to be a very good sign for that child, indicating that this child would be blessed with the crown of Torah, the crown of a good name, the crown of leadership, or perhaps all three!

The planting of a tree at the birth of a child was a general custom, and some families continue it today. Some had the tradition of planting different kinds of trees for male and female children. Often the thought in Jewish families was that the tree planted at the birth of a child would be the source of the limbs and branches that would be used to make up the poles and supports of the Chuppah (wedding canopy) for that child (of course, mingled together with the parts of the tree planted for the betrothed other child!) when the time came.

Another birth custom that is sometimes still observed was that the swaddling cloth for the child would later be recycled into a wimpel (a long strip of cloth which is decorated

Rabbi's Desk

with information about the child and sometimes with wishes or hopes for that child, along with verses of prayers and quotes from the Tanakh), which might later be used as a Torah binder, especially when that child becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Later, the wimpel might be incorporated into the Chuppah as part of the canopy for that child's wedding, or used as part of the material for a Tallit (tallis – prayer shawl).

The most consistent minhag has been that the father, on behalf of his family, would donate Tzedakah (funds used for support of charitable and communal needs) in honor of the child's birth.

Next month, we will look at the topic of Covenant and Naming.

JEW'S ONLINE

An extremely useful website that I recommend wholeheartedly is www.hebcal.com. This site provides a perpetual Jewish calendar, with the ability to convert back and forth to Gregorian (secular) dates. In addition, it lists Shabbat candle lighting times and times for Havdalah (the ritual of separation between Shabbat and the secular weekdays) specifically by zip code areas. The site also shows the Torah reading and Haftarah for the week, with links to see the text online. This is a useful site to add to your list.

JEWISH TRIVIA

Asser Levy and Jacob Barsimon, two of twenty-three Jews who arrived in the New World from Holland on the Sainte Catherine in 1654 were anticipating equality, but Jews were not allowed to become burghers (citizens), nor guard the stockade of New Amsterdam (now known as New York). In 1655 Barsimon demanded to do so, but Dutch authorities refused. Levy stood guard but was denied acceptance. Upon appeal to the director-general of the colony, he was finally admitted to the Burgher Rite, becoming the first American Jewish 'citizen' on April 27, 1657.

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

Office Hours and Contact Information

RABBI'S AVAILABILITY & CHANGED OFFICE DAYS

Rabbi Joe will be back in the office regularly beginning in September. In the event of an emergency before then please contact the rabbi at home.

To better match the needs and schedules of congregants, there will be a change in the Rabbi's office days starting in September. He will be available by appointment, with scheduled days to be 'in the office' on Sunday and Thursday in Harrisonburg, and **Monday and Friday in Staunton**. Meetings on other days may be scheduled by prior arrangement. There are no fixed office hours. Please feel free to email or call for a time to meet or stop by and see if the Rabbi is in.

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

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.

Noteworthy Congregational

JOIN US FOR A WELCOME BACK PICNIC

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2005

3:00 – 7:00 PM

HOSTED BY MARTHA AND DOUG DEGEN AT HAPPY HOLLOW

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PLAY BEFORE DINNER, BRING WATER TOYS AND CHAIRS

COME FOR KAYAK RACES AND PING PONG COMPETITION

POTLUCK DINNER APPROXIMATELY 5:30

If your last name begins with: Please bring:

A-B drinks

C-G main dish

H-P side dish

R-Z dessert

Take I-64 east to the Lyndhurst/Sherando Lake exit. Turn right onto Rt. 664/South Delphine toward Sherando. Travel 3.4 miles, passing the Lyndhurst Post Office. Turn left at the Wilson Volunteer Fire Dept. (large blue bldg) onto Mountain Side Lane. The gravel drive winds through the farm and crosses a wooden plank bridge. Bear to the right after the bridge and continue to the gate marked Happy Hollow. The gravel road continues to wind through woods and on top of the dam that creates the lake. Park your car at the lake on your left or at the top of the hill (stay right) next to the lodge. The lodge has restrooms to shower and change. Lake/lodge phone is 943-6875.

- The **next temple board meeting will be September 1st at 7:00 in the social hall.**
- The **September meeting will be held on Thursday, September 22nd.** Same time, same place!

