



*October 2007*

***A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT***

Hello Beth El Family -

The summer has come and gone. I hope that it was a time of relaxation, of family playing/visiting and of a bit of renewal for you.

The holidays have come and gone. I hope that it was meaningful, reflective and spiritual for you. I know you realize how fortunate we are to have two such incredible rabbis to share that time with us. Their messages were important and heartfelt and it was a time of such warmth in our sanctuary. For those of us who grew up with professional (paid) choirs for the holidays, it is a treat to have (and to be a part of) our own little group. Did you know that the choir begins rehearsals in July for these 4 days? It is a true labor of love...well...most of the time.

So, here we are, at the beginning of our temple year. Our membership has changed a little; we welcome our new members, we mourn the passing of longtime members Harry Clayman and David Merlin.

We've had names come and go from our Mishabeyrach for Healing list. As my granddaughter sings "The Circle of Life" from her favorite movie, she has no idea how meaningful that is.

We all know that Beth El is a powerful community. We have a huge range of ages, talents, backgrounds and interests among us. I hope that this year we will all spend time getting to know each other, through our "Meet the Mishpocha" events at onegs and as we join in planning and participating in services, education, celebrations and all the other events of our year.

Please resolve, with me, to bury the, "Yes but, I'm already so busy." and "Yes but, someone else always does that." and all of the other "Yes but" responses in your repertoire, when you're invited to take part. We need you. It wouldn't be the same without you.

Margee

***CONGREGATIONAL LIST***

I will be getting the new congregation list assembled in the near future. Is the address and zip code on last year's list, current and accurate? Let me know if you have a new email address. With postage so expensive, if we can send notices and newsletters to you via email, we can help keep our budget balanced and expenses lower. Your email address is only used for temple communication, so please share it with us.

We have also started listing cell phone numbers. For many people, this is a better way to receive communication, so please send that to me too. If you send in a cell phone number, please also tell me who is the primary person who carries it. If you have college age student, I can send the temple newsletter via email or snail mail. Thank you.

Judy Freudenthal,  
867-5648 or  
[jfreudy@aol.com](mailto:jfreudy@aol.com)

***SISTERHOOD***

There will be a Sisterhood meeting Thursday, October 25 at 6:00 pm at the temple. We will be having pizza and salad for dinner. Also, anyone interested in knitting squares to make quilts for a social action project, call Sherri Alt 249-5463 for details! We are planning to knit as a group on Wednesday, October 10 at Joan Funston's home at 7:00 pm. Call me for details!

Sherri

## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,  
Shalom!

The High Holy Days have already come and gone. Sukkot is upon us, and it is Harvest season – Thanksgiving is just ahead. Religious school has begun, our schedule of services is underway, and activities are in full swing. Welcome to 5768!

## THE CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS

### TISHREI

Rosh Chodesh (the New Month) for Tishrei (the seventh month) took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, when we marked Rosh Hashanah, literally, the head of the year. On September 22<sup>nd</sup> we observed Yom Kippur (the day of atonement), and beginning September 27<sup>th</sup> we are celebrating Sukkot (the harvest festival). Of course, in the Jewish calendar, each day begins at sunset, so we start our observances at sundown of the preceding secular calendar day (so September 12<sup>th</sup> for Rosh Hashanah, September 21<sup>st</sup> for Yom Kippur, and September 26<sup>th</sup> for Sukkot). Tishrei ends on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, and the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of October are Rosh Chodesh for Cheshvan. Cheshvan continues until the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, and Rosh Chodesh for Kislev is on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November.

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Tishrei) we are to observe a festival of seven days. This is Sukkot, the Harvest festival, also known as the Feast of Booths, after the Sukkah (hut) in which we are to dwell. This holiday began on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, and will run to October 4<sup>th</sup>, followed immediately by Simchat Torah on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Simchat Torah is the holiday of rejoicing in the Torah, and the day on which we conclude and begin once again the regular cycle of reading the Torah.

