



December 2007

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As we roll through the month and near the Thanksgiving, Chanukah and New Year hoopla, I pause to take a breath and to think about giving thanks. In a recent “sermonette” at lay services, Becky Mintzer talked about the things for which she is thankful, all related to her family: Jessie’s smile, Lester’s patience, Anne’s presence in their lives. I could really relate and began to list the things in my life, also related to my families... at home and around the country and at Beth El.

Then we moved in the service to the Mishaberach for healing and, from such a small group, there were so many names...some loved ones whose names we hear most weeks and so many in our Beth El family who are in need of both physical and emotional healing. The stark contrast from giving thanks to worrying was overwhelming for a moment. Then, as we sang and continued the service, I began to think about how lucky we are to belong to this family who cares and feels and prays for each other.

“That’s pretty dorky, mom,” my kids would say. But, as I think about giving thanks during these next hectic weeks, along with thinking of Jennie and Leah and Bekah and Chris, all of you will be there. We succeed, we struggle, we learn, we forget, we win, we lose, we get hurt, we heal (and sometimes we don’t). And we have each other who, whether or not we always remember to say it, cheer sometimes, cry sometimes, and pray sometimes, on our behalves. That is something for which to give thanks. I do.

On another front, it seems like someone is forever asking me about services at my “church.” On Friday, November 30, I plan to invite them to participate in our Community Awareness Shabbat. Rabbi Joe is planning an informative/instructive service with the participation of a number of congregants. Janet Kohen, with Ron Ornstein, Roberta Stein and Don Smith, will provide lively music. Joe Lansdon will read Torah. We will, of course, have an oneg afterwards. I hope you’ll plan to invite your friends, neighbors, colleagues, teachers and school administrators to share in this event. It promises to be welcoming and upbeat and a night of sharing.

Margee

FUND RAISING BY GROCERY SHOPPING

As the cold weather and higher heating bills come along, you can now help Beth El by using gift cards to buy your groceries. If you use these cards Beth El receives 5% of your purchase costs.

- For those of you who use **Kroger** cards just go their office and add monetary value to your card.
- **Food Lion** cards are available at Beth El or B. Ney’s and are all \$50.00 in value.
- **Martins** Gift Cards come in \$25.00, \$50.00, \$100.00, or any other denomination. They are also available at Beth El or B. Ney’s. They can even be used to purchase gasoline.

Now for those members who told me that it was too inconvenient to come to Beth El or B. Ney’s to get a new card, they can be delivered. If you give Bill Ney (442-6397) notice what cards you need, they will be reserved for you. This is the easiest Fund Raising program that we can conduct. It is up to the membership to make the commitment to obtain these cards and use them. If you shop, we will benefit.

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,

Shalom! I hope that your Thanksgiving holiday was blessed with family and friends, and that your reasons for gratitude were manifest and plentiful to you.

THE CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS

KISLEV → TEVET

Rosh Chodesh (the New Month) for Kislev took place on the 11th of November. Kislev will run until December 9th, and Rosh Chodesh for Tevet will be on the 10th. Tevet will run until January 7th, and the 9th is Rosh Chodesh for Shevat.

A reminder, in case this edition makes it into your hands before the date: November 30th is Beth El's Community Awareness Shabbat. Be sure to invite your friends, colleagues, teachers, neighbors, students, acquaintances, and anyone else you think might be interested in attending our Shabbat service to learn more about it, and us.

TORAH PARASHIOT

Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include: Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Vayechi, and Shemot. These are drawn from Bereshit (Genesis) 37-50 and Shemot (Exodus) 1-6.

Haftarot (readings of sections from the Prophets) read this month include readings from Amos 2-3, Zechariah 2-4, Ezekiel 37, 1 Kings 2; and Isaiah 27-29.

HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS

The major holiday during this month of Kislev is Chanukah. It begins on the 25th of Kislev, and runs until the 3rd of Tevet. On the secular calendar this year it will fall from sundown on December 4th through sundown on the 12th.

The procedure for lighting candles is a compromise between Hillel and Shammai, so we add candles going from right to left (not counting the shamash or helper candle), starting with one candle the first night, and adding one each night to increase the light as we move through the holiday. When we actually light, however, we light the shamash (helper) candle, and use that to light all the other candles,

starting at the newest, which is the one on the farthest left for that night. In practice, for the fourth night (Friday evening, December 7th this year), we would put four candles into the Chanukiah, starting at the right side and moving towards the center, then we would light the shamash, and recite the blessings, then actually light the candles from the last one added to the first one, going from left to right. The blessings for the first night are the two for Chanukah plus the Shehechyanu blessing, as this is the first time we are lighting the Chanukiah this year, so on the first night we would recite:

Baruch atah Adonai elokenu melech ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitvotav vitzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, sovereign of creation, who has commanded us with Your commandments concerning the lighting of the light of Chanukah.

