



Temple House of Israel Bulletin

A Member Congregation of the Union for Reform Judaism
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www.thoi.org

Our mission is to perpetuate Jewish life and identity through a welcoming community of spirituality, learning, service, joy and worship.

December 2008, Kislev/Tevet 5769

President's Notes

Dear Congregants,

The URJ's Mid-Atlantic Council Biennial, set in beautiful western Maryland, included moments of spirituality (my 5-mile hike around the lake and oh, yes, the Torah study) sessions of interest (Rabbi David Saperstein on the 2 million Muslims in the US and how to strengthen the moderates within that group), a wonderful, upbeat program of live music, and synagogue finance information (which I've passed along to our treasurer).

In addition, Carol Ochs, visiting scholar-in-residence for the weekend, spoke about stories: how stories are a wonderful way to carry meaning and that seeing our lives as a story interacting with other stories gives us a sense of a connectedness. Think about it.

Join us for the Women's Group's Shabbat dinner on December 5th and stay for our *Community Awareness Shabbat* services that evening. Celebrate Chanukah with us on Christmas Day 4:00-8:00 with a potluck party, movie and games. Be part of that connectedness.

B'Shalom,
Beth

From The Rabbi

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,

Shalom. It is now December, the end of the secular year. This is often seen as a very busy time, with the Thanksgiving holiday, the winter break, travel, family gatherings, gift giving, card sending, holiday celebrations and parties, bad weather.... it is often hectic and disorienting, and occasionally it is depressing and draining, although it can be exciting and fun as well.

On the Jewish calendar, on the other hand, at this moment we are in the midst of our holiday 'downtime'; the time with nothing unusual on the calendar, the period which falls between the end of the High Holy day period - concluding with Simchat Torah - and the start of the celebration of Chanukah. It is a gift to us - a time when we can re-group, re-consolidate, and re-focus - especially in contrast to all the excitement and energy of the secular events.

There is a custom, at least in parts of the secular world, to 'take stock' and review the year in view of the 'new year', and even to develop some 'resolutions' for the coming year. For Jews, that process has often already happened with the preparations for the High Holy days just a few months back, culminating with the arrival of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (the days of Judgment and Atonement). Nonetheless, a mid-course check and minor corrections a few months into the year can be beneficial, so this reprise of the theme of review is a welcome time to re-think whether we are following through on our hopes and aspirations to make ourselves better, to strive to be more the person we each wish to become in the current year.

I hope that each of you finds in your self-examination that you are doing exactly what you feel you need to do to fulfill your potential for this year, and that you find renewed energy and purpose in successfully doing it.

Upcoming THOI Events

The next THOI Board meeting is December 8 at 7:00 PM.

Our *Community Awareness Shabbat* is on December 5 at 7:30 PM. Invite anyone who may be interested in observing our service with an opportunity to ask questions. Help yourself to the invitations on the social hall bookcase.

Be sure to mark your calendar: December 25th from 4 to 8 pm there will be a game day and potluck dinner to celebrate Chanukah at THOI. Be sure to bring your Chanukiah and whatever entertainment you would like to share! We will be lighting five candles and the shamash this evening, so plan accordingly.

Looking slightly ahead, on January 9th at THOI the SHORTY Youth Group will offer their fund-raising dinner at 6 pm, and will lead the Shabbat service at 7:30 pm. The funds raised at the dinner help to offset the cost of the members of SHORTY attending the NFTY Convention and various Kallot – which are each fairly expensive. I hope you will turn out to support our youth group members.

Join Us @ These Beth El Events

A new initiative is being tried at Beth El starting on December 12th. It is a Tot Shabbat service at 6:30 pm, followed by a regular service at 7:30. Families of young (and not so young) children are invited to join in. It will be a pot luck dinner and the theme for this time will be Shabbat! We expect to have music, singing, crafts, food, and even a story, so it will be a fun time for the whole family. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Roberta at (540) 383-3691 or Robertastein52@AOL.COM. We hope to have this as a monthly offering.

There will be a Torah Lishmah and Shabbat service on the evening of December 19th at Beth El. The Torah study will begin at 6:30, and the service will start at 7:30.

Of course, Chanukah starts December 21st in the evening, and runs until the 29th, with the last candles being lit on the evening of the 28th.

There will be a Chanukah dinner and a performance by many of the children at Beth El starting at 5 pm on the 21st. If you bring your Chanukiah and two candles (a shamash and the first one) you can light it there.