This year our celebration of Simchat Torah is a particularly significant one for our congregation because we have been reading the Torah on a triennial cycle (1/3 of each weekly portion in each year), and this will mark the completion of the full three year cycle. This means that our congregation will have fully completed reading all of the Torah in the three years leading up to this celebration. How exciting, and what a great reason to celebrate!

## HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE: The Religious School celebration of Sukkot will take place on September 30<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 11 am. There will also be a dinner in the Sukkah on MONDAY, October 1<sup>st</sup> at THOI.

Simchat Torah will be celebrated on Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at THOI. The service will begin at 7:30 pm. During the service, we will celebrate the holiday, and also mark the Consecration of our new Religious School Students. All Religious school students and their families are invited to attend (there will be no separate Religious school celebration of this holiday). Following the service, there will be a brief ceremony of re-dedication of the Ben Raybin Library, followed by the Oneg.

The B'nai Mitzvah celebration of Sean Miller will take place at THOI on October 19<sup>th</sup> (7:30 pm) and 20<sup>th</sup> (10 am).

We will be presenting a program in the Shenandoah Valley Holocaust Education series in October. At 7 pm on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> at THOI, and again at 1 pm on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> at Beth El, we will have a performance of a one-woman show, **Presenting Corrie ten Boom**. Award-winning actress Evelyn Hinds will educate, entertain, and move us as we 'meet' this amazing righteous gentile, and learn her story.

The first Talmud Torah Limud (Study of Torah) will be on October 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at Beth El. You are welcome to bring your dinner and eat while we study and discuss Torah, up until just before the start of the Shabbat service beginning at 7:30.

## TORAH PARASHIOT

Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include: Vezot Habrachah, Bereshit, Noach, Lech Lecha, Vayera, and Chayei Sarah.. These are drawn from Devarim (Deuteronomy) 33-34, and Bereshit (Genesis) 1-22.

Haftarot include readings from Isaiah chapters 40-43 and 66, 2 Kings 4, and 1 Kings 1.

## MEN'S CLUB

1. Sukkot - Deconstruction around 10:30 on Oct. 7 - Let Kevin G. know, or just show up.
2. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, October 10, 6:30 for a meal (ordering in...any suggestions ?) and a movie (Bary-you pick) and a bit of a meeting.  
BARY BERGERS HOUSE - 3315 Argyle Court 574-0440  
**Directions:** 33 East, Right on Massanetta Springs Rd.(Quarles) past Sunnyside, cross Shen Lake rd., veer around the lake, but continue straight until Argyle Court and turn right (Brick house w/green shutters)

RSVP to any or all of the above to Ron  
(ornfam@comcast.net)

PS - Please let anyone you know who does not have internet about the various Men's club activities listed above - maybe we can buddy up so that we can be more sure the messages get to everyone (Eddie, Herb, Milton, others)

## CARING COMMITTEE

A brief reminder: The Sisterhood now has a committee to coordinate assistance as needed for Beth El community members. While we often do step forward when others require help, the Sisterhood wants to make sure that all members of our community are able to call on others when the need arises. Esther Minskoff is the chair person and initial contact person at this time. If you are not able to reach Esther, please contact Michelle Ornstein. Other committee members are Dale Brothers and Gale Clemons. The purpose of the committee is to coordinate meals, visits, and services as needed, and all Temple members are encouraged to volunteer when possible. We understand that some individuals may not require or wish this contact; however, members are encouraged to contact Esther if assistance is needed by a Temple member.

## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

L'Shanah Tovah!

We are glad to be back in full swing in our Religious School instruction. The students have all displayed positive energy and we are looking forward to an excellent year. We hope everyone will join us for the Consecration Service when we welcome our new students during the Simchat Torah service at Temple House of Israel on Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>.

