



<http://va014.uri.net/bethel.html>

February 2009

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Wow, January's over (cold enough for you), and we're racing into February. As always, we have a lot of things going on among our community and within the building. I know that most people still don't read the *Bridge* much beyond page 3, but please look at the congregational calendar and see what's happening. We will be having our annual Men's Club Shabbat on Friday February 6, and the following week will be the Religious School Shabbat. These events are not only for the Men's Club and Religious School, but for the whole congregation, they are

opportunities for the whole congregation to see how various parts of our community can share with us. Then, on February 28, we will have our annual Hanks fundraising dinner. Please come – and don't forget to invite your friends!

As always I am still looking for people to take on committee work. Please let me know if you are interested.

Gary

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,

Shalom. I write this article as it is absolutely freezing outside! I hope that you are staying warm and healthy, and feeling many blessings.

IN OUR WORLD

There is a Chinese curse which goes something like this. "May you live in interesting times". The thrust of it seems to be that 'interesting' is a synonym for 'turbulent and difficult'.

It has certainly been an 'interesting' time in our world. There is much at which to be troubled. On the negative side we can think of the situation with Israel and Gaza, the world and national economy, unemployment figures and the jobs picture, the stock and housing market crises, untreated illnesses and rampant treatable diseases, the ongoing deaths and genocide in several locations through the world, and so much more. One could easily despair.

Yet, at the same time, there are rays of light and hope.

Just days ago, after one of the largest turnouts in memory voted, Barack H. Obama was sworn in as the President of the United States – the first person of color ever to have achieved that position. Though we can debate just how far we still have to go as a nation to achieve full equality and acceptance of all without regard for race, color, or creed, (and eventually, perhaps even gender!), there can be no denial of the distance already traversed that this event demonstrates.

Leading up to this historic moment, even as the Bush administration came to its' final hours in office, they continued to try to work with Egypt to broker a cease fire agreement between Israel and Hamas. Things are in flux, now we have to wait to see if a cease fire can be implemented, and if it will be observed and hold. The possibility of some

level of relief for the beleaguered Israelis, and for those living in Gaza who suffer in this situation is possible, and perhaps in sight.

President Obama's announcements have hinted at policies similar to those of the New Deal in part – which, it is thought, would help get people back to work, as well as repair our nation's needy and flagging infrastructure.

The call for each person to reach out and make a difference in their community by Mr. Obama brought a wonderful response by people to that call – it seems to have worked as was seen on the recent 'day of action' asking people to do something on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to help others. A huge number of Americans went out and did something for others, and made a difference. Even better, they felt so good about it that many of them plan to repeat this again soon.

The Nothing But Nets campaign to provide treated netting for areas where Malaria is a problem has distributed over 50,000 nets to date. For just a \$10 donation, a person can protect another person and virtually eliminate the probability that they will contract this disease, which so often debilitates or kills without treatment or prevention.

There is hope in the larger world that our nation will re-establish its' ties with other nations, and will once again fully take part in the usual fashion, restoring some of the trust and friendship we lost, and increasing acceptance of our country amongst our allies and friends.

As you can see, all is not lost. If we focus our energies, speak our minds, allocate our resources, and maintain our efforts, we can help, we can make a difference, we can make the world a better and a more godly place.

IN OUR COMMUNITY

Not for the first time in my experience, in the last week I met someone in

the community who was amazed and surprised, and told me that they had never met a Jewish person before. As I say, this was not the first time I encountered this kind of statement, and it was easy to respond, saying something along the lines of, "Perhaps you have, but have just not known it." This led into a pleasant conversation, where this person asked me a number of questions about Judaism (simple things, for the most part, about when we have services, and what we do in them).

I wound up inviting this person to join us on February 6th for the next Community Awareness Shabbat at THOI. I believe that he is curious enough that he will come to find out more for himself about Jews and Judaism.

This kind of conversation is not a rare occurrence. Sometimes it is a little more awkward; someone will ask if I would take off my kippah (yarmulke or headcovering) to see my 'horns'. Most of the time, this is not a joke, and it is not meant to be impolite or said with any malice. In those cases, I have explained that the idea that Jews have horns is due to a mistranslation of the Torah (the word 'keren' is used for both horns and rays, and so when Michealangelo painted the picture of Moses descending from Mount Sinai with his face shining and radiating 'rays' of light, he based it on a translation which misunderstood it as horns, and that painting became the image of a Jew for many in the non-Jewish world).

