



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
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<http://urj.net/congs/va/va008>

October 2004, Tishri/Cheshvan 5765

From the Rabbi's Disk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,
SHALOM!

We have jumped right in to the year! High Holidays have come and gone as I write this. I felt really good about how the holidays went, and I hope that you share that assessment. Of course, if you can share what you think went well and what we should do for improvements, I would appreciate it.

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

We are still in the month of Tishrei. The holidays of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah are coming up right away, running from September 29th to October 8th. On October 15th and 16th we will celebrate Rosh Chodesh (the New month or moon) for Cheshvan, sometimes called Mar-Cheshvan (Bitter Cheshvan, from the same root as 'Maror', the bitter herb for Passover) because there are no holidays to celebrate in it after all the holidays and events of Tishrei. We will try to alleviate that bitterness this year by having a service led by the Religious School upper grades on October 22nd and we'll commemorate the anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on October 26-27th.

The next several upcoming holidays are tied to the High Holidays just passed. It is said that on Rosh Hashanah (New Year) through the Yamim Nora'im (Days of Awe) God sits on the throne of Justice, inscribing us in the Book of Life; at afternoon on Yom Kippur God moves to the throne of Mercy and mitigates the severe decrees; but we are given until Hoshannah Rabbah (the Great Hosanna – the cry of 'Save Us!') to affect the decree, as the book of Life is said to be sealed for the year on that day. That means there is still time for repentance and Teshuvah (Return) even after the High Holidays!

Sukkot (Booths), of course, is the eight-day harvest festival also known as the Feast of Booths after the temporary structures that are set up and 'dwelt in'. There will be one at the synagogue, and you are invited to come and sit in it, say a blessing, and even eat there. These sukkot (huts or booths) commemorate several things: first, the custom of staying in the fields to harvest the crops and camping out there; second and more importantly, the temporary dwellings that the Hebrews used as they wandered in the wilderness for forty years with Moses; and third, the ties we have to nature and creation, with the open nature of the huts being a way to put us back in touch with the natural world around us. These explain all the laws regarding how these temporary shelters are to be constructed. We are taught by these laws that the structure has to have at least 2-1/2 sides to qualify as a structure; the sides must be at least tall enough for a person to stand up; the roof must be made of natural growing materials cut from plants that are connected to/growing from the ground (such as trees, ferns, and the stalks of grasses); the roof must be constructed in such a way that only a little more than half of the overhead area is actually covered, and it is possible to see stars through the material and for rain to enter through the roof. The second part of the

From the
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mitzvah regarding Sukkot is the use of the Lulav and Etrog (Palm, Willow and Myrtle branches and the Citron fruit), also known as the 'Four Species'. The practice is to hold these four items together, and to recite the blessing and wave and shake the four species in six directions: North, South, East, West, (or forward, back, left and right), and Up and Down, acknowledging that God is everywhere.

Traditionally, on the seventh day of Sukkot, the day is called Hoshannah Rabbah (the Great Hosanna), during which we pray to God for salvation and for the blessing of water, and afterwards we march around the sanctuary and beat the branches of the willow on the ground until the leaves have fallen off while praying.

The eighth day of the period is known as Shemini Atzeret, the Eighth day of Tarrying. This is because Sukkot is a universal holiday: our tradition was to offer a sacrifice for the well-being of each nation/people in the world during the seven days leading up to Hoshannah Rabbah. As often is the case, after the big event, the guests go home, but family stays on for a while to have a more private time to share: Shemini Atzeret is the private time for our 'family', consisting of the Hebrew people and God, to 'catch up', sort of an extra day added to the holiday for visiting with family.

A completely separate holiday follows immediately on the heels of Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret. This is Simchat Torah (Rejoicing in the Law). Rather than have a nine day period of holidays, it has become the tradition in the Reform movement to combine the celebration of Shemini Atzseret and Simchat Torah: it makes sense because they both have to do with our relationship with God. Simchat Torah is the holiday on which we celebrate the receiving of the gift of Torah, and show our appreciation and eagerness for this precious gift by finishing the last few verses of the Torah in the cycle of readings and immediately starting over again with the first few verses with no pause. This holiday is marked by dancing with the Torah, carrying it around the synagogue, and generally having a lovely and fun time.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

The **Selichot** (Penitential prayers) service held September 11th was a very warm and lovely event. I thank all those who attended, and cannot forget the delicious desserts!

