

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

The purpose of this congregation shall be to worship God in accordance with the faith of Judaism; to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage; to strengthen the ties within the Jewish community; to strengthen the bonds of loyalty with the Jewish people everywhere; to bring nearer the Dominion of God on earth through an emphasis of the principles of righteousness and harmony in society at large.

March 2010

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Our Beth El Family:

Well, we approaching March, and spring (rather than snow) should be in the air. March is certainly going to be busy, with preparations in our families and Religious School underway for Passover at the end of the month. The board and Sisterhood are planning an adult party on the evening of March 20, so I hope we have a good turn-out for that. And don't forget our Passover Community Seder on Monday, March 29.

At High Holy Days services I noted that we have some very special people in our congregation. I'd like to go on with that thought and mention a couple more who have been brought to our attention recently. Dr. Eric Kramer of RMH's Emergency Department spent a week in Haiti as part of a team evaluating orphanages in the region and providing medical assistance as needed. A true example of Tikkun Olam

We should also thank Judy Liss for her work in organizing our fundraising dinner that was held on February 20. I think it was a success in every way—the food, the numbers involved, and the socializing. My thanks also go out to the members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pi, the Jewish sorority at JMU for their enthusiastic help in setting up the social hall and serving during the dinner. We have certainly come a long way in forging a lasting relationship with the students at the University.

For those of you who get this issue of the Bridge before the end of February, Please don't forget the Purim musical that's going to be performed by our Religious School students on Sunday, February 28.

I wish you all a happy and healthy Passover.

Gary

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends,
Shalom. I don't know about you, but I am tired of snow. I am looking forward to spring. ☺ Enjoy the newsletter.

THE CALENDAR

ADAR → NISAN (MARCH)

Adar (a twenty-nine day month) began February 15th, and runs until March 15th. Nisan begins on March 16th, and runs until April 14th. Rosh Chodesh for Nisan (a thirty day month) is March 16th. Rosh Chodesh for Iyar (a twenty-nine day month) will be March 14th and 15th.

HOLIDAYS

March 1st is known as Adar 15, Shushan Purim, observed a day later because the news of the proclamation to save the Jews could not be brought into the walled city of Shushan until the following morning (it arrived after the gates were locked for the night). This is a 'second chance' to observe Purim.

The day of March 29th is Nisan 14, Erev Passover, and traditionally Jews observe the Ta'anit Bechorot, the fast of the first born. This is a sunup to sundown fast, unless one participates in a Seudat Mitzvah, a meal in celebration of a mitzvah, such as a Brit Milah (circumcision), chuppah (marriage), or completion of a significant body of material one has been studying, in which case the celebration outweighs the fast. The fast ends with the beginning of the Pesach seder.

Prior to Passover, there is a custom of cleaning the house, and placing all chametz (things that are leavened) in closed and sealed spaces. Then, one can authorize the rabbi to sell these items on their behalf through an installment contract sale which starts prior to Passover and is to be completed just after Passover ends (so we don't conduct business on a holiday). If the contract is not fulfilled to the letter, it is written to become null and void, so the possession of the materials covered reverts

to the original owner at that time. If you are interested in such a contract for sale of chametz, please speak to Rabbi Joe.

In the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan we arrive at Pesach/Passover. The first seder will begin with sundown on Monday evening, March 29th, the 15th day of Nisan, which is the day of the full moon. This year, the first community seder will be at Beth El, at 6 pm. The second night seder will be on March 30th at 6 pm at THOI. (Look for more information to be sent out soon.) Pesach runs until sundown on the evening of April 6th, which is the beginning of the 23rd of Nisan.

Starting the night of the second seder of Passover, March 30th, we begin to count the Omer, leading us to connect Passover and Redemption to Shavuot and Revelation seven weeks later.

Leading up to Passover there are five special named Shabbatot (Sabbaths). We began with Shabbat Shekalim (Half-Shekel tax) on February 13th, and continued with Shabbat Zachor (Rememberance of Amalek) on the 27th. March 6th will be Shabbat Parah (the red heifer), the 13th is Shabbat HaChodesh (Sabbath of the month), and the 27th is Shabbat Hagadol (the great Sabbath, leading up to Passover).