The Jewish Calendar & Holidays

KISLEV → TEVET (DECEMBER)

Kislev began November 28th and runs until December 27th. The 28th of November was Rosh Chodesh (new month/moon) for Kislev. The 27th and 28th of December are Rosh Chodesh for Tevet.

The holiday in Kislev is Chanukah, which is the 25th of Kislev through the 2nd of Tevet. This year the first night of Chanukah is December 21st, and the last night is December 28th. The eight days of Chanukah fall on the 22nd to the 29th of December.

Chanukah is a minor holiday on the Jewish calendar. It commemorates two things. First, that the Maccabees, a very tiny group, could ‘overcome’ the massive armies of the Hellenized Assyrians and the Romans (only through the help of G-d, of course). Second, that when the Temple was recaptured, prepared, and re-dedicated for ritual use, the single cruse (vial) of sanctified oil that should normally have burned in the Menorah in the Temple for only one day, lasted the eight days it took to manufacture and bring more sanctified oil to the Temple.

Through the ages, the rabbis have downplayed the first explanation; after all, there are other examples of small forces overcoming large armies in history, and military victory, though important, is not at the heart of Judaism. Instead, the focus has been on a small miracle, something in which only G-d could have a hand.

In part, this is why the game of dreidel was supported. It is not that Jews are such avid gamblers in most cases; rather, it is to teach about this miracle. The letters on the dreidel are Nun, Gimel, Hey, and Shin, and they are the first letters of the words of the phrase, 'Nes Gadol Haya Sham' – a Great Miracle Happened There. We remind ourselves and teach our children that G-d caused a miracle for our people, and we thank and bless G-d for it as we play the game of Dreidel!

Travel, Meetings & Conferences

I attended the MAC Biennial conference over the weekend of October 24-26th. Beth and Ruth also attended (as well as Andy Kohen from Beth El). We all agreed that it was a good experience, and worth attending. I hope others will choose to do so in coming years.

At the MAC Biennial, I presented a 'learnshop' session on the topic of EcoKashrut. I would like to offer this same program sometime in the spring.

Also at the MAC Biennial, I was elected to the MAC Council, representing our community at the regional level. I felt it was important to accept the position because Ruth concluded her term on the council, as did Andy Kohen, and I wanted to be sure that at a voice for very small congregations be included.

I attended the STAR PEER conference from November 1st to 5th. It was an amazing and wonderful experience, and I gained a tremendous amount from it. I am hoping to be able to put some of the lessons I learned into practice here in our community and in my own daily routine.

November 9th, I went with the Daled class of the religious school to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. The evening of the 9th was the 70th anniversary of Krystallnacht, the "night of broken glass." It seemed to me that the students took in a great deal that day, and it will need to be integrated and absorbed, but it was a valuable lesson and a good trip.

In Our Community

Looking back at this calendar year, we have experienced a very full and active time in our local community. I am proud to say that our congregations have also reached out to others in need in our larger community.

In short, as a group we have sought to embody the mitzvot (commandments) by taking on acts of tzedakah (righteous actions), gemilut Chasidim (deeds of loving kindness), and tikkun olam (repair of the world). These are identified in Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) as one of the sets of three pillars upon which the whole world rest, and on which the stability of our world depends.

It is my hope and prayer that as a kehillah kedoshah (a holy community) we can continue to act in this way, and to grow in our actions to embody these mitzvot and the underlying values they represent. I am grateful and awed by your generosity of spirit as shown over and over again. It is awesome and holy work that we have been involved with, and I want to acknowledge you all for your part in it. Kol Hakavod Lekulam (all honor to each of you).

Acknowledgements & Thank Yous

Let me take a moment to point out a few of the happenings behind the scenes that enhance our congregational life.