The **Tashlich** ritual was quite nice, I felt, and the weather even cooperated! I think that even if nothing else was accomplished, the fish appreciated all the bread crumbs.

In fact, it was also a nice opportunity for congregants to join together publicly in a ritual moment outside the shul. The **Yizkor/Memorial** service took place on September 19th at the cemetery. Those in attendance seemed to find it a helpful in remembering loved ones no longer with us.

I was happy to share the pulpit in turns with Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell again this year. It is always a pleasure to have her lead the congregation when I am not able to do so.

FEEDBACK

I have been fortunate to receive some very valuable and helpful feedback and I have taken these into consideration in my planning for the coming year. As a result, this year I will hold single-session or short-term classes for Adult Education, rather than the longer courses that I offered last year. In many ways, I think this will be an improvement, as it will permit offering a wider variety of materials and subjects (without need to increase the number of hours in a day!), and will require less of a long-term commitment from those signing up to participate.

My request is that you continue to provide your comments and opinions, letting me know what you think will help to make our Jewish community stronger and more vibrant, be even more fun, provide a richer Jewish experience, and allow me to serve the community more effectively. Please feel free to communicate your thoughts to me by email, in writing, by telephone, or in person.

B'virvat shalom (with
Blessings of Peace),
Rabbi Joe Blair
October 2004

**Office Hours
And
Contact
Information**

After holding my office days and times fixed for most of the past year, I found that some adjustments were necessary to best focus the use of my time.

First, my day off is Wednesdays. I will not be in the office at all on that day, but I can be reached by leaving a message on the phone at the shul or by email, and in case of an emergency I can be reached by phone at home.

I have office days in Harrisonburg on Mondays and Fridays with appointments generally available between 11-7 Mondays and 10-5 Fridays.

I have office days in **Staunton on Tuesdays and Thursdays** with appointments generally available from **10 to 5 on Tuesdays**, and from **11 to 7 on Thursdays**.

Other times and days to meet or speak with me are available by appointment. Please feel free to call or email to set up a time to meet when I can focus exclusively on our conversation.

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]

PLEASE CONTACT THE RABBI

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
News**

- PLEASE PARDON OUR DUST WHILE WE UNDERGO RENOVATIONS.... And extend a huge thank you and debt of gratitude to Laurie Berman for making possible the changes thus far in the social hall, to Beth Young who translated ideas into drawings and who then translated her drawings into action, to Asher Brand, Doug Degen and Byron Grove-Humphries who volunteered their time helping the contractor, and to Paul Klein, and his brother-in-law Harry Samet, for our new sofa. Enclosing the storage area and creating new library space and the subsequent re-arrangement of displays and Judaica Shop have made a tremendous difference in our synagogue's living space. Now, of course, comes the "as-long-as-we're-doing-this" part. The walls need to be painted, the floor needs to be refinished and the window coverings need to be replaced. Your donations will gladly be accepted and greatly appreciated.
- Another addition to our synagogue is the beautiful tzedakah box designed and built by David Waterman. Thank you, David, for your wonderful contribution and thank you, congregation, in advance, for the contributions put into our gorgeous tzedakah box!
- Mazel tov to Marcia Connor and her husband Karl on the birth of their son, Clarke Augusta Connor who was born September 16th after a long labor. Everyone is exhausted, happy and well! And that's only the beginning for the Connor family - !
- You are invited to join the celebration as Sarah Grove-Humphries becomes Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, October 9th at 10:00 am. A lunch and music will follow the service. The Vulgar Bulgars klezmer band is coming, so bring your dancing shoes! We'll dance after lunch so you can make room for dessert!
Entrée, dessert, wine and drinks will be provided.
If you'd like to bring a vegetable or side dish for lunch, please call Beth Young so that our efforts can be coordinated.
- Our Shabbat on Friday, October 15th will begin at 6:45. Following services,

Noteworthy Congregational News

the entire congregation is invited to a complete kosher Shabbat dinner hosted by Laurie's brother, Denny Berman and family in honor of Sara Brody. And then, please come celebrate with Sara Brody as she becomes Bat Mitzvah on Saturday morning, October 16th at 10:00. A kiddush luncheon will be served immediately following services.