Baruch atah Adonai elokenu melech ha'olam she'asah nisim la'avoteynu beyamim hahem bazeman hazeh.

Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, sovereign of creation, who did miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time.

Baruch atah Adonai elokenu melech ha'olam shehechyanu vikiyamanu vehigianu lazman hazeh. Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, sovereign of creation, who has sustained us and supported us and allowed us to reach this time (of joy).

On all other nights after the first, we would not include the Shehechyanu blessing.

The 7th of December is Friday. You may want to remember that on the Friday night in Chanukah, we light the Chanukiah, and THEN the Shabbat candles, ushering in the Sabbath AFTER celebrating Chanukah so as not to kindle flame on Shabbat. 😊

Plan ahead for a fun event – the Chanukah dinner will be held at Beth El on Sunday, December 9th at 5 pm, and there is a performance by our Religious School students planned! The Religious school students will also be performing on Friday the 7th at THOI after the Chanukah dinner there at 6 pm.

A Thought on Light at Chanukah Time

Chanukah is often thought of as the holiday of light, or lights. After the difficult times of oppression and persecution, a moment arrived when we (through the Hasmoneans) were victorious, with G-d's help carving out a respite in the ongoing war, lightening and enlightening the world for a time. We recall the re-kindling of faith and hope as the Temple was re-dedicated, at that time when the menorah was re-lit to shine out and dispel the darkness that had come in those days. That light has served as a beacon of hope and faith and comfort to many, then, and in all the years and centuries since.

That light, the light of the presence of G-d among us, shines on still. That light cannot be extinguished, but it can be made dim and difficult, even impossible to see. In our day, there are reasons that the light is not apparent to us.

Today, we must acknowledge that the holy light of the presence of G-d among us is not visible to us. It is clouded by the darkness of war in many places. It is obscured by the existence of hate, bigotry, and prejudice among us, and within us. It is masked by the use of violence and bloodshed as tools to quash others. It is concealed by the cries of those who feel the sting of poverty and degradation. It is hidden by the intolerance and lack of acceptance of others not exactly like us. It is covered by the actions and choices of our elected and appointed officials, in our name, in perpetrating actions we do not and cannot condone or accept. It is veiled by the actions and words of our leaders, religious and secular, who use their position to further their own ends and not G-d's. It is buried by the vicious, genocidal actions of so many in too many places.

If we are to truly kindle the light of Chanukah, we must re-dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of justice and righteousness. We must partner with G-d in making the world more perfect, more fit for the presence of G-d among us, so that the light of G-d's presence will shine forth brightly, illuminating all in every corner of this world.

There are so very many needs, and so many worthy ways to work towards this end. I pray that we each choose at least one among them, and dedicate and re-dedicate our self to the holy tasks of Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) and Rodef Tzedek (pursuit of righteousness) to help bring light to the world at this season of the year when light is on our mind. .

Rabbi Joe

YOUTH GROUP

Our next meeting will actually take place on Saturday December 1, late into the night! Everyone with children should have received a flyer regarding Parent's Night Out with SHORTY babysitting at the Temple.

After children are picked up at 11:00 pm, SHORTY will be staying for a lock-in meeting and working on our ski weekend. If anyone has questions, please call me. We need all youth if possible!

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR JANUARY 18, 2007 TO HELP HOUSE TEENS! We will need housing again for Friday night only. You will be hearing from me and in advance, let me thank everyone who so graciously houses teens every year and is willing to do so again! More details to follow.

Sherri Alt 249-5463

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Greetings from the Religious School,

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy Chanukah, which is fast approaching. Today was our Ellis Island Family Education Day. We have all been busy preparing, and have run out of time for our Bridge contribution. We will have to provide a more detailed news article post Bridge publication. It was a success and a very interesting morning, as well as including a delicious lunch of family favorites. We thank everyone who helped to make it happen. Special thanks to our guests who so graciously shared their family histories and stories with the students, John Stewart, Gary Stein, and Ronnie (Reva) Saltsberg.