- The board has continued to work for the betterment of the congregation. The voting members of the board include Beth Young, Laurie Berman, Steve Rosenberg, Ellen Boden, Ruth Chodrow, and Lisa Solod Warren.
- Trustees continue to look towards the future of the congregation, and seek ways to deal with the uncertainties of the current financial situation. Our three trustees are Alan Goldenberg, Rich Young, and Doug Degen.
- We have committees, including the finance committee, fund raising committee, library committee, ritual committee, education committee, social action committee, and others, continue to go about their tasks without fanfare or notice. We are very appreciative of your work.
- The Women's Group has continued their wonderful work, including a Mitzvah day, and arranging our Oneg Shabbats, the dinners and other events they sponsor, and so much more. Thank you to the Mitzvah day workers. Ruth Chodrow, Rosalie Waterman, Gail Bruscoe, Janet Brody, Elizabeth Schwartz and Marsha Pillet.
- Chevrah Kadishah members hold themselves ready to be called upon for their difficult but holy work. A reporter has asked to interview them about the work they do.
- The Caring Committee springs into action to meet the needs of our community members. Thanks to the coordinators of this group; Rosalie Waterman, Janet Brody, and Lou Boden.
- The Religious school and Pre-School continue to serve our community. The three co-principals (Ruth, Dara and Linda) work hard to make it all happen. Roberta does double duty on the music program in religious school and also running the pre-school. The recent combined Havdalah Family Education program was a pleasure.
- The religious school teachers show commitment and dedication out of their love for Judaism and concern for the students. Thanks to Hilary Gerson-Krohn, Dara Hall, Joel Ornstein, Rachael Beloff, Dawn Savage, and Anne Dreyfuss.
- The buildings and grounds committee has been doing a lot to maintain and improve our cemetery and synagogue. Steve Rosenberg, Mike Brown, David Waterman, Rich Young, and Byron Grove-Humphries keep on top of things that keep the building working.
- Thank you David Waterman for guiding the JMU fraternity in cleaning out the hedge along the alley and for handling **all the landscaping** and lawn care at the cemetery and synagogue.
- Marsha Pillet continues to maintain the biblical garden.
- The film committee, chaired by Laurie Berman, is working on plans for the second *Staunton Jewish Film Festival*, April 3 - 4 -5. Contact her if you would like to help.
- The **Shenandoah Valley Holocaust Education Program** committee members are working to create a spectacular event this year. The series will be from February 25 to March 22—with a greater variety, in more locations, involving more groups and members of our larger community. Talk with the Rabbi Joe to help.
- Our webmaven Marcia Conner, has made improvements to our website and calendar functions.
- Our volunteer Torah and Haftarah leyners (chanters/readers) have continued to enhance our services with their efforts. We would love to see even more of

our congregants involved in this effort. Thanks to Rafael Brand, Ruth Chodrow, Sarah Grove-Humphries, Marsha Pillet, Natasha Beneson and Philip Chodrow.

- Similarly, our volunteer Gabba'im (MC for the Torah service) have done a wonderful job, but I am sure they would like a chance to sit down once in a while. Don Chodrow seems to take this on much of the time, and Sarah Grove-Humphries. If you would like participate contact the Rabbi.
- It is beyond me to express how much I appreciate having musical support to enhance and beautify our services. Our mainstay in that role is Sarah Grove-Humphries, with assistance from Linda Blazer.
- The SHORTY youth group is moving along, thanks to Sherri Alt and Joel Ornstein, the advisors.
- Our Judaica Shop has been looking wonderful and carrying many unusual items thanks to Natasha Benenson.

THOI Building Update

- Byron Grove-Humphries repaired the slate roof of the building at the cemetery, replacing almost half of the roof materials.
- The social hall has new energy efficient windows.
- Our stained glass windows have been cleaned and repaired, and ways of protecting them from the outside are being explored.
- New art work has been added in the social hall for all of us to enjoy.
- More building improvements are in store. Stucco repair work and exterior painting is being planned when the weather permits.
- A landscaping plan will be developed to enhance our building with plantings, as the WWPL project moves forward.
- At a future date, the floor in the social hall will be refinished and ceiling tile replacement project completed.
- The lack of a renter has hurt the THOI income level. If you know of anyone or a group who may be interested please contact Beth Young.

Closing

Looking back, I cannot imagine that we have already arrived at the start of December. It seems only days ago that it was August.... But as I think back over the past months, I recall many wonderful conversations, phone calls, and visits, some lovely moments at our services and celebrations, and multiple moments when I felt gratified and proud of our community. I am so often pleased and delighted to be here, serving as your rabbi, doing all I am able to meet your needs and expectations, to support vital Jewish life here in the Shenandoah Valley, and to work with the larger community on your behalf in the interest of our shared objectives of tikkun olam (repairing the world) and partnering with G-d.