- We have another simcha to celebrate! Everyone is invited to the baby naming for Eliana Brown, daughter of Mike and Bonnie Brown and sister of Sam Brown. Please join us at the temple on Saturday, October 30th at 6:30 with refreshments immediately afterwards.
- The Mid Atlantic Council Biennial meeting in Norfolk will be held October 23-24 and at that time, Ruth Chodrow will be officially inducted as a Board member. Mazel Tov!
- Welcome to our newest member, Vera Flint. Vera moved from California to Staunton in order to be near her daughter Ruth Chodrow and the Chodrow family. We're delighted she's joined us! We wish her good health.
- The temple has a new lock. As a matter of fact, the temple has one lock for all 5 doors so that one master key will open all doors. The keys were distributed just before the holidays to the 8 people designated by the board. If you need access to the temple at times other than the Rabbi's office days and services, please contact a member of the Board. Thank you to Martha Degen for coordinating the effort and funding the locksmith.
- What happens when a temple has furniture that is perfectly usable but no longer wanted? What happens when a newly arrived immigrant family is looking for a place to live and will be needing furniture? With a bit of luck, the two of them can come together! Staunton Grace Covenant Church has sponsored an Armenian family who has immigrated to this country. They are presently living with relatives in the area, but hope to have a place of their own soon. Thanks to Ruth Chodrow for arranging this match. Our temple did a mitzvah, our un-needed furniture has a new home and the renovations to the social hall and storage area are progressing.
- In the same vein, Paul Klein's brother in law donated two sofas for our social hall and only one of them really works. The divided-seat sofa has been given to the Augusta Regional Free Clinic for their waiting area and they are delighted with it!
- Thanks to Sarah Grove-Humphries and Marsha Pillet for coordinating the oneg for our Rosh Hashonah Services and to Martha Degen and Rachel Jordan for arranging our break the fast following Yom Kippur. And thanks to all who contributed their delicious goodies!
- Thank you to Sara Brody, Philip Chodrow and Ian Jordan for their help in switching the prayerbooks and Torah dressings for the High Holidays.
- We are planning a joint event with Congregation Beth Israel of Charlottesville and Beth El in Harrisonburg to see Shenandoah Shakespeare's production of "The Merchant of Venice" at the Blackfriar's theater on November 28th. Hold that date! Tentatively a short talk at 1:00 with refreshments served, followed by a 2:00 show.
- The next **Temple board meeting** will be Thursday, **October 21st at 7:00** in the temple social hall. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Film Series

- COME JOIN US ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH AT 7:00 PM FOR "MONSIEUR IBRAHIM". Set in a working class neighborhood in Paris in the early 60's, an