We plan to have a family education event celebrating our heritage with an "Ellis Island Day" on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. We will also enjoy a Jewish food experience during this event. Please let Ruth Berger (ruthberger@comcast.net) or Linda Kohn (lin5ko@aol.com) know if there are any ideas, stories, artifacts, or memorabilia you would like to share. Please plan to join us during this event and share a special family recipe for a potluck tasting of Jewish food.

*Wishing you peace in 5768 –  
Dara, Linda & Ruth*

## MEET THE MISHPOCHA

"Meet the Mishpocha" is an opportunity that we began last year, for our members to share their journeys to Beth El. We had several members address the congregation at services, as we took our first stab at this and learned so much about them, about who they are and about how they got here. When we received the results of our survey, we had the suggestion that, instead of during the service (and instead of or in addition to a d'var Torah), we might try it as a part of our oneg Shabbats, after rabbi-led services. What a great idea! Everyone can grab a piece of challah, other goodies and a cup of coffee or juice, and relax as we listen (for 10 minutes or so) to a journey. This is VERY informal and there are no specific expectations or guidelines. If you would be willing to share what brought you to Beth El or if you have any questions or concerns, please see Margee.

## A LITTLE JEWISH HUMOR

Newish Jewish Words:

**Jewbilation** (n.) Pride in finding out that one's favorite celebrity is Jewish.

**Santa-shmanta** (n.) The explanation Jewish children get for why they celebrate Hanukkah instead of Christmas.

**Matzilation** (v.) Smashing a piece of matzo to bits while trying to butter it.

**Bubbegum** (n.) Candy one's mother gives to her grandchildren that she never gave to her own children.

S M T W T F S

	1	2	3	4	5 Lay Service @ 7:30 pm (Simchat Torah@THOI)	6
7 RS & Bagel Bar	8	9	10 Men's Club mtg @ 6:30 pm Sisterhood knitting @ 7	11	12 Rabbi-led Service @ 7:30 pm	13
14 RS & Bagel Bar	15	16	17	18 Board Meeting	19 Lay Service @ 7:30 pm	20
21 RS & Bagel Bar SV Holocaust Project @ 1 pm	22	23	24	25 Sisterhood mtg @ 6:00 pm	26 Torah Study @ 6:30 pm Rabbi-led Service @ 7:30 pm	27
28 RS & Bagel Bar	29	30	31			



October 2007



Yahrzeits

- |    |                                |    |   |    |  |
|----|--------------------------------|----|---|----|--|
| 01 | Carrye Kohen<br>Annette Biatch | 15 | Hattie Hirsch<br>Milton Trubitz<br>Sarah Lovinger | 22 | Ida Zindler<br>Dorothy D Kaiser          |
| 02 | David Rubin                    | 16 | Miriam Brooslin Cohen                             | 25 | Leon Hirsch<br>Helen Wise<br>Sarah Lebin |
| 05 | Jack Lichtenstein              | 17 | Rosa Wise   | 26 | Rosalie Amberg                           |
| 07 | Paige Nash                     | 18 | Harriet Gould                                     | 27 | Oscar Rodbell<br>Marilyn Goldenthal      |
| 08 | Leonard Raff                   | 19 | Rabbi Edward L. Israel<br>Mabel Rodbell           | 29 | Edith Bersson                            |
| 09 | Samuel Metzger                 | 20 | Barbara M Levin<br>Ruth Shwayder                  | 31 | Amalie G Wise                            |
| 12 | Betty Nemoytin                 |    |   |    |  |
| 13 | Israel Smith<br>Harry Katzen   |    |   |    |  |

*Beth El Congregation is grateful for the following generous donations:*

**To the General Fund**

- Anne Mintzer - Wishing a speedy recovery for Shirley Merlin

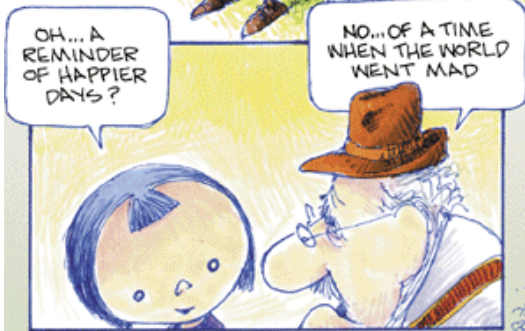
**To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund**