Rabbi Joe Blair

<p>Congregational Calendar</p>	<p>Be sure to check out the calendar at the end of this Bulletin and online. If you visit our web site www.thoi.org click on the Calendar 5769 link, you will see an up-to-date schedule. If you click on the Rabbi link, you will see a blurb about Rabbi Joe and then his schedule outside those on the congregational schedule. If you are interested in adding your events to the calendar (as part of the congregational calendar or as part of your group or committee's work, contact the rabbi or the temple webmaster at website@thoi.org.</p>										
<p>Congregation News</p>	<p>Our condolences to the Cunningham family following the passing of Michael. May his memory be a blessing.</p> <p>Mazel tov! THOI member Art Goldsmith, the Jackson T. Stephens Professor of Economics at Washington and Lee University, has won the new H. Hiter Harris Memorial Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching from the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC). www.wlu.edu/x27223.xml.</p> <p>Celebrating Happy Birthdays</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Gregg Goldenberg on 6th</td> <td>Rosalie Waterman on 19th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Robert Pendleton on 11th</td> <td>Jesse Landsberg Ward on 25th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alan Goldenberg on 12th</td> <td>Anna Degen on 28th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beth Young on 14th</td> <td>Philip Chodrow on 28th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sam Goldenberg on 14th</td> <td>Ben Freedman on 31st</td> </tr> </table> <p>Happy Anniversary Rachel and Tony Jordan celebrating on December 29th</p> <p>Bookstore discount: Carey McCallum at the new bookstore on Beverly Street called Sacred Circle, (112 E Beverly Street, 540-0213-3881) has offered to give 10% off on any books purchased if you mention that you are from THOI. The Sacred Circle carries a selection of Judaica titles that may be of interest.</p> <p>Book Business: There are now two small bookcases against the wall in the social hall near the windows that have books for you to swap. If you find something you wish to read, please do so. If you have books you wish to share, you can place them there.</p>	Gregg Goldenberg on 6 th	Rosalie Waterman on 19 th	Robert Pendleton on 11 th	Jesse Landsberg Ward on 25 th	Alan Goldenberg on 12 th	Anna Degen on 28 th	Beth Young on 14 th	Philip Chodrow on 28 th	Sam Goldenberg on 14 th	Ben Freedman on 31 st
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<p>Refuah Shelemah</p>	<p>Refuah Shelemah: We extend continuing wishes for healing and shalem (wholeness) to: Rafael Brand; Shirley Brand; Philip Chodrow; Ruth Chodrow; Rachel Peretz Comes for Dee Fizdale; Pauline Drucker; Steve Guberman; Janet Phillips, Marsha Pillet for Claire Lerner; Helen Prince; Lynne Landsberg; Betty Menaker; Dan Schorsch; Ken Schwartz; Margie Schwartz; Crys Sragovitz; Fredi Solod; Jay Solod; Lisa Solod Warren; Rosalie Waterman for her aunt; Nancy Witt; and everyone else who should be included in our thoughts and prayers at this time.</p>										
<p>Torah Parashiot</p>	<p>Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include the following in December: Vayetze, Vayishlach, Vayeshev, and Miketz, drawn from Bereshit (Genesis) 28:10-44:17, and Bamidbar (Numbers) 28:9-15. The reading from Bamidbar is the additional section for the Shabbat in Chanukah. Haftarot (selections from the Prophets) read on Shabbatot (Sabbaths) in December include selections from Hosea 11-14, Amos 2-3, Zechariah 2-4, and Isaiah 66.</p>										