	<p>elderly, Sufi deli owner brings light and love into the life of a lonely young Jewish boy. (Sufism is the mystical expression of Islam). In French and Turkish with English subtitles. We'll have popcorn & drinks with the movie.</p>
<p>Adult Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The five-week course to introduce/refresh the basics of reading Hebrew will start in October. Immediately following the conclusion of this course, an advanced course will be offered to build on the first level. This will also be a five-week session. Depending on the level of interest, there may be additional courses after that. • The Adult B'nai Mitzvah classes will resume in October, meeting twice monthly. There will be one meeting at each of the congregations in a given month to make it easier to attend. If you can attend both, that would be wonderful, but please do try to attend at least one each month to progress as planned towards your selected date! • There will be a monthly one-session class on a variety of topics. So far interest has been expressed in the following topics: Ethical Wills, Midrash; The Zohar; Jewish History; Liturgy; Judaism & Christianity; Jewish literature; and Women in Judaism. If you have ideas for additional offerings, please let Rabbi Joe know. <p><u>Hebrew Introduction/Refresher 7-9 pm</u> Mon. @ BE Oct. 18, 25, Nov. 1, 15, 22 Thurs. @ THOI, Oct. 14, Nov. 4, 11, Dec. 2. 9</p> <p><u>Hebrew II Intermediate/Advanced 7-9 pm</u> Mon. @ BE Nov.29, Dec. 6, 20 (After this, TBA) Thurs. @ THOI, Dec. 16 (After this, TBA)</p> <p><u>Adult B'nai Mitzvah</u> Sun. Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec. 12 @ BE @ 2-4 pm Sun. Oct 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 5 @ THOI @ 3-5 pm</p> <p><u>Jewish Lecture Series</u> Sun. Oct. 17 @ THOI @ 7-8:30 pm on Midrash Sun. Nov. 21 @ BE @ 7-8:30 pm on Ethical Wills Sun. Dec. 19 @ THOI @ 7-8:30 pm on The Zohar</p> <p><u>Parashat Hashavuah/Weekly Torah Study</u> We will meet at the same Thursday noon time-slot at THOI. Please come discuss the Torah portion for the week. Bring lunch and eat while we learn!</p>
<p>News of our Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Rafael Brand after a spill on his bicycle during an Elderhostel trip in Canada. • Rabbi Ariel Friedlander has a new home address now that she's settled in at Temple Shaaray Tefila. You may reach her at home: 24 Mekeel Street, Katonah, NY 10536 and (914) 962-5673 or at work: Temple Shaaray Tefila, 89 Baldwin Road, Bedford Corners, NY 10549 and (914) 666-3133x121.
<p>News from the Women's Group</p> <p>News from the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our yard sale is set for October 24th. Please bring your goodies to the temple after October 16th so that we don't clutter the social hall prior to our October B'nai Mitzvah celebrations. If you can help with setting up on Saturday, the 23rd beginning at 10 AM or selling on Sunday, the 24th (doors open at noon), please call Shirley Brand 949-0529. • Please hold the date: We'll have a Shabbat dinner just prior to services on Friday, November 12th at 6:00 pm. That's our Community Awareness Shabbat and if you'd like to include your guests for dinner as well as services,

<p>Women's Group</p>	<p>they are more than welcome to come – just let Beth Young know so we can have enough food. Dinner will be \$8 per person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to keep selling our cookbook! They make great gifts and are joyfully received by everyone. • The next Women's Group meeting will be Sunday, October 10th at 2:00 in the social hall. We'll finalize plans for the yard sale, fill in the blanks where volunteers are needed and plan our year together. <p>We'd like to say HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the known October birthdays</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Chuck Fox celebrating on September 5th Bonnie Legum on the 6th Marsha Pillet on the 21st Paul Klein on the 22nd Benn Legum on the 23rd Bonnie Brown on the 28th</p>
<p>Religious School</p>	<p>Rabbi Joe will be in for the Religious school regularly on Sundays from 9:30 until 12:30 while classes are in session. B'nai Mitzvah tutoring will be scheduled individually with each student and family. Because he is usually working with the students during that time and is generally rushing around, it is not the best time to have a long or important conversation or one that requires focus. Please feel free to speak to the Rabbi then, but keep in mind that his attention is probably a bit scattered. If you have something to discuss that would need full attention, please make an appointment when he will not be distracted and can give you the time and attention you deserve.</p> <p>Religious School Classes October 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31</p>
<p>Confirmation Class and Youth Group</p>	<p>There will be a planning meeting for the Confirmation Class and Youth Group on Sunday, September 26th at Beth El at 2 pm. At this time, we will finalize the calendar and make plans for activities for the year. Youth Group members, please be sure to come to this meeting to let us know what you want for this year, or if you cannot attend, please contact me or Sherri Alt to let us know so we can take your interests into account!</p> <p>Starting in October, Confirmation class will meet on Sundays, monthly on the THIRD Sunday of the month (the 17th of October). We will meet alternately at Beth El and THOI. The times will be 2-3 pm for Confirmation class. Our October meeting will be at THOI.</p> <p>The Youth Group will meet immediately after the Confirmation class. There will generally be a short meeting, followed by a social activity. You will hear more from Sherri about this.</p>
<p>Notes from the Editor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm looking forward to hearing your suggestions for changes and/or additions you'd like to see in the bulletin. Let me know at templenews@ntelos.net. • If you would prefer to receive this bulletin via e-mail, please let me know. The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month. October's bulletin will "go to press" on September 20th.
<p>Judaica Shop</p>	<p>Check out our many gift items in stock and peruse the many Judaica catalogs available. There's a lot to choose from! Please let Dianne Mason know of any</p>