News of our Community

- We wish Don Chodrow a speedy recovery from his hospital stays in August. At this writing Don is recovering from multiple liver abscesses.
- Bennie Sragovitz is gradually returning to work after lung surgery. We wish him back to good health as quickly as possible.
- AJ Hartung underwent back surgery in July and is recovering slowly and experiencing much less pain than before.
- The Valley Music Academy is offering the early childhood music program Musikgarten in Staunton and Waynesboro for children from 4 months to age 9. All Staunton classes are taught by Sarah Grove-Humphries. Music's melodic and rhythmic patterns stimulate neural pathways in the brain and develop listening skills, the foremost necessity for learning. Musikgarten classes also provide the essential foundation for piano or other instrumental study. Classes begin the week of August 29th and are held at the Staunton Academy of Ballet, 105 N. Augusta Street and at the Ballet Box, 1744 Englewood Drive. If you or someone you know is interested in Musikgarten classes, please contact Sarah at 885-4223.
- Martha Degen is featured in the Fiberarts Design Book 7, a celebration of the diversity found in the work of textile artists from around the world. Magazine judges reviewed almost 6,000 entries worldwide and compiled 550 works from 24 countries including the United States. Martha's work is on display at the Artisans Center of Virginia in Waynesboro's Outlet Mall through August 31st. She has also shown in many locations around the country during the past several years. Congratulations Martha on your much deserved recognition!

URJ Biennial

To Do What's Right and Just: God's Challenge to Reform Jews is the theme for this

	<p>year's Biennial and we're all invited. Every member is invited to Union for Reform Judaism 68th Biennial ~ Houston, Texas, November 16-20, 2005. Board members are encouraged to attend! If your payment is received by September 25th, the early-bird registration fee is \$510. After that date, registration for all attendees is \$560 which covers all general sessions and workshops, all concerts and late night entertainment and all Shabbat meals beginning with Friday night regional dinner. To register on line or for more information check out www.biennial.urj.org.</p>
<p>News from the Women's Group</p>	<p>Our first meeting of the year will be held at the temple on Sunday, Sept. 18th at 2:00. Please join our loosely structured group to help plan a fall Shabbat dinner for the congregation, perhaps a yard sale and to finalize plans for our traditional Rosh Hashonah oneg and the Yom Kippur break the fast.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Birthdays to be celebrated in September:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ralph Degen, celebrating on September 9th Lynn Hewitt, also on the 9th Scott Goldenberg on the 17th Zachery Pereles on the 18th Caterina Janicker on the 28th</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Anniversary</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rich and Beth Young on September 20th Ray and Iris Rubin on September 28th</p>
<p>Adult Education</p>	<p>During the past year the Rabbi has attempted to present classes and lectures that responded to the requests and interests of congregants, and was able to offer something in response to each request received. If you have any particular requests for lectures, classes, or discussions, please let him know so he can try to incorporate them into plans for this year. At this point, the following classes and programs are being considered.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Introductory Hebrew (6 weeks) Intermediate Hebrew (10 weeks) Adult B'nai Mitzvah (ongoing as needed) Conversion Training (as needed) B'nai Mitzvah tutoring (ongoing as needed) Parashat Hashavuah (weekly) Limud Torah (monthly) (Re-)Introduction to Judaism (20 weeks) Seminars & Workshops (periodic) Possible topics include: My Spiritual Autobiography; Introduction to the Enneagram; Preparing for the End Jewish Lecture series (periodic) Possible topics include: Death and Dying; Liturgy and Lifecycle; Judaism and Christianity – Differences Jewish Literature and films discussion (periodic) Possible topics include: Specific Yiddish or Hebrew stories; Films with Jewish themes or content; Jews in Hollywood; Jews in theatre; Television Jews; Images of Jews in popular culture</p> <p>I sincerely hope that you will find something of interest among these, or will help me to find a topic in which you would be interested.</p>
<p>Staunton</p>	<p>From AJ: "We hardly discussed The Jane Austin Book Club per se at our last foray at Janet Brody's. Janet's comment, on a re-reading, she was quite sure why she had</p>

