

The Beth El Bridge

Keeping the Jewish Community Connected

Beth El Congregation

Harrisonburg, VA

May 2005

From the Rabbi's Desk

My dear fellow Valley Jews and friends,

Shalom!

Tax season is behind us, spring is firmly established, and Passover, the season of crumbs, has arrived!

I write this hoping that you are having a joyous and sweet Pesach, one that brings you new insights into liberation and redemption, and a wonderful entry into this season of the year that shows the glories of Aviv (Spring)!

The Calendar and Holidays: We are now deep into the month of Nisan, the season of Passover. One May 9-10 we will arrive at Rosh Chodesh (the new Month beginning) for Iyar.

We are in the midst of Pesach now. It concludes on either Nisan 21/April 30 or Nisan 22/May 1, (for those who follow the seven or eight day holiday minhag/custom for Passover).

Immediately on the heels of Pesach, we come to Nisan 27, Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day — the day we commemorate the Holocaust victims, as best we can), which this year falls on Friday, May 6. We will incorporate a memorial into the liturgy of the Shabbat service on May 6 at THOI. Yizkor (Memory) candles are available at both congregations for those who wish to light them.

A few days later, we celebrate Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israel's Independence Day, Iyar 5). Because Iyar 5 falls on Shabbat, we celebrate on May 12 or May 13. We will incorporate a Yom Ha'atzma'ut commemoration into the Shabbat service on Friday, May 13, at Beth El this year.

Congregational Meeting

Our annual congregational meeting will be held Monday, May 9, at 6:30 p.m., in the Temple social hall. Desert will be served at 6:30, and the meeting will begin at 7.

The highlight of the meeting will be the election of Temple officers for 2005-06. Congregants also will vote on a constitutional amendment about the tenure of trustees.

See ballot, Page 8. Also look for your ballot in the mail.

Congregants will have an opportunity to sign up for one of our many important committees, and to take an active role in helping to guide our religious community.

Please come out and participate in our annual Congregational Meeting!

Another feature of the calendar this month is the Sefirat Ha'Omer (counting of the Omer — the measures of the barley crop harvest collected and brought to the Temple as first fruit produce offerings. The Omer is an interesting feature of this season. Starting on the second night of Passover (towards the end of the second seder) we begin to count off the time between Pesach (the holiday of Liberation and Redemption) and Shavuot (the Holiday of Revelation of the Ten Commandments and Torah). Shavuot falls on the 50th day after Pesach. That means we count a total of 49 days, or seven weeks of seven days, a number that is symbolic of completion, wholeness and wellbeing. This recalls a period of awe, trepidation, and worry and is treated as a semi-mourning time, with no celebrations scheduled. There is a rabbinic story, however, that at one time when a plague fell upon the people Israel, it began with the counting of the Omer, but lifted on the thirty-third day of this period, so there arose a custom of celebrating the end of that plague on the 33rd day, and the restrictions associated with mourning were lifted for the remainder of the counting of the Omer. It has become a