<p>Tzedakah & Social Action Committee</p>	<p>We don't currently have a social action committee or chair; if you would like to work in this area, speak to Beth Young. There are opportunities open to us to perform Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) and Gemilut Chasidim (acts of loving kindness), from supporting the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank to working at the Volunteer Farm, partnering with Rebuilding Augusta, and more.</p> <p>The food collection over the High Holy Days netted 299 pounds of food delivered to the food bank, and over thirty grocery bags to First Step Shelter.</p> <p>It is still not too late to fulfill the mitzvot (commandments) of Tzedakah (righteous action), Gemilut Chasidim (deeds of loving kindness) and Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) by sending a donation to Mazon, and/or by returning the grocery bag with non-perishable foods to the synagogue.</p> <p>A November 15th trip to the Volunteer Farm was spearheaded by the Beth El Sisterhood. Beth El Sisterhood plans to go again, coordinating with the Men's Club, Youth Group, and other congregants. Congregants from THOI would be very welcome to come along.</p> <p>David Waterman continues our <i>Tzedakah</i> efforts for our community so we may take part in Rebuilding Augusta (a group with which he is quite involved). According to David, we need to have a group of four to twelve people who are willing to work for anything from 4 to 12 hours in the course of a day or two to accomplish each of several projects in the community, ranging from removing a temporary wheelchair ramp, building a new wheelchair ramp, repairing some walls, to clearing out massive amounts of trash from a house. Many of the things he wants to accomplish are outdoors at least in part, so we need to have them happen soon. If you can volunteer a block of time contact David at drwaterman@comcast.net or 540-886-1713.</p>
<p>Book Group</p>	<p>The book group will meet on 1/28/09 in Natasha Benenson's home at 7:30 pm to discuss <u>In Defense of Food</u> by Michael Pollan. For more information please contact her at 886-1157 or judaica@thoi.org</p>
<p>Women's Group</p>	<p>Our fall Shabbat dinner has been rescheduled to December 5 at 6:00 PM to coincide with the <i>Community Shabbat Service</i>. Please contact Marsha Pillet 540-249-4946 for reservations, \$9-adults and \$5-children. Help is needed setting up. Those willing to help need to arrive at 5:30 PM. If those who prepare dinner stay to set up, we will have enough people. Thanks in advance.</p>
<p>SHORTY</p>	<p>The next SHORTY meeting will be on Saturday, December 6th at 5:00 PM at Beth El in Harrisonburg. We will hold a Parent's night out (babysitting) event from 5:30 to 11 pm. The members of SHORTY will then meet to go over the Ski weekend service and program, and stay overnight for a Shul-in. Please plan to attend. Look for more information to be sent to the member list.</p>
<p>Oneg Reminder</p>	<p>According to the master schedule, the following people have oneg responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec.5 Shabbat Services - Mike & Bonnie Brown / Ben & Bonnie Legum • Jan. 9 Shabbat Services - SHORTY Fundraising Dinner@ 6 PM Gary Harvey / Susan & Tom Pereles
<p>Judaica Shop</p>	<p>Chanukah items are on sale. THOI will be host a shopping date on 12/7 from 1-3 PM or by appointment. Please contact Natasha at 886-1157 or judaica@thoi.org.</p> <p>The Beth El boutique will be open for your shopping pleasure from 9 to 1 on the 7th, 14th and 21st.</p>