Shalom,
Linda, Dara, and Ruth

S M T W T F S

						1 Youth Group and Parent's Night Out
2 RS & Bagel Bar Gift Shop	3	4 First Night of Chanukah	5	6 Reading Hebrew @6 pm Board Mtg @ 7:30 pm	7 Lay Service @ 7:30 pm	8
9 RS & Bagel Bar Chanukah Dinner @ 5 pm	10	11	12	13	14 Lay Service @ 7:30 pm	15
16 RS & Bagel Bar	17	18	19	20 Reading Hebrew @6 pm	21 Torah Study @ 6:30 Rabbi-led Service @ 7:30pm	22
23 No Religious School Barnes & Noble Gift Wrapping	24 Barnes & Noble Gift Wrapping	25	26 NFTY Winter Kallah 12/26-12/30	27	28 Lay Service @ 7:30 pm	29
30 No Religious School	31	 <h2 style="margin: 0;">December 2007</h2> 				

01 Sadye Spiro	17 Carl Ney	30 Eddie Ney
03 Alfred Ney	18 Louis Hamburg	Doris Kalman
05 Anna Bloom	Rhoda Mintzer	Sarah Miller
Elizabeth Levey	21 Esther Derechinsky	Bertha Hammer
06 Sebastion Goldsmith	22 Sarah Rabinowitz	31 Lenora Myerberg
Albert Klingstein	Gladys Ney	Sarah Miller
08 Mollie Katzen	Rabbi Burton Padol	
09 Max Frankel	23 Albert H Ash	
Elaine Trubitz	24 Nace Cohen	
12 Rabbi Jacob Schvanefeld	25 Theresa Hirsch	
Barnett Nelson	26 Amelia L Figgatt	
Molly Feig	Mal Mintzer	
13 Bertha Schvanefeld	Joshua Rader Stein	
Roselea Kohen	27 Anna Robinson	
14 Simon Wender	28 Josephine Merzger	
16 Agnes Moore	29 Pearl Rachel Katzen	
William A Loewner		
Simon Oestreicher		

Beth El Congregation is grateful for the following generous donations:

The Yahrzeit Memorial Fund

- Milton Perlman - In memory of Louis Perlman (Milton's Brother)
- Eddie Ney - In memory of Carolyn Ash (Eddie's Grandmother)
- Bill & Leslie Ney - In memory of Annie Ney (Bill's Grandmother)
- Bill & Leslie Ney - In memory of Alfred Ney (Bill's Grandfather)

High Holiday Visitor Donations

- Bradley Weill

The Window Fund

- Chuck Slott - Wishing a speedy recovery to Roberta Stein
- Ron and Michelle Ornstein - In honor of all recovering from illness



We will be looking forward to seeing everyone at our Chanukah dinner on December 9 @ 5 pm. Mail your money and reservation!! We will NOT be meeting in December - our next meeting is Wednesday, January 9th at 6:00 pm at the Temple. We will be having cold salads/deli for dinner.

Sisterhood is also doing gift wrapping at Barnes and Noble on December 23, 11:00-9:00 pm and on December 24, 10:00-6:00 pm. If anyone is interested in helping with any of these times, please let me know!

Thanks to all, Sherri

Walking through San Francisco's Chinatown, a tourist from the Midwest was enjoying the artistry of all the Chinese restaurants, shops, signs and banners when he turned a corner and saw a building with the sign "Moishe Plotnik's Laundry." "Moishe Plotnik?" he wondered. "How does that belong in Chinatown?"

He walked into the shop and saw a fairly standard looking drycleaner, although he could see that the proprietors were clearly aware of the uniqueness of the store name as there were baseball hats, T-shirts and coffee mugs emblazoned with the logo "Moishe Plotnik's Chinese Laundry." The tourist selected a coffee cup as a conversation piece to take back to his office. Behind the counter was a smiling old Chinese gentleman who thanked him for his purchase. The tourist asked, "Can you explain how this place got a name like 'Moishe Plotnik's Laundry?'"

The old man answered, "Ah...Evleebody ask me that. It name of owner." Looking around, the tourist asked, "Is he here?" "It me," replies the old man.

"Really? You're Chinese. How did you ever get a name like Moishe Plotnik?"

"Is simple", said the old man. Many, many year ago I come to this country. I standing in line at 'Documentation Center of Immigration.' Man in front of me was Jewish man from Poland. Lady at counter look at him and say, "What your name?" He say, "Moishe Plotnik."

Then she look at me and say, "What your name?" I say, "Sam Ting."