Another type of conversation in which I have often found myself engaged by those in the community has to do with what we do in services. Sometimes, the question will be asked about whether we still perform sacrifices. The more sophisticated questioners will often go on to ask if we do not sacrifice how do we achieve atonement and absolution. I have to admit to the occasional mental urge (never acted upon!) to answer that the only sacrifices we still make are beautiful virgins, and to ask if they know any. Once I get past this internal joke, I reply that sacrifices ceased for Jews with the

destruction of the second Temple in the year 70, and ever since, our prayer from the heart (specifically the Amidah or HaTefillah) is in place of the sacrifice.

In the same vein, I have been asked to teach a short course through the JMU Institute for Lifelong Learning (adult non-credit five session mid-day classes) as an Introduction to Judaism for whoever may be interested. More than twenty had signed up two weeks ago; the class will not begin until the first week of February and sign ups continue until the start of the class.

What all this tells me is that there is both immense ignorance about Jews and Judaism, and a deep well of curiosity about us.

All of which leads me to encourage you to serve as an ambassador for Judaism in the community. If someone is interested, invite him or her to attend a service. We do this for our Community Awareness Shabbat each year, but the number of people who want to know more is far larger than we can accommodate on any one date. People who come to one of our services gain a great deal and appreciate the opportunity. It is a win-win for all. Not only do they see what we do, they learn something about Jews and Judaism, see how much of our worship service is reflected in their own, note how many similarities there are, and clear up some questions they have. They also have a chance to experience our warm and welcoming community, and to enjoy our hospitality and the Oneg Shabbat! What a positive and fun way to make friends and influence people, and at the same time to help build stronger connections between our small Jewish community and the larger community. ☺

Beyond the walls of our Shul, our congregation has made more efforts to reach out and work with our community. I am so pleased at how the congregation has stepped up and worked to meet the needs in our region. The Beth El Sisterhood continues to lead an effort to work at the Volunteer Farm, as well as knitting to make things for those in

need. The Beth El Men's club and Sisterhood led the congregation in working with the HARTS shelter, housing and feeding those in need during a week in January when it is too cold for anyone to remain outside. Shorty worked to support both of these efforts, and is thinking about supplying food to the Valley Mission in Staunton as a project, perhaps even volunteering to cook and serve there. The preschool and religious school collected food at their Chanukah performance. We continue to send food and needed items to the First Step and Blue Ridge area Food Bank, as well as support Mazon. Donations have been sent to a variety of causes and groups on behalf of the congregation through the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

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), tikkun olam (repair of the world), and Hakhnasat orchim (hospitality). Three of 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. These are all deep rooted Jewish values that inform so much of what each of us does, even when we are not conscious of it.

Now, more than ever, in light of all the ill news in the economy, the sense of trouble in the world, the damage to our environment, and in the face of all that we must each deal with, 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 mitzvot and the underlying values they represent, to help heal and improve our own community and the world. 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).

IN THE CONGREGATION

I don't know if you are aware of it, but the congregation is fairly small in numbers. With about seventy-one households, we fall into the VERY SMALL category for Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) congregations. Even assuming that there are 2 adults in each household (which we know is not true for all cases), we are about 142 individuals – a really small number! Despite that, we do a LOT. Take a look:

So far this year we have traversed the full cycle of the High Holidays and Sukkot, Chanukah has come and gone, Community Awareness Shabbat was a big success, our Tzedakah efforts have grown, and we have had our regular scheduled Shabbat services, learning opportunities, classes, and social events.

Planning for our events is ongoing even as I write. Be sure to look at the calendar in the Bridge and the email announcements to keep track of everything that is planned! Looking ahead at some of the bigger events on the horizon:

January 31st at 10 am is a Shabbat morning service, followed by a Torah Limud (study).

February 1st is the next session of the Women in the Bible series. It will be at 2 pm at Beth El. Open to all.

February 13th at Beth El is the Religious School Shabbat service at 5:30 pm for dinner, and 6:30 pm for the service.

The Tu Bi'Shevat Seder will be February 15th [NOTE: This is a changed date] and initial planning is already underway. It will be at 5 pm at THOI. Community members from both THOI and Beth El are invited to attend.

February 16th, Monday, at THOI at 6-7 pm will be the second session of Torah With Commentary. We will focus on the same Biblical verse (Bereshit/Genesis 28:16) and look at one commentator's take on it. Again, this is open to members of both Beth El and THOI.