	items that you would like stocked. Dianne can be reached at 885-6254.		
Staunton Book Group	<p>The book selected for September is <u>Man's Search for Meaning</u> by Austrian psychologist Viktor E. Frankl, who with his wife was in a concentration camp during the war. Come join us on Wednesday, September 29th at 7:30 at the Hartung's house.</p> <p>On Thursday, October 28th at 7:30 we'll discuss <u>The Pianist</u> by Wladyslaw Szpilman. This is the extraordinary true story of one man's survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945, which has been made into a motion picture. Come to the temple's new social hall for this discussion. We'd love to have you join us even if you haven't read the book....</p>		
Yahrzeits for October	Annette Biatch Nina Rattner Finkel Samuel Goldenberg Shirley Scherer Goldenberg Nathan Harrison	Annie Rosenthal Klotz Mary Tornow Kravitz Leonard Legum Irving Schwartz Henrietta Loewner Siegel	Benjamin Sragovitz Babette Switzer Daughter of M&R Walters Moses Walters Leon Weinberg
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NOTE: If you are not currently a member and would like to continue receiving this bulletin, the subscription rate is \$15 per year (September-July/August) made payable to Temple House of Israel. Please contact Laura Jean Brand, our treasurer, at 942-3656 or mail your check to THOI, P.O. Box 1412, Staunton, VA 24402.

Temple House of Israel Calendar

OCT.					1 Sukkot Services at Beth El 7:30pm	2
3 Religious School – H'burg	4	5	6	7 Torah study noon	8 Simchat Torah Services at 7:30	9 Bat Mitzvah of Sarah Grove- Humphries at 10:00
10 Religious School –H'burg; Women's Group at 2:00; Adult B'nai Mitzvah 3-5 pm	11	12	13	14 Torah study noon Hebrew Class 7- 9 pm	15 Shabbat Services at 6:45 followed by a kosher dinner hosted by Denny Berman	16 Bat Mitzvah of Sara Brody at 10:00
17 Religious School – H'burg Lecture Series on Midrash 7- 8:30	18	19	20	21 Torah study noon Board meeting at 7 pm	22 Religious School Upper grades Shabbat Service at Beth El at 7:30	23
24 / 31 Religious School – H'burg	25	26	27	28 Torah Study noon Book Group at 7:30 at temple	29 Youth Group Dinner at THOI at 6:00 Services at 7:30	30

Oct 1	Sukkot/Shabbat Services at 7:30 pm in Harrisonburg
Oct 5	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Oct 7	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome!
Oct 8	Simchat Torah Services at 7:30 pm
Oct 9	Bat Mitzvah of Sarah Grove-Humphries at 10:00
Oct 10	Women's Group at 2:00 Adult B'nai Mitzvah class 3-5 pm in Staunton
Oct 12	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Oct 14	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Hebrew Introduction/Refresher 7-9 pm
Oct 15	Shabbat Services at 6:45 pm followed by Shabbat Dinner in honor of Sara Brody
Oct 16	Bat Mitzvah of Sara Brody at 10:00
Oct 17	Lecture Series of the Midrash 7-8:30 pm
Oct 19	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Oct 21	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! 7:00 pm Temple Board Meeting
Oct 22	Religious School Upper Classes lead Shabbat Services in Harrisonburg at 7:30 pm
Oct 26	Rabbi's office day 10 am – 5 pm
Oct 28	Rabbi's office day 11 am – 7 pm; Torah study at noon; everyone is welcome! Book Group discussion of <u>The Pianist</u> at the temple, 7:30 pm
Oct 29	Youth Group Dinner at 6:00 in Staunton; Shabbat Services at 7:30 pm