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IMO Sonya Davidson	Campbell, Susan																																																																																								
High Holidays	CENTURY 21 Premier																																																																																								
IMO Jacob, Mabel, Joseph & Bernard Kaplan	Chodrow, Don and Ruth																																																																																								
High Holidays	Davidson, Stuart and Ann Cohen																																																																																								
IMO Morris & Pauline Shapiro, Harold Ely Shapiro, Stephen P. Shapiro, Samuel L & Shirley Goldenberg, Howard Michael Goldenberg, Gussie, Israel, Helen, Al and Gertrude Scherer	Degen, Doug and Martha																																																																																								
IMO Leo, Celia & Sarah Jill Goldfarb	Farmer, Leah																																																																																								
High Holidays	Gitlin Trust																																																																																								
High Holidays	Goldenberg, Alan and Vicki																																																																																								
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Rabbi Discretionary Donations - Class	*																																																																																								
IMO Bernie & Edith Hersch, Meyer Levinson, Mollye & Jack Kramer	Goldfarb, Steven																																																																																								
High Holidays&Yizkor Donation -IMO Bobbie Landsberg	Goldsmith/Kaufman, Art and Jan																																																																																								
High Holidays & IMO family of David Neiss who perished holocaust Paul & Didlje Lange who saved him	Goldstein, Deana																																																																																								
IMO Viola P.Blazer Hyman Blazer & Charles Blazer	Grove-Humphries, Sarah and Byron																																																																																								
High Holidays	Harvey, Gary																																																																																								
IMO Glenn Anderson & Phil Horowitz	Hersch, Lee																																																																																								
IMO Bertram, Shirley & Abraham David Peretz	*																																																																																								
High Holidays	Landsberg, Lynne																																																																																								
High Holidays	Neiss, Dahlia & Caldwell, Adam																																																																																								
IMO Rosaline & Louis Kamerman	*																																																																																								
IMO Philip David, Joseph, Frieda Bernstein Schwartz, Rose Schwartz Greenfield, Lily Schwartz Oran, Shirley Schwartz Mafatone, Rachel Schwartz Rothenberg, Irving, Lawrence, & Jerry Schwartz	Osborne, Jim & Linda Blazer																																																																																								
High Holidays	Pearson, Irene																																																																																								
High Holidays	Pereles, Tom and Susan																																																																																								
General Fund	Peretz Comes, Rachel																																																																																								
High Holidays, IMO Ben Drucker, In celebration of Elias Gardner	Pillet, Marsha																																																																																								
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	Tzedakah Box																																																																																								
	Young, Richard and Beth																																																																																								
December Yahrzeits	<p>Our apologies to the family of Viola Pierantozzi Blazer. She was left out of the November list.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Flora Barth</td> <td>Louis Belfor</td> <td>Earl Nicely</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joseph Barth</td> <td>David Brownold</td> <td>Tina Rosenberg</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Louis Belfor</td> <td>Hannah Degen</td> <td>Abraham Rosenthal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Brownold</td> <td>Anne Goldberg</td> <td>Simon Rosenthal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hannah Degen</td> <td>Rose Greenfield</td> <td>Alma Samuels</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anne Goldberg</td> <td>Aaron Harris</td> <td>Phillip Seltzer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rose Greenfield</td> <td>Sadie Jacobson</td> <td>Albert Shultz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aaron Harris</td> <td>Max Klotz</td> <td>Lydia Switzer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flora Barth</td> <td>Milton Klotz</td> <td>Hubert Thompson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joseph Barth</td> <td>Clara Litvin</td> <td>Rhea Walters</td> </tr> </table>	Flora Barth	Louis Belfor	Earl Nicely	Joseph Barth	David Brownold	Tina Rosenberg	Louis Belfor	Hannah Degen	Abraham Rosenthal	David Brownold	Anne Goldberg	Simon Rosenthal	Hannah Degen	Rose Greenfield	Alma Samuels	Anne Goldberg	Aaron Harris	Phillip Seltzer	Rose Greenfield	Sadie Jacobson	Albert Shultz	Aaron Harris	Max Klotz	Lydia Switzer	Flora Barth	Milton Klotz	Hubert Thompson	Joseph Barth	Clara Litvin	Rhea Walters																																																										
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Adult Education & Religious School

Religious School Report

On Sunday, November 9th, the dalet class went on a field trip to the Holocaust Museum. This experiential learning experience was extremely moving and insightful for our students. Rabbi will follow up on the visit during the next few weeks at religious school. Students in bet and gimmel were also introduced to Kristallnacht at school.

On Saturday evening, November 15th, we had a religious school family education Havdalah celebration and Jewish food experience. The preschool families were also invited. We made a variety of crafts to create a Havdalah set for each family, including a Havdalah candle, a spice box with spices, and a booklet of the Havdalah service. We all shared in a Havdalah service together. Each family brought a traditional “Jewish” dish or a dish that is a part of their Jewish experience to share during our pot luck dinner. Everything was delicious! We followed dinner with the Birkat Hamazon. Thank you to all of the families who participated and helped with the food and crafts!

We will be celebrating Chanukah during religious school on December 14th (with winter break for religious school on December 21st and 28th.) The religious school has also been asked to perform at the Beth El Chanukah dinner on December 21st and Roberta Stein is working with the children on their performance.

Wishing you all a joyful and bright Chanukah!

L’Shalom,

Dara, Linda, and Ruth

Rabbinic Education Initiatives

The Tanakh: Women of the Bible series of classes continues. The November meeting was on the 23rd. In December, we will meet at 2 pm at Beth El on the 7th. Each class stands alone, so you don’t have to attend every one of them to take part. We look at the Tanakh text in some detail, and especially at the doings of the women included in various sections, and try to tease out a bit of their stories, as well as look at the historical and contextual world in which those stories are unfolding. The setting for this class would be akin to a seminar in which we would look at the story of one woman/group of women in each class, and read the text (in English), talk about the background, and discuss the story. We have now gotten (limited) access to the newly published Torah: A Women’s Commentary, and we will try to incorporate some of the material in that volume into our discussion, as appropriate.

The **Introduction to Judaism** course is continuing for those who are already registered.