- Eddie Ney - In memory of Beth Ney (Eddie's Mother).
- Keith Nash - In memory of Paige Nash (Keith's Mother).
- Joyce & Erwin Helbraun - In memory of Vera Levine & Lila Hyman (Joyce's Sisters)
- Thea & Elliott Golub - In memory of Hyman Golub (Elliott's Father), Charles Schweitzer (Thea's Father), and Judith Levine Schweitzer (Thea's Mother)

- Evelyn & Larry Williams
- Ruth Clayman
- John & Nancy Stewart
- Erwin & Joyce Helbraun
- Les & Becky Mintzer
- Linda & Peter Kohn
- Marshall, Lynn, Jacob & Rachel Kohen
- Lenore Ann Price
- The Greenfield & Robles Families
- Herbert Rodbell
- Thea & Elliott Golub
- Andy & Janet Kohen
- Bill & Leslie Ney
- Marlene Brumbaugh & Sherri Alt
- Anne Mintzer

**High Holiday Visitor Donations & Pledges**

- Sadie Bialock
- Joshua & MaryBeth Neckowitz
- Sulamith Schmacher
- Theresa & Daniel Emmerman
- Aaron Neckowitz
- Stuart & Judy Liss
- Mona Wolf
- Roberta Mondres
- Bev & Leo Zindler
- Robert Lantz
- Brian & Yvonne Rodbell
- Judy Freudenthal
- Franklin & Candy Blatt
- Eddie Ney
- The Neckowitz Family
- Estelle & Joshua Robinson
- Sheila Padoll
- Arnold Kahn
- Jerry & Esther Minskoff
- Sadie Bialock
- Cindy Baron
- Ron, Michelle, Joel & Naomi Ornstein
- Chuck Slott
- The Clemons Family



"IMAGINE YOURSELF IN A LAND WHERE YOUR COUNTRYMEN FOLLOWED THE VOICE OF POLITICAL EXTREMISTS WHO DIDN'T LIKE YOUR RELIGION. IMAGINE HAVING EVERYTHING TAKEN FROM YOU, YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY SENT TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP AS SLAVE LABORERS, THEN SYSTEMATICALLY MURDERED. IN THIS PLACE, THEY EVEN TAKE YOUR NAME AND REPLACE IT WITH A NUMBER TATTOOED ON YOUR ARM.

IT WAS CALLED THE HOLOCAUST, WHEN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE PERISHED JUST BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH..."



NON SEQUITOR  
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### 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

### THANK YOU FROM ANNE

My compliments to all the chefs who provided my delicious meals, also to those who took me out. A special thanks to Esther Minskoff who chaired the new Temple Caring Committee, and to all the members who made my life a little easier. This is a great service you are doing for our members who need some extra care.

Sincerely,  
Anne Mintzer

Today, we are taught, is the birthday of the world, the anniversary of creation. G-d is viewed as the sovereign, sitting on the throne of justice and judgment, writing our fate in the books of life and death. Our deeds are weighed, our souls are judged, our worth is measured, our future determined. Which of us is confident we will not be found lacking? Which of us has been completely righteous, without sin or transgression, blameless, and without error? Certainly, I would not dare to think of myself in that category. I am an imperfect human being. I err frequently.

But all is not lost. Even now, at the holy days, if we strive, we can accomplish Teshuvah, turning and returning. We can repent and make amends. We can seek and grant forgiveness. We can repair the damages, heal the injuries, seek forgiveness for our trespasses, and forgive those who have trespassed against us. In short, we can open our hearts, perform Teshuvah, and be better than we were. This requires a sincere effort in all of these tasks and aspects. Not one, not two, not some, but all. It is not enough to make amends and repent. Nor can we simply seek forgiveness for what we have done that injured others. A key component of this process is sincerely to grant forgiveness. Easier said than done. I find that often, the most difficult thing of all of these to do is to forgive. As hard as it is to say 'I am sorry', it is harder still truly to forgive.