<p>Book Group</p>	<p>suggested it. A truly honest lady. But we had a wonderful talk on our feelings about Jane, her books, her place in literature at that time and other contemporary authors, their interpretations of the era and even how they affected us in our understanding (or lack thereof) of then and today. A lovely summer evening of ideas, fruit, cheeses, biscuits from which we left feeling exactly as one should after comfortably sharing thoughts not necessarily of the same perspective. David and Janet made us very comfortable and I apologize to Ann Allen for not thanking her for her hospitality in June, blame it on latent anesthesia! Our next meetings are: Wednesday, August 30th at 7:30 at AJ's for <u>The Secret Agent</u> by Joseph Conrad and then in September on Tuesday the 27th again at our usual time of 7:30 pm, Natasha Benenson is hosting us at her home, 1613 Packard Street for <u>The Virgin Blue</u> by Tracy Chevalier. Please call our hosts if you need directions. Looking forward to seeing you with YOUR ideas.... “ For more information, call A.J. 337-6836.</p>
<p>Tot Shabbat</p>	<p>Our first Tot Shabbat for the year will be held on Saturday, Sept. 24th at 10:00 AM. Shelby Apple will again lead pre-schoolers and their families in songs, stories and crafts. Please contact Shelby at 943-6934 or shelbyapple@yahoo.com if you're interested or know of someone who might be.</p>
<p>Youth Group SHORTY and Confirmation Class</p>	<p>Our first meeting for the year will be September 11th at Beth El in Harrisonburg from 4 to 6:30 pm. At that time we will make plans for the year and hold our first Confirmation discussion. Please remember to bring \$21 to that meeting for Shorty dues, and \$5 cash for food. More information will be sent out by email. PLEASE BE SURE Sheri and the Rabbi have your current VALID email address! Possible activities we can talk about are: visits/trips to a Chabad Orthodox service, to one or two churches, to the Holocaust museum, to shul-ins, to Jewish NY City, and to Cosmic bowling (especially now that Sheri's knee is healed!); Kallot (LTI, Fall, WLI, Winter at Harlam, Convention; TheVENT, Spring Kallah, Summer Kallah, Camp); Services and spaghetti dinners (Fall at THOI and BE), Confirmation & Youth Shavuot Service at BE, Youth Group service at THOI and Ski Weekend at BE; volunteering to work with the Special Olympics; cleaning up in the Cemetery; preparing a meal for the soup kitchen; and anything else you would like to add to the list. Confirmation programs may include discussions of Jewish thought on various topics such as prayer, the importance of ritual, the meaning of community, differences between Judaism and Christianity, differences between Judaism and Islam, interacting with those of other faiths, dealing with missionaries, Eco-Kashrut, Jewish views on the death penalty, a taste of Torah, a taste of Talmud, the Torah of money, business ethics, and any others that interest you.</p> <p>Looking ahead slightly, SHORTY may be taking their first road trip in early October. We are looking at a day trip to Busch Gardens, and perhaps inviting other youth groups to meet us there. You will hear more soon from Sheri when this is finalized.</p>
<p>Judaica Shop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sharing our Best</u>, The Women's Group Cookbook, would make a great holiday gift this year. We have them in stock! • Dianne Mason has added many new items in the Judaica Shop and it looks wonderful. If you have any Judaica needs, please call Dianne at 885-6254.
<p>Donations</p>	<p>Thank you to these generous people who have made contributions to the Temple during the summer months. We appreciate your donations!</p>