The **Introduction to Hebrew** class has been cancelled due to lack of interest in a class at this level. I will consider offering it again in the spring on a different day and at a different time to see if there is enough interest to justify holding it this year. Otherwise, I will wait a year and re-assess the situation.

If you are interested in studying for and celebrating a B’nai Mitzvah, or in learning to leyn (read/chant) Torah and/or Haftarah, or to lead services, or serve as a gabbai (MC for the Torah service), please be in touch with the rabbi. Classes are planned for later this year. More information will be forthcoming soon.

Torah Lishmah – a monthly text study session at THOI that looks at something in the way of a Jewish text, drawn variously (seemingly randomly!) from Torah, Nevi’im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings), Talmud, the Zohar, and other Jewish texts. Open for discussion and speculation! This will usually take place on Friday evening from 6:30 to 7:30, and you are welcome to bring a meal to eat while we talk. On some occasions, it will be moved to Saturday morning, when we have a Shabbat

	<p>morning service scheduled, and in that case, will follow the service and any Kiddush that is offered. The next session scheduled will be Friday, December 19th at 6:30 pm, prior to our Shabbat evening service at THOI. The next session after that will be January 23rd at the same time, also preceding our Shabbat service.</p> <p>Torah Limud – a monthly Torah study session at Beth El that looks at that week’s Torah Parashah and tries to fit it into the context of the larger story. Open for discussion and developing your own midrashim! This will usually take place on Friday evening from 6:30 to 7:30, and you are welcome to bring a meal to eat while we talk. On some occasions, it will be moved to Saturday morning, when we have a Shabbat morning service, and in that case, will follow the service, and any Kiddush that is offered. The next session will be January 2nd at 6:30, followed at 7:30 by the Shabbat evening service at Beth El. The session after that will be a Saturday morning Shabbat service on January 31st at Beth El, followed by Torah Limud.</p>
<p>Reaching the Rabbi</p>	<p>The rabbi is available to meet by appointment. If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call to set an appointment.</p> <p>The office is not staffed and the building is generally closed when the rabbi is not in. Messages are regularly checked by the Rabbi at both congregations, and email is frequently read during the week. Please understand that the rabbi will not be available or reply on Shabbat or on Jewish holidays unless it is an emergency that cannot wait.</p> <p>In the event of an urgent need the rabbi may be contacted by telephone. In that case, please call the cell phone number listed, leaving a detailed message, and be sure to express the need for an urgent response.</p> <p>If you wish to make an appointment to see the rabbi please feel free to call (886-4091) or email (rabbijoe@thoi.org). To minimize driving, he is grouping most appointments in Staunton on Mondays and Fridays, and in Harrisonburg on Sundays and Thursdays. Other days may be possible-contact him to ask.</p> <p>Rabbi Joe’s Email: rabbi@thoi.org Beth El Congregation 540-434-2744 Temple House of Israel 540-886-4091 Cell phone (Please use this # for emergencies) 434-981-3959</p>

Temple Contacts	Rabbi	Joe Blair	886-4091 or rabbi@thoi.org
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	Past President	Lisa Solod Warren	886-1603 or pastpresident@thoi.org
	V. P. of Membership	Laurie Berman	885-2925 or membership@thoi.org
	V. P. of Building/Grounds	Steve Rosenberg	943-0507 or building@thoi.org
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	Director at large	Janet Brody	851-0877 or director-at-large@thoi.org
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Caring Committee	Lou Boden	caring-committee2@thoi.org or 540-255-5555	
	Rosalie Waterman	caring-committee1@thoi.org or 886-1713	
Film Series	Shirley Brand	949-0529 or films@thoi.org	

December 2008	1	2	3	4	5	6
	1PM Torah Roll				6PM Women's Group Dinner 7:30PM Community Awareness Shabbat	SHORTY Parent's Night Out @ Beth El 5:30PM
7 2PM Tanakh Class@ Beth El 1-3PM Chanukah Shopping	8 4:30 PM Torah Roll 7PM Board Meeting	9	10	11	12 6:30PM TOT Shabbat @ Beth El	13
14 4 PM Intro to Judaism Class	15 12 PM Torah Roll	16	17	18	19 6:30PM Torah Lishmah 7:30 Rabbi Lead Shabbat	20 Bulletin Submissions Due
21 First Night of Chanukah	22 12 PM Torah Roll	23	24	25 Chanukah Potluck & Party 4-8PM	26	27
28	29 12PM Torah Roll	30	31			