I am human - we all are - and we all have a tendency to nurse our hurts, to hold on to our grudges. This is not healthy. In fact, this is not only fruitless, it is downright self-destructive. Rabbi Harold Kushner tells of a woman who approached him after a high holiday sermon on forgiveness. She reminded Kushner that her husband had abandoned her, leaving her to raise two small children by herself. She demanded, angrily, "After he did all that to me, you want me to forgive him for what he did?" Kushner replied, "Yes, I want you to forgive him. Not to excuse him, not to say that what he did was acceptable, but to forgive him as a way of saying that someone who would do that has no right to live inside your head, any more than he has a right to live inside your house. Kushner's point is valid, showing us that forgiveness is not a favor we do for the person who offended or injured us. It is a favor we do for *ourselves*, a way of cleansing our soul of thoughts and memories that lead us to see ourselves as a victim, and make our life less enjoyable than it is or could be.

When we understand that we have little choice as to what other people do, but we can ALWAYS choose how we will *respond* to what they do, we are empowered and able to let go of the embittering memories. We can then enter the new year cleansed and refreshed, free of the burden of carrying their actions in our heart and soul.

One more step: as difficult as forgiveness is, an even more difficult task, in my experience, is forgiving oneself. Like many of us, I am my own harshest critic. I seem to never forget or let go of my failures, I can't overlook my mistakes, I hold on to and remember all that I do that does not work or

does not meet my own expectations. Being very much human, I have lots to criticize in myself. I cannot count my errors and faults in the course of a week just on my fingers and toes. At times I feel that it would take a 10 digit adding machine with paper tape to do so! I am all too aware of my many flaws and mistakes.

We cannot merely forget these flaws and mistakes, and we cannot simply say that the slate is wiped clean and we will go forward into the new year, doing the same things again! No. We know in our hearts that is not the way, it will not work. Instead, once we have sincerely repented for what we have done, made amends as best we can, and truly asked forgiveness of others, then we are ready to do the hard work. *Only then* may we seek to do for ourselves that which we do for others: we must forgive ourselves for our own errors and transgressions. In this way we can free ourselves from a crushing encumbrance that drags our soul down, and free ourselves of the burden. At that point, we are prepared to seek G-d, and to ask for forgiveness from the divine ruler.

There is a huge benefit to us for this effort. This feeling of freedom, of interacting with the divine, is the source of Joy. Not happiness, for that is fleeting. Not pleasure, which is tied to the physical world and the actions of others. Joy, the sense of being at one with creation, in communion with the divine, at peace with oneself. The tools are available to us, and we can take advantage of them to reach Joy. We are flawed, but in a manner of thinking, the imperfections we contain are the necessary precursors to seek and find Joy. It only remains for us to choose to seek Joy amidst imperfection.

All the structured discourse of the philosophers, all the patterned logic of the theologians was for naught. All the classes on morality, the reflections on situational ethics, the values based decision making, even the pilpul of the Talmud; and it all came down to just this. The final arbiter of principle was kishkes. How simple. And how do you know? Because your kishkes – your guts – tell you so.

The bottom line, the take away message is that G-d has provided for us two ways to seek Joy: by choosing so as not to err, and by seeking Teshuvah when we do err. Joy is available to us even when we err. How liberating! What a great gift! Praise be to G-d for creating us in such a way that we may find Joy, even when we fail in the first instance.

May all of you have a shanah tovah u'metukah, and a gut, gebencht, gezunt yor, *and may you find and experience much Joy.*

*This sermon was edited due to space limitations. Contact Rabbi Joe for the unedited version.*