	<p>For Sarah Grove-Humphries cantorial workshop Leah Farmer Don and Ruth Chodrow Vera Flint Tony and Rachel Jordan David and Rosalie Waterman Rabbi's Discretionary Fund</p> <p>In honor of Rabbi Joe's work with Jenna Cunningham Michael and Sara Cunningham</p> <p>In honor of Jenna Cunningham's Bat Mizvah Joseph and Doris Miller In honor of Alan and Vicki GoldenberFinancial Partners Capital In memory of Davis Pillet and Roberta LevineMarsha Pillet General DonationsKen Schwartz Gordon Sutker</p>																		
<p>Notes from the Editor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider receiving your newsletter via email. Our bulletin is full of news and information and serves as an excellent out-reach tool as well. Its distribution is important for our congregation to stay connected. However, costs to print and mail it continue going up. It would be wonderful if we could cut down on costs by sending each issue via email to those of you who can receive it that way and print your own copy. I'd even throw in a ream of colored paper (your choice of color!) for you to copy to and we'd still save money. Let me know templenews@ntelos.net • The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month. Anything you'd like published in the October bulletin should be given to me by September 20th. Your suggestions are welcome! 																		
<p>Corrections Member/Friend List</p>	<p>➤ If your information is not correct or is incomplete, please let me know at templenews@ntelos.net or bydesign@ntelos.net.</p>																		
<p>Yahrzeits for September</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Flossie Wise Cohen</td> <td>Julius Margolis</td> <td>Anna Seff Seltzer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reuben Harris</td> <td>Minnie Fred Petterson</td> <td>Michael Seltzer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Harry Harrison</td> <td>Hermina Printz</td> <td>Steven P. Shapiro</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Henrietta Summerfield Harrison</td> <td>Samuel Printz</td> <td>Samuel Shultz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Herman Levy</td> <td>Joseph Ruteenberg</td> <td>Sadie Kravis Witt</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Miriam Schultz Loewner</td> <td>Nathan R. Schilling</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Flossie Wise Cohen	Julius Margolis	Anna Seff Seltzer	Reuben Harris	Minnie Fred Petterson	Michael Seltzer	Harry Harrison	Hermina Printz	Steven P. Shapiro	Henrietta Summerfield Harrison	Samuel Printz	Samuel Shultz	Herman Levy	Joseph Ruteenberg	Sadie Kravis Witt	Miriam Schultz Loewner	Nathan R. Schilling	
Flossie Wise Cohen	Julius Margolis	Anna Seff Seltzer																	
Reuben Harris	Minnie Fred Petterson	Michael Seltzer																	
Harry Harrison	Hermina Printz	Steven P. Shapiro																	
Henrietta Summerfield Harrison	Samuel Printz	Samuel Shultz																	
Herman Levy	Joseph Ruteenberg	Sadie Kravis Witt																	
Miriam Schultz Loewner	Nathan R. Schilling																		
<p>Jewish Humor</p>	<p>How The Rules Of Kashrut Came About: A brief dialogue between G-d and Moses</p> <p>G: Moses, in keeping Kosher, never cook a calf in its mother's milk. It's cruel. M: Lord, are You saying we shouldn't eat milk and meat together? G: I'm saying never cook a calf in its mother's milk. M: Lord, is what You are saying that we should wait after eating meat to take milk? G: Moses, listen. What I am saying is don't cook a calf in its mother's milk! M: Lord, You mean we should keep separate dish sets for milk and meat, and separate utensils? G: Oy! Moses, do whatever you want!</p>																		

Temple Contacts

Rabbi	Joe Blair	886-4091 or rabbijob@hotmail.com
President	Rafael Brand	949-0529 or rafa@ntelos.net
V. P. - Membership	Paul Klein	396-6169 or mediamat@ntelos.net
V. P. – Bldgs. Grds.	Michael Brown	885-3809 or mcbrown@vaix.net
Secretary	Ruth Chodrow	886-2252 or rchodrow@verizon.net
Treasurer	Laura Jean Brand	942-3656 or asherb@mac.com
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@earthlink.com
Temple Webmaven	Richard Young	885-1481 or younghdwe@ntelos.net
Bulletin Editor	Beth Young	website@thoi.org
Bulletin Circulation	A.J. Hartung	885-1481 or bydesign@ntelos.net
		337-6836

September				1	2 Rabbi's office day	3
4	5 Rabbi's office day	6	7	8	9 Rabbi's office day Shabbat Services 7:30	10
11 Youth Group @ BE at 4:00-6:30	12 Rabbi's office day	13	14	15	16 Rabbi's office day	17
18 Women's Group at temple at 2:00	19 Rabbi's office day	20	21	22	23 Rabbi's office day Shabbat Services 7:30	24 Tot Shabbat at 10:00 am
25	26 Rabbi's office day	27	28	29	30 Rabbi's office day	

Aug 28	Welcome Back Picnic at Happy Hollow 3:00 – 7:00 with Potluck Dinner approx. 5:30 pm
Sept 2	Rabbi's office day
Sept 5	Rabbi's office day
Sept 9	Rabbi's office day First Shabbat Services at THOI at 7:30 pm
Sept 11	Youth Group Meeting at Beth El in Harrisonburg, 4-6:30
Sept 12	Rabbi's office day
Sept 16	Rabbi's office day
Sept 18	Women's Group Meeting in the social hall 2:00 pm.
Sept 19	Rabbi's office day
Sept 23	Rabbi's office day Shabbat Services at THOI at 7:30 pm
Sept 24	Tot Shabbat at 10:00 am
Sept 26	Rabbi's office day
Sept 30	Rabbi's office day