The Shenandoah Valley Holocaust Education Project (SVHEP) kicks off on

February 22nd with a trip to the Richmond Holocaust museum, including a meeting with one of the founders of that museum. It continues with a speaker on the 25th at Westminster Presbyterian in Waynesboro. This will be a local WW II Veteran who will share some of his experiences. Many more events are planned for March – at least one will be sponsored by Beth El, and may be held in the synagogue. Others are being sponsored and presented elsewhere in our region. It is looking to be an amazing series of events, so be on the lookout for more information in a flyer and emails to be distributed soon.

Purim is coming. It is scheduled to be celebrated in the Religious school on March 8th, and we will have an ‘adult’ service on the 9th at THOI at 7 pm.

The second Staunton Jewish Film Festival is coming up in April (the 3rd-5th); films are already being viewed and evaluated for inclusion in it by the committee. Plan to attend.

Passover begins April 8th with a seder at THOI, and Beth El will host the second night Community seder at on the 9th.

CONDOLENCES to Dale Brothers and family on the sudden recent loss of her sister Karen.

REFUAH SHELEMAH BIMHEYRAH
(Speedy & Complete Health and Wholeness)

We extend continuing wishes for healing and shalem (wholeness) to: Miriam Banker; Candy Blatt; Franklin Blatt; Ruth Clayman; Charlie and Gale Clemons (for Charlie’s parent); Erwin Helbraun; Joyce Helbraun; Lynne Landsberg; Joe Landson; Shirley Merlin; Gerry Price; Herb Rodbell; Roberta Stein; John Stewart; and anyone else who should be included in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

CONCLUSION

As you can tell, we are all busy and working to serve our community. Please be

sure to take part and take advantage of all that we can offer!

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

SHEVAT → ADAR (FEBRUARY)

Shevat began January 26th and runs until February 24th. The 24th and 25th of February are Rosh Chodesh for Adar, which runs from February 25th until the 25th of March, with the 26th of March being Rosh Chodesh (head of the month) for Nisan.

In the month of Shevat, we end our period in the calendar with no Jewish holidays. On Shevat 15 (Tu Bi'Shevat), which falls on the evening of February 8th and February 9th, we will arrive at Rosh Hashanah Le'Ilanot (the new year for the trees). This observance goes back to the Torah which instructs us to care for G-d's creation, including allowing trees to mature and become strong and healthy before trying to take fruit from them for commercial purposes. This is a practical holiday, allowing those planting orchards (with fruit trees) to keep track of how ‘old’ the trees are, so they may avoid permitting fruit to set on the trees in the first several years, so that the root system can develop and mature. Far from an arbitrary date picked at random on the calendar to observe this date, it was tied to the understanding that this was the time of year when the sap first began to rise in the trees after the dormant period. The specific date was selected by observing that the first trees to flower in Israel were the almond trees, and backing up from the date of this earliest flowering, the 15th of Shevat was determined to be the date when the rising of sap in preparation for the annual growth and flowering began. To fulfill the mitzvah (commandment) of not taking fruit in the first several years (it varies by type of tree or plant), a date to ‘age’ the trees was required, so this became the time to count, adding a ‘year’ to the age of the trees.

Children tend to call this the ‘birthday of the trees’, and see the observance of it as a birthday party. This is cute, and fun, and a nice way to think of it.

Over time, another, more adult, understanding has arisen. As late as the 16th-17th century, the Kabbalists began to connect this holiday with the celebration of Creation, and viewed the tree as the symbol of the connection of heaven and earth, with two intertwined trees growing together; one growing up towards heaven from earth, and the other growing down towards earth from heaven. In some representations, this intertwined double tree is pictured as the tree of life, and as also as the sephirothic tree upon which we find pictured the ten emanations of G-d appearing in our world. The Kabbalists saw this archetypal tree as having existence in multiple levels of existence, tying into the four worlds concept, and making this a very sophisticated view of the holiday, far from simply the 'birthday of the trees'. These Kabbalists developed a full practice by establishing the custom of holding a seder (ordered ritual meal), very much like a Passover seder, but using the fruits of trees as the ritual foods, celebrating G-d's Creation, and connecting to the earth and the cycles of agriculture/horticulture and life.

The seder has taken on another layer in modern times. There has been a great increase in understanding and knowledge of and in concern for the physical world. Tu Bi'Shevat has been given an overlayer of concern with ecology and the environment. This is why it is so often that you see requests from JNF (the Jewish National Fund) to plant trees in Israel at this time of year – to help by adding trees, in order to improve and preserve the environment, as well as moderate the climate, and to retain groundwater.

These are not just ancient concerns of our long-ago ancestors; these are issues we are grappling with today, which we hear about in terms such as global warming, water scarcity/drought, and dustbowl formation.

The seder which we will follow is fun and easy – you could do it at home, if you like, but I hope you will join us as we observe Tu Bi'Shevat with a seder on February 15th at 5 pm at THOI. The seder itself will include

tasty treats as the ritual foods drawn from those things that grow on trees - fruits and nuts of a variety of forms with different characteristics (shells, internal pits, rinds and pits, no shells or pits). We will also include white, rosé, pink, and red wine for our four cups. The seder uses many readings from Torah to create a fairly short liturgy, which leads us up to the moment when we enjoy a seudat mitzvah (a celebratory meal connected to the doing of a mitzvah). We conclude the seder with the Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals).

This seder is a joint presentation for both Beth El and THOI members; if you wish to attend, please follow the directions that will be forthcoming soon and RSVP so that there will be a place for you at the meal. Please note: the date has changed: it is now February 15th! Make sure you have the new date on your calendar.

It is written in the Talmud, that 'one who rejoices in the arrival of Adar increases joy in the world'. Adar is the month in which Purim falls – something to look forward to for all of us.

TORAH PARASHIOT

Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include the following: February 2009 Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim, and Terumah, drawn from Shemot (Exodus) 13:17-27:19, and 30:11-16 (for Shabbat Shekalim on 2/21).

Haftarot (selections from the Prophets) read on Shabbatot (Sabbaths) in February include selections from Judges 4-5; Isaiah 6-7, 9; 2 Kings 11-12; and 1 Kings 5-6.

OTHER NOTES

If you feel a conversation with the rabbi on any topic would be of benefit to you, please be in touch to make an appointment. You can call or email Rabbi Joe.

Please know that we always seek congregant and guest participation in services throughout the year. If you are

interested in taking a role in a service, please be in touch with Rabbi Joe, Beth Young, Don Chodrow, Leah Farmer, or Lisa Warren. Roles include: reading Torah, reading Haftarah, delivering a Devar Torah, serving as Gabbai (the “MC” for the Torah service), reading an English reading, or having an honor. The Honors we usually confer in our services include being called up for an Aliyah (saying the blessings for the Torah or the Haftarah reading), serving as Hagbah (lift, hold, and/or carry the Torah), Gelilah (undressing and dressing the Torah), or Petichah Usegurah (opening and closing the Ark).

RABBINIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES

The Tanakh: Women of the Bible series of classes continues, and the conversations are lively, engaging, and fun. You are welcome to join in! 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. The next meeting of this class will be on February 1st at 2 pm at Beth El.

Torah Lishmah – a monthly text study session, often on Torah, 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

morning service scheduled, and in that case, will follow the service and any Kiddush that is offered. The next session scheduled will be Friday, March 14th after our Shabbat morning service (there is no February session due to other events on the calendar).

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 31st at 12:30, following the Shabbat morning service at Beth El. The session after that will be a Friday, February 27th at Beth El, followed by the rabbi-led Shabbat evening service.

February 2nd at THOI at 7 pm, I will offer a class session Everything Jewish You Wanted to Know About Sex & Relationships. This is open to members of both Beth El and THOI. I hope to see many of you at this session. Bring your questions – I will try to answer.

Starting Monday, January 19th at THOI, at 6-7:30 pm, I began a series of discussions for members of both congregations which I titled Torah With Commentary. The next meeting of this group will be February 16th at the same time and place. In each session we will look at a piece of Torah text, and at the various commentaries on that text, and discuss what we see. This technique is often described as ‘close reading’. The most famous of the commentators is Rashi, of course, but there are many others as well. To start off, we will use the text by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner called G-d was in this place and I, i did not know. This book takes one biblical verse and looks at it from the perspective of seven different commentators, also helping us to learn about the commentators. We will try to

focus on one commentator each time we meet, until we complete this book, then if there is sufficient interest, start our own reading and analysis of the text and commentaries.

Of course, 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 to be a Gabbai, please be in touch with the rabbi.

SHORTY

Shorty led services at THOI on the 9th of January, and did a very nice job. They also served a dinner prior to services to raise funds for their activities. Attendance was rather low. I hope that you will all support the activities of our youth group and the religious and pre-school students. These are the future, and we could not support or invest in anything that has more value.

Shorty led the services on the 16th of January at Beth El, and held their 9th annual ski weekend. The number of youth attending was down to about 55 this year, but they were a lively and fun-filled group. Shorty members did a great job on the service, and also led the entire group in a wonderful program to help feed and shelter the homeless during some of the coldest nights of the year.

Shorty will meet again in February. We will be in touch about a February date to meet. The next meeting date following February is tentatively set for 3/1 at 1-4 at Beth El. Informally, Shorty members may join Rabbi Joe in meeting and speaking to the youth from the Verona United Methodist Church Youth Group who will be visiting us on January 25th from 3 to 4:30 pm at Beth El.

CLOSING MESSAGE

We find ourselves now to be in the midst of the winter, experiencing some of the coldest days and what feel to be among the darkest, but we can take heart. We have moved past the solstice, and the days are already beginning to lengthen. That means there is more light each day (the days are

longer). May that be not only a matter of the clock and calendar for us; let it also be a metaphor for our situation, and an answer to our prayers that the world will move into more light, becoming a more godly place. Ken Yehi Ratzon – may it be G-d's will that it be so.

Rabbi Joe Blair
February 2009

REACHING THE RABBI & THE RABBI'S AVAILABILITY

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.

The office is not staffed and the building is generally closed when the rabbi is not in. Messages are 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.

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 immediate response.

If you wish to make an appointment to see the rabbi please feel free to call (886-4091) or email (rabbijoeb@hotmail.com). To minimize driving, he is grouping appointments in Staunton on Mondays and Fridays, and in Harrisonburg on Sundays and Thursdays. Other days may be possible – contact him to ask about that possibility.

Rabbi Joe's Email:

RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

Beth El Congregation

540-434-2744

Temple House of Israel

540-886-4091

Cell phone (Please use this # for emergencies)

434-981-3959

FEBRUARY YAHRZEITS

| | | | |
|----|----------------------|------|----------------------------------|
| 02 | Emmanuel Loewner | 1894 | Member |
| | Harry Weiss | | |
| | Morris Myers | | |
| 04 | Helen Margulis | | Simon Fred Simon's Mother |
| 05 | Fannie Wise | 1877 | Member |
| | Pauline Peck | | Beverly Zindler's Mother |
| 06 | Rae Trubitz | | Mark Trubitz' Mother |
| 09 | Fannie Goldsmith | 1933 | Member |
| | Hortense Wise | | |
| | Harry Moodnick | 1982 | Ann Mintzer's Brother |
| 10 | Jennie Auerbach | 1987 | Suzi Trubitz' Grandmother |
| | Ada Robinson | 1975 | Member (Josh Robinson's Mother) |
| 12 | Abel Miller | 1945 | Member |
| | Hannah Nusbaum | 1937 | |
| 14 | A J Goldenthal | | Member |
| | Rosella Wender | 2003 | Member |
| 15 | Fannie Loewner Ney | 1946 | Member (Eddie Ney's Grandmother) |
| 19 | Ruth Frankel | 1975 | Dave Frankel's Mother |
| 20 | Lillie Hirsch | 1956 | Member |
| | Anna Rodbell | | Herb Rodbell's Mother |
| | A J Goldenthal | | Marilyn Goldenthal's Husband |
| 21 | Adolph Wise | 1928 | Member |
| 22 | Emanuel Klingstein | 1971 | Member (Cap) |
| 24 | Charles Moore | | Cleda Frankel's Father |
| | Milton Mitchell | | Jerry Minskoff's Brother |
| 25 | Julia Hirsch Canning | 1945 | |
| | Samuel Loewner | 1894 | Founding Member |
| | | | Made the Ten Commandment |
| | | | Tablets above the |
| | | | Torahs. |
| | Herman Heller | | |
| | Sydney Nathanson | | |
| | Joseph Strauss | 1983 | Mark Strauss' Father |
| 26 | Ida Fielder | 2002 | Arnie Kahn's Mother-In -Law |
| 28 | Sam Lane | 2007 | Stuart Liss' Uncle |

DONATIONS

Janet Kohen Music Fund

Elissa & Melissa Sachs-Kohen and children

Gifts and Memorials:

Jessica MacWilliams

Bary & Ruth Berger

Steve & Katherine Stein

Rabbi Sue Elwell

Jerry & Ester Minskoff wishing Dan Bly: Get well and strong recovery!

JMU parents:

Brian Allen & Susan Barbash

Joel & Carol Breitner

Ellen Seidner

Alexine Spellman

Saul & Deborah Smith

Stephan & Ellen Greene

Neil & Regina Rose

Susan & Andrew Shapiro

Beverly & Lawrence Rosenman

Steven & Karen Brown

Jay & Celia Friedman

Yael Buchsbaum

Lisa Ratcliff

Richard Wexell & Lisa Horowitz

Margo & David Rosenberg

Jo Kline

Renee & Stephen Gould

Elliot & Antoinette Band

Phillip & Ashley Renick to the Beth El Pre-school program

In honor of Anne Mintzer's 96th birthday

Jerry & Esther Minskoff

Ron & Michelle Ornstein

The Clemons Family

Judy Freudenthal

In memory of Karen Vanderhoof, Sister of Dale Brothers

Elliott & Thea Golub

Judy Freudenthal

Ron & Michelle Ornstein

Eddie Ney & Frances Stewart

Jerry & Esther Minskoff

Yahrzeit:

Sheila Padoll in memory of Rabbi Burton L. Padoll, husband

Max Derechinsky in memory of Esther, wife Bill and Leslie Ney in memory of Bill's grandfather Alfred Ney

Mo, Mike, & Justin Goldberger in memory of Sadye Goldberger

Roberta Mondres in memory of Mollie Leder, mother and Irving Leder, father

Miriam Banker in memory of Richard Banker, husband, and father of

Roberta Stein and friend of Gary Stein Arnie Kahn in memory of Lester Kahn, father.

John Stewart in memory of Margaret Stein, mother and William Stein, father

Other donations:

Paper shredder: Jerry & Ester Minskoff

MEN'S CLUB NEWS

Thanks to all who have helped this past month with making and serving spaghetti dinner for 70 for the SHORTY ski weekend. We also served our famous specialty meal to both the Lion's club and the HARTS program on Tuesday Jan. 20. It has been a busy month. Thanks to all who have participated. Please let Ron (ornfam@comcast.net) or Bill Ney (Ney331@aol.com) know if you can be a participant in the service on Feb. 6.

Temple Beth El Helps HARTS

HARTS - Harrisonburg and Rockingham Thermal Shelter - is a mostly volunteer run shelter program that provides food and housing to the local homeless when the weather gets cold. The shelter is housed in different churches and congregations in the area, rotating on a weekly basis. This year Beth El partnered with Muhlenberg Lutheran Church when they hosted the shelter during the week on Jan. 19 - 25. Many of us helped out in a variety of ways. During the SHORTY ski weekend, the youth groupers made desserts and breakfast casseroles which Sherri delivered on Monday. Tuesday, the Men;s Club delivered a spaghetti dinner for 20, including Eddie's famous sauce, bread, spaghetti and

salad to the group. Thursday, the Sisterhood prepared desserts and served dinner. Saturday night, Ron and Kevin spent the night and were joined Sunday morning by other Men's Club members who cooked and served breakfast. For our first year, we ended up very actively involved in this mitvah project. Thanks to all who contributed. Now that we know more what is involved, we hope to continue assisting in the future. Thanks also to the Muhlenberg Congregation for welcoming us to assist them, and for hosting the program in their community activity center. Please join us on Friday, February 6th for the Annual Men's Club Shabbat service at Beth El at 7:30.

REMINDER!!!

PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR

BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD DINNER

SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 6:30 P.M.

A Popular Annual Event...Not to be Missed

Details to Follow in Early March

First Step Wish List

A guide to donations, in addition to non-perishable foods.

HOUSEHOLD SUPPLIES: toilet paper, tissues, hand soap, wet & dry Swiffers, sponges, dish detergent, kitchen and bathroom cleaners, trash bags, bath towels/wash cloths, pillows, single bed sheets/comforters, mattress pads (single), paper towels, plastic storage boxes, and kitchen towels.

PERSONAL SUPPLIES: flashlights/batteries, alarm clocks, toothbrushes/toothpaste, umbrellas, brush/comb, sanitary napkins, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, hats/gloves/scarves and lotions.

KID SUPPLIES: school and craft supplies, toys, books, games, diapers and baby items

GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR: groceries, gasoline, clothing, household items, eating out and movies

OFFICE SUPPLIES: stamps, permanent markers, binder clips, paper clips, tape and copy paper for laser ink and inkjet printers.

They also need 1 or 2 used computers for use by the residents in accessing the internet.

Items should be brought to the temple and deposited in the corner of the lobby near the rabbi's office.

SISTERHOOD

**Sisterhood meeting--Wed Feb 11 at 6pm.
We will be having pizza for dinner.**

Youth--Thank you to everyone that helped with our annual ski weekend, especially all of the congregants who housed teens on Friday night. It was as always, another successful weekend. Services were wonderful, skiing was certainly available and making food for HARTS was an awesome social action program. Thank you to Lisa Giovanetti for helping to organize and for the preparation for the cooking project!

Sherri Alt, SHORTY YOUTH ADVISOR

BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

In the ongoing focus on tikkun olam (healing the world), our sisterhood has chosen to put our efforts, this year, into feeding the hungry. We have organized workdays at the Volunteer Farm, have made meals for the HARTS program and have designed a new initiative for Beth El:

At many times throughout the year, congregation members choose to purchase flower arrangements to adorn the bima, in honor or memory of a loved one or an event. Instead of purchasing flowers, in the future, we encourage congregants to honor/remember a family member or friend, (or just support the food bank) by making a donation to the Sisterhood, in any amount, designated for feeding the hungry. Sisterhood will then donate the money, in your name, to The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. The contribution will be recognized from the bima and in the Bridge. Donations can be sent/given to Maureen Goldberger, Sisterhood Treasurer, c/o Beth El. Very soon, you will see a beautifully decorated food basket in the place where you often see flowers on the bima, indicating that a donation has been received. Remember that you can make sure that the basket is in place for ANY service.

The Food Basket on the Bima represents a donation to Sisterhood in support of their Blue Ridge Food Bank project. Donated by Judy and Stuart Liss in memory of Ruth Rotkin and the anniversary of Helen and Charles Levinson.

SCHOOL NEWS

We hope you have all been enjoying a wonderful beginning to 2009!

May you rejoice in the beauty of the nature that surrounds us this Tu B'Shevat! Our religious school students and families will celebrate Tu B'Shevat with a seder on Sunday, February 8th. We always look forward to this time of year as we taste the delicious fruits and nuts, plant trees, and celebrate and show our thanks to God.

Our religious school students have been working hard in preparation for the RS Shabbat Service all throughout January. Please join us on Friday, February 13th at Beth El Synagogue for the service. Our students will be leading us in prayer and song. In order to accommodate our younger students, services will begin early at 6:30 pm. Please come and support our students! We look forward to seeing you there!

L'Shalom!

Dara, Linda & Ruth

Board Members

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gary Stein | President |
| Jerry Minskoff | Vice President |
| Becky Mintzer | Secretary |
| Michelle Ornstein | Treasurer |
| Judy Freudenthal | Trustee |
| Andy Kohen | Trustee |
| Bill Ney | Trustee |
| Sherri Alt | Sisterhood President |
| Ron Ornstein | Men's Club President |
| Marlene Brumbaugh | At large member |
| Phil Renick | At large member |
| Margee Greenfield | Immediate Past President |

Bridge Editor

Elliott Golub
Elgolubret@comcast.net
181 Turkey Drive
McGaheysville, VA, 22840
540-289-5336

CALENDAR

| February 2009 | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 1 Religious School Bagel Bar | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 Men's Club Shabbat Service | 7 Parashat Beshalach |
| 8 Religious School Tu B'Shvat Seder Bagel Bar Joint Tu B'Shvat Seder at THOI 5:00 | 9 Tu B'Shvat New Year for Trees | 10 | 11 Sisterhood Meeting 6 pm | 12 | 13 Religious School Shabbat | 14 Parashat Yitro |
| Rabbi at CCAR Convention ----- | | | | NFTY Convention----- | | |
| 15 Religious School Bagel Bar <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">NFTY Convention-----</div> | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 Board Meeting 7:30 | 20 Lay Service | 21 Parashat Mishpatim |
| 22 Religious School Bagel Bar | 23 | 24 Rosh Chodesh Adar | 25 Rosh Chodesh Adar | 26 | 27 Lay Service | 28 Hanks Dinner Parashat Terumah |