TORAH PARASHIOT

The Torah parashiot (Torah portions) read for the period covered by this newsletter include the following:

Torah Parashiot will be Ki Tisa, Vayakhel-Pekudei, Vayikra, and Tzav, drawn from Shemot (Ex.) 30:11-340:38; Vayikra (Lev.) 1:1-8:36; and special readings for the named Shabbatot of Bamidbar (Num.) 19:1-22, and Shemot (Ex.) 12:1-20.

Haftarot read on Shabbatot (Sabbaths) in March include selections from Ezekiel 36 (Shabbat Parah), 45-46 (Shabbat HaChodesh); Isaiah 43-44; and Malachi 3 (Shabbat Hagadol).

RABBINIC/EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Tuesday, March 2nd there are two food-related events at THOI. From 10-1 there is a cooking class led by Tina Wasserman, cookbook author and food historian. Later, from 7 pm on there is a lecture with tastings by Ms. Wasserman. The lecture will trace the movement of Jews from Spain in 1492 (expelled at the time of the Inquisition), where they went, and what foods they brought with them. The tastings will follow some of their journey. There is a fee for both events; if interested please contact Beth Young at 885-1481.

Thursday March 4th at noon to 1:30 the Interfaith Association will meet at EMU's West Dining room. The program will be entitled "Caught in the Net: internet addictions and how they affect our community". Lunch is available – arrive early and go through the cafeteria line. For questions about the Interfaith Association, please contact Rabbi Joe.

Later, at 7 pm on the 4th at Beth El, is the next Adult Education session, based on the lectures of Dr. AJ Levine. Last month we looked at the book of Judges, and how it presaged the need to move to a monarchy for stability. This month we begin the establishment of the monarchy. Rabbi Joe will facilitate a discussion following the video lectures.

Friday, March 5th at 6-7 pm at Beth El is the next Family Shabbat service. This is an early and shorter service, geared to those with children. We sing, share a story, and recite prayers together to celebrate Shabbat. Come join us. [Please note: a regular rabbi-led Shabbat service will follow Family Shabbat, at 7:30 pm.]

Sunday, March 7th at 2 pm at Beth El we will present the movie based on the book Hannah's Suitcase as part of the Shenandoah Valley Holocaust Education Project (SVHEP). You may recall that this book was what inspired Rachel Berger to sell the charms to help fund a holocaust education program in Japan a few years ago. This will be quite appropriate for school age children, from all I can determine. You are welcome to invite anyone who may wish to join us; friends, colleagues, neighbors,

and others. We will sit in the social hall and watch on the television or a projection screen. Perhaps we will even have popcorn and drinks! There is no fee, and all are welcome.

Saturday, March 13th is the next scheduled Kinderlachen session at THOI. It will be at 10 am. Kinderlachen is a preschool play group with a little Jewish content, open to anyone in our area who wishes to attend. Please RSVP to Rabbi Joe – there is a minimum of three children attending for the session to take place. The focus for this month will be Passover.

Sunday March 14th is the start of Daylight savings time!

Sunday, March 14th or Thursday March 18th will be a Master Read for Number the Stars as part of the SVHEP events. The precise location, date and time, will be announced soon. This will help prepare audience members to know what to expect when they see the play, and let them in on the creative process of developing the characters and motivation for the actors.

Friday through Sunday, March 19th-21st is the Staunton Jewish Film Festival. Showings of the nine films included will all be at Mary Baldwin College in the Francis Auditorium. Individual tickets are \$8, \$5 for students (but free for students with a Mary Baldwin Id), and a full festival pass will be \$55. The pass is a 24% saving over individual tickets, and an excellent deal. More information on the films will be sent out soon, so watch for it, and plan to go.

The play Number the Stars will be performed at Skyline Middle School on Thursday March 25th and Friday the 26th at 7 pm, and on Saturday March 27th at 2 pm. There is a 'what to watch for' presentation prior to the matinee presentation. It is just possible that Lois Lowry will attend the performance on March 26th, and may agree to say a few words.

Sunday afternoon, March 28th, at 2-3 pm at Beth El is the next Women in the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) discussion. All are welcome to join in our conversation. We will return to the book of Shemot/Exodus, and the midwives

Shifrah and Puah, Tziporah (wife of Moses), then return to Miriam (as time permits).

Sunday, February 28th Purim Celebration starting at 10:30 am at Beth El: Rabbi Joe's speedy (abbreviated) Megillah reading, the Religious school Purim Performance, and the Purim Carnival with Shorty (youth group) and JMU Jewish sorority and fraternity members operating the games and activities. Come to hear the Megillah, wear a costume, and have fun!

After you have been tuckered out with the jollity of Purim, come join a book discussion at THOI at 6 pm. ☺ We began a discussion group around a book entitled "Witnesses to the One: The Spiritual History of the Shema" by Rabbi Joseph B. Meszler. The publisher is Jewish Lights Publishing

(www.Jewishlights.com) This book looks at the Shema through the eyes of Jewish thinkers through the ages (something like the book "G-d was in this place, and I, i did not know" by Lawrence Kushner). We have met twice, and the conversations were really amazing and wonderful both times. You can easily catch up as the chapters are only about a dozen pages each and an easy read. All who are interested in this discussion are welcome to join in; you do not need to have attended the prior discussions. I think you will find this book worth reading. I expect to meet more or less every other week for an hour and a half or two hours to discuss one of the ten thinkers and/or chapters. This is open to congregants from both THOI and Beth El, and anyone else who wishes to participate. We will meet on Sunday evening February 28th at THOI at 6 pm for the third meeting – please join us. I will announce the time and date for the next meeting at that session, or call me (Rabbi Joe) for information about following dates.

Monday March 29th is the first night community Seder at Beth El. The 20th is the second night seder at THOI. Look for more information about reservations, payment, and the menu to be out soon, if it is not already.

At this point, we are looking at just over a year to the planned congregational trip to Israel, open to members of both Beth El and THOI, as well as family and friends who would

want to join us. This trip is planned to take place in late February or March of 2011. We now have nine people in the two congregations who have expressed interest. The group rate will be lower if we have more people traveling with us. If you think this sounds interesting, please speak to me.

As you can see, it is pretty busy! Please join in and make it happen with us. ☺

PASTORAL CARE

If you feel a conversation or meeting 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 as listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Also, if you are ill, or know someone who may be, and might like a visit or call, please let Rabbi Joe know so he can be in touch.

SERVICE PARTICIPATION

Please know that we seek congregant and guest participation in services throughout the year. If you are interested in leading a lay service, or in taking a role in a service, please be in touch with Margee Greenfield, Sherri Alt, or Gary Stein. You are also welcome to talk with Rabbi Joe about participation. If you are interested in singing at our services, please be in touch with Ron Ornstein our able coordinator for music at worship services.

OTHER RITUAL MATTERS

Celebrations: If you are interested in studying for and celebrating an adult B'nai Mitzvah, or in learning to leyn (read/chant) Torah and/or Haftarah, or to lead services, or serve as a gabbai, please be in touch with the rabbi.

Jewish Study: If you are interested in or wish to consider conversion, or you just want to learn more about Judaism (whether you are Jewish or not), please be in touch with the rabbi.

Caring Committee: This group has been doing wonderful things in helping and supporting those in our community who may have some needs for assistance or support. If

you can volunteer, please speak with Esther Minskoff, Ron Ornstein, or Sherri Alt. As always, if you know of someone who is ill, or who might wish to be contacted, please also let Rabbi Joe know about that.

Chevrah Kadishah: This group functions to prepare and dress a body for burial in accordance with the Halachic (Jewish legal) requirements, showing care and concern for the deceased. Members are not publicly acknowledged nor is it made public who has been involved in this mitzvah. Thank G-d, we have not had too many opportunities to respond, but we do need to be ready when the need arises. If you have any interest in participating in performing this mitzvah, please speak with Rabbi Joe.

CLOSING MESSAGE

We have had a lot of illness, loss, and hardship among our community members. Let us all pray for spring to arrive soon, with warmer weather and a sense of hope that we will all find things easier in every way.

Rabbi Joe Blair
March 2010

REACHING THE RABBI & THE RABBI'S AVAILABILITY

The rabbi is available by appointment. If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call to set an appointment time. In that way, the rabbi will be able to respond and give you his full attention, as you deserve. Please note: the rabbi does not read or respond to email on Shabbat or holidays.

The rabbi may be contacted by telephone. To do so, please call the cell phone number listed here: if you reach voicemail, please leave a message, speaking clearly, with your name, telephone numbers, the topic, and if an emergency, please be sure to express the need for an urgent response. The rabbi will respond as soon as possible.

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

MARCH YAHRZEITS

01	Ivan Lantz		Bob Lantz' Father
03	Julias Wise	1954	Member
	Mary Frank Loewner	1945	
04	Joshua Rabinowitz		
05	Bertha Ney	1943	Member
	Lilly Schwartz		Member
	Shirley Dobin	1982	Gale Clemons Mother
	Rosalie Hirsch	1988	
06	Joseph Berney		Member
	Hetty Marrick	1972	
07	Maurice Scheuer	1935	Member
08	Sadie Derechensky		Max's Wife
09	Rae Slater	1950	Member
10	Baruch Ney	1915	Member The Original B. Ney

	Merwin Kalman		Brian Kalman's Father
	Phyllis Rodbell		Herb Rodbell's Wife
12	Joe Kimmel	1974	Member
14	Nathan Minskoff		Jerry Minskoff's Father
	Anna Rodbell	1959	Herb Rodbell's Mother
	Lenore White		Mike White's Mother
15	Jonathan Freudenthal		Judy Freudenthal's Brother
	Mary Blatt	1994	Frank Blatt's Mother
16	Louis Amber	1903	
18	Rose Solomon	1903	
19	Joseph Huffman		Mildred Rubin's Father
	Louise Perlman	1997	Milton Perlman's Wife
20	Augusta Loewner	1883	Member
	Rabbi Bernard Bloom		Rabbi at Beth El
21	Morton Nusbaum		Member
	Flossie Hollander	1888	Child
22	Sigmund Wise	1909	Member
	Esther Clayman	1981	Harry Clayman's Mother
	Abraham Bersson		Bob Bersson's Father
23	William Friddle	1958	Member
	Michael Mintzer	1976	Anne Mintzer's Husband
	Aaron Sissman		
	Cornelia Oestreicher	1918	Member
24	Esther Miller	1951	Member
25	Charles Schwalb		Steve Schwalb's Father
	Lilly Schwartz	1983	Member
26	Phillip Feig		Betty Nemoytin's Father
27	Beatrice Schwalb	1982	Steve Schwalb's Mother
29	Fanny Spivak		
	Max Sissman		
31	Rabbi David Fazon		Dave Frankel's Grandfather
	Margot Stein		Gary Stein's Mother
	George Goldberg	2005	Dave Merlin's Friend

DONATIONS

Beth El Congregation is grateful for the following generous donations:

Yarheits:

Eddie Ney in honor of his grandmother, Fannie Ney
 Max Derechinsky in honor of his sister, Fanny Cohen

JMU parents:

Mr. & Mrs. Murray S. Rosenbach
 Gini Blostein-Wolf & Franklin Wolf

In honor of Justin Goldberger for his Amazing performance as the Amazing Joseph.

Jerry and Esther Minskoff.

MEN'S CLUB

The Men's Club has been busy this past month or so, with dinners for the SHORTY Ski weekend and the Lion's Club along with leading the Shabbat Service on Feb. 26. Coming in March we have two more dinners to serve, Tuesday, March 2nd is our final Lion's Club spaghetti dinner, and Tuesday March 23rd we will be preparing a spaghetti dinner for HARTS. This date is a change from previous notices, so please mark your calendars. We will meet at the Temple around 5:00 to prepare the food and bring it over to Asbury UM around 6:30 or so. We'd like to have a few men to help serve and eat with the HARTS guests until around 8:30 or so. We also need a few men (1-2 per night) willing to spend the night at the shelter with the guests and help to serve breakfast on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights, (March 22-24) If you can assist with any of these opportunities, let Ron Ornstein (ornfam@comcast.net) know. Additional upcoming Men's Club events include April 25 - our annual Brotherhood-Sisterhood dinner in which we invite a local church to join us for a meal, fellowship and discussion, our May 27th dinner meeting at Clementines at 6PM and the annual Temple spring picnic on June 6th, 1:30 - 4:00 (after the yard sale that morning). Also save March 20 for our first annual "give ourselves a party" party. (details tba) As always, please join us in as many of these events as you can come to and let's continue enjoying spending time with each other.

Helping HARTS , Our Community Based Homeless Shelter

Beth El Congregation will be partnering with Asbury United Methodist Church (the host church) and McGaheysville United Methodist Church, to provide meals and service to the HARTS program the week of March 22-29. Our turn will be Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (March 22-24) and your help will be most appreciated. Monday evening Beth El Sisterhood will be providing and serving the meal, so please contact Sherri Alt (249-5463) if you can contribute a dish or time or both. Tuesday evening the Men's Club will be meeting at the Temple to prepare our famous spaghetti dinner to bring over, so contact Ron Ornstein (434-8695) if you'd like to join in that day. Wednesday evening we'll do an everybody help night, so contact Chuck Slott (433-8436) if you can provide food, time or both for that evening. Each evening, we'll also bring simple breakfast foods for the next morning. We are also looking for 1-2 people to spend the night at the shelter each of those nights, and if you would like more information about that part, contact Ron who can fill you in. The HARTS program has been fully utilized this difficult winter by our areas homeless population. The fact that we can offer this service speaks volumes about our community and I look forward to this opportunity for us to contribute once again.

SISTERHOOD

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday March 20 We are hosting an UN-Bar Mitzvah Dance Party! We have all been cooped inside long enough--mark the calendar to come to a lovely adult relaxing evening with a DJ and dancing and enjoying each other's company. More information to come!!!

SHORTY-- Thank you so much to all of the congregants who housed teens for our ski weekend in January. We would also like to thank Men's Club for Shabbat dinner and

Sisterhood for hot chocolate and dinner after skiing! To all that helped with the weekend we thank you, it was a fantastic weekend, we heard nothing but awesome comments from our guests. We hosted youth groups from Newport News, Norfolk, Richmond, Roanoke and Charlottesville. My favorite comments are always how such a small community can do such large things! I would also like to thank Joel Ornstein, Assistant Advisor and Becky Mintzer Advisor in Training!!

Sherri Alt Youth Advisor

SCHOOL NEWS

Greetings from the Religious School!

That was a lot of snow (and I'm told there might be more in our near future)! Although we did not get to enjoy our Tu B'Shevat seder together because of the weather, it's always nice to know that Tu B'Shevat will be back next year! I'd like to thank Marie Landes and Ronn Daniel for their effort in trying to make the seder happen for us – two weeks in a row. And once we were back in classes, Marie Landes brought us seeds and pots for our students to grow parsley plants which will start growing in time for Pesach. The students had lots of fun preparing their plants! Please mark your calendars for our Model Passover Seder, which we will be enjoying on Sunday, March 21st, the week before our Passover break.

Once the snow stopped, we were able to welcome a new student to our school in the Alef classroom – Allison Sokoloff. It's so wonderful to have so many happy, eager new learners in

our midst! Our community has grown to 26 students K - 7th (plus Ms. Roberta teaches a bunch of preschoolers every Sunday too!).

During all of that snow mess, I'm sorry to say that Ms. Roberta was in the hospital; however, I'm thrilled to say that she responded well to all of our prayers for her because she was back as soon as school started up again and it was "on with the show". So, I hope you will all join us for our Purim celebration on February 28th at 10:30 am when we will have a Purim musical. Also, our Alef teacher, Morah Becca, is working with her sorority – Sigma Alpha Epsilon Phi and with SHORTY in order to create a great Purim carnival after the musical this year. We hope to see you there!

L'Shalom,
Dara Hall, Principal
433-5596

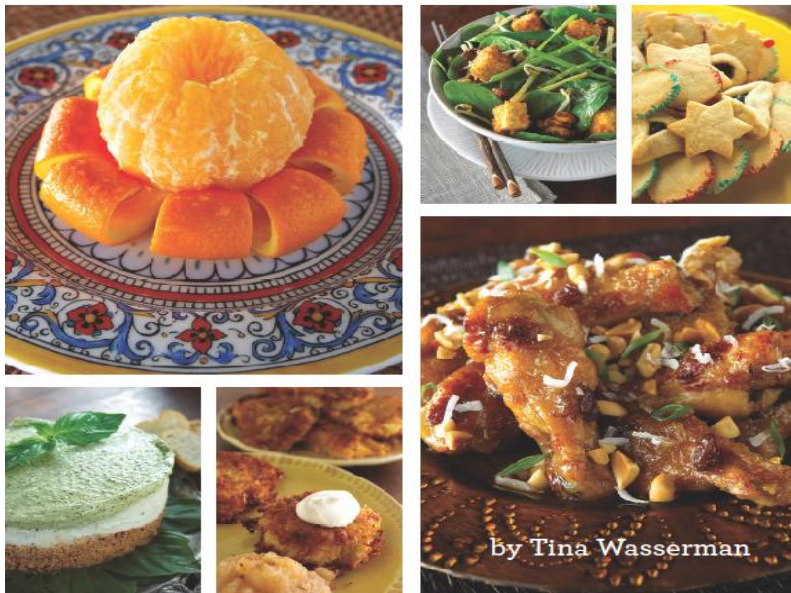
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coming March 2

***Entrée to Judaism: A Culinary Exploration of the Jewish Diaspora* cooks up the many flavors of Jewish life around the world**

ENTRÉE TO JUDAISM

A Culinary Exploration of the Jewish Diaspora



Tina Wasserman will be coming to Temple House of Israel on Tuesday, March 2, 2010
10:00 am – 1:00 Cooking Class will be limited to 15-18 people (first reserved, first served)
\$35 for members of THOI or Beth El, \$45 for non-members

7:00 pm presentation on Jewish cooking and Jewish history along with tastings of Jewish foods \$15

Reservations are required and can be made with Beth Young at bydesign@ntelos.net or 885-1481.

Adult Education
Thursday March 4, 2010
7 PM.
Samuel & Saul
King David
Videos Followed by
Discussion Led by Rabbi
Joe

Gift Shop
For the Congregation's pleasure: Your wonderful gift shop is opened for your buying needs all year round. Please get in touch with Marlene Brumbaugh if you need a gift any time of the year.

As requested, additional small stones are now located beneath the benches throughout the cemetery.

THIS WON'T COST YOU ANYTHING

After every trip and hotel stay, we usually come home with small toiletries - that we don't use, don't need, and are un-opened. Just bring these toiletries to the Temple and put them in the basket in the lobby. Sisterhood will collect and donate them to First Step, a haven for abused women.

Bema Basket Reminder

At many times throughout the year, congregation members choose to purchase flower arrangements to adorn the bema, 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 bema and in the Bridge. Donations can be sent/given to Kate Neckowitz, Sisterhood Treasurer, c/o Beth El. You will see a beautifully decorated food basket in the place where you often see flowers on the bema, indicating that a donation has been received.

Board Members

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Joe Blair | Rabbi |
| Gary Stein | President |
| Sherri Alt | Vice President |
| Mona Wolf | Secretary |
| Michelle Ornstein | Treasurer |
| Judy Freudenthal | Trustee |
| Andy Kohen | Trustee |
| Bill Ney | Trustee |
| Sherri Alt | Sisterhood President |
| Ron Ornstein | Men's Club President |
| Judy Liss | At Large Member |
| Chuck Slott | At Large Member |
| Phil Renick | At Large Member |
| Margee Greenfield | Immediate Past President |

Bridge Editor

Elliott Golub
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540-289-5336

CALENDAR

March 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Shushan Purim	2 Lions Club Dinner	3	4 Adult Ed 7 PM	5 Family Shabbat 6:00 Rabbi Service 7:30	6 Parashat Ki Tisa Shabbat Parah
7 Religious School (24) Bagel Bar	8	9	10	11	12 Lay Service <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">NFTY thEVENT-----</div>	13 Kinderlachen at THOI 10 AM Parashat Vayakhei-Pekudei Shabbat HaChodesh
14 Religious School (25) Bagel Bar <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">thEVENT</div>	15	16 1st of Nisan, 5770 Rosh Chodesh Nisan	17	18 Board Meeting 7:30	19 Rabbi Service	20 Un-Bar Mitzvah Party Parashat Vayikra
Rabbi at RRA Conference-----						
21 Religious School Model Seder (26) Bagel Bar	22	23	24	25	26 Lay Service	27 Parashat Tzav Shabbat HaGadol
28 No Religious School	29 Beth El Community Seder Ta'anit Bechorot Erev Pesach	30 15th of Nisan, 5770 Pesach I	31 16th of Nisan, 5770			