ANNE MINTZER'S 95TH BIRTHDAY

On Friday night, January 11, 2008 we will be celebrating not only our mother's 95th birthday but also for her **60** years plus of service to the Temple. My sister and I and all of our families invite everyone for a special service and "oneg" in her honor. We hope everyone in the congregation who can be there will be there to share the celebration with this truly special person. We look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you,
Les and Deanna

BETH EL SPORTS

It has been said that as Jews moved into mainstream America, they also moved into the country's national pastime. Even the music for baseball's unofficial anthem, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," came from a Jew, Albert Von Tilzer.

Hank Greenberg of the Detroit Tigers was baseball's first Jewish superstar, but the first Jewish player was Lipman Emaunuel "Lip" Pike, son of a New York City haberdasher. In 1876, when the National League was created (editor's note, one year before the Hebrew Friendship Congregation was chartered in Harrisonburg), Pike played center field for the St. Louis Brown Stockings. He also became the first Jewish umpire and the first Jewish manager.

Greenberg was one of the first Jewish major leaguers to draw attention to his religion. "I find myself wanting to be remembered not only as a great ballplayer but, even more, as a great Jewish ballplayer," he said in the 1930's. Along with his amazing prowess on the field, Hammerin' Hank is remembered for refusing to play on Yom Kippur 1934, although his Tigers were in a pennant race. Dodgers' ace Sandy Koufax, the only other Jew beside Greenberg to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, pulled a Greenberg when he refused to pitch on Yom Kipper in Game One of the 1965 World Series against Minnesota. One of the most famous moments in Jewish baseball history occurred on May 2, 1951, when a Jewish pitcher pitched to a Jewish batter with a Jewish catcher behind home plate.

Today the general managers of the Yankees and Red Sox, Brian Cashman and Theo Epstein, are Jewish, as are Marvin Miller, former executive director of the players association, current executive Donald Fehr, and Commissioner Bud Selig. Jews continue to take the field in limited numbers. There were 16 Jewish players in the majors during 2007.

Excerpted from Moment (Nov 2007)
The Jews of Baseball by Karin Tanabe

BOARD MEMBERS

Joe Blair Rabbi
Margee Greenfield President
Gary Stein Vice President
Becky Mintzer Secretary
Bill Ney Treasurer
Judy Freudenthal Trustee
Andy Kohen Trustee
Jerry Minskoff Trustee
Sherri Alt Sisterhood President
Ron Ornstein Brotherhood President
Janet Kohen Past President
Marlene Brumbaugh At large member
Thea Golub At large member

THE RABBI'S AVAILABILITY

The Rabbi is available this year by prior arrangement on Sundays and Thursdays in Harrisonburg, and Mondays and Fridays in Staunton. If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call for an appointment to be sure that Rabbi Joe will be able to give you his full undivided attention, as you deserve.

The office is not staffed and the building is generally closed when the rabbi is not there. In the event of an urgent need the rabbi may be contacted by email or telephone. Messages are regularly checked at both congregations, and email is frequently read. 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. In that case, please be sure to express the need for an urgent response.

Email	RabbiJoe@hotmail.com
BethEl	540-434-2744
Temple House of Israel	540-886-4091
Cell (Leave a message)	434-981-3959

2007 BETH EL SISTERHOOD ANNUAL CHANUKAH DINNER

Please join us **Sunday, December 9th at 5 PM** for food, fun, and special entertainment by our Religious School. Don't forget to bring your menorah and candles and share in lighting them with us. The menu includes:



- Vegetable Soup
- Brisket
- Green Beans with Almonds
- Rolls
- Latkes (of course!)
- Apple Sauce/Sour Cream
- Donuts for Dessert



Reservations are required in advance. Please return the bottom portion of this page **WITH YOUR PAYMENT** by December 4th to Maureen Goldberger, 441 Queen Anne Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Cost for Members: Adults - \$15.00, Ages 6-13 - \$8.00, Under 6 - free
 After Dec. 4th : Adults - \$20.00, Ages 6-13 - \$12.00 Under 6 - free
 Non-members: Adults - \$20.00, Ages 6-13 - \$12.00 Under 6 - free



First Step helps abused women and their children by setting them up in their own apartments. As a tzedakah project, the Sisterhood will be collecting kitchen items to donate to First Step. Please consider bringing a new kitchen item to the Chanukah Dinner.



Name: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Number of Tickets:

Member Child (\$8) _____ Member Adult (\$15) _____ Under 6 (Free) _____
 Non-Member Child (\$12) _____ Non-Member Adult (\$20) _____ Under 6 (Free) _____

_____ Yes, I want to join the fun with the Sisterhood on December 9th. Enclosed is my payment of \$_____.

_____ No, I cannot attend, however, I have enclosed a monetary contribution to the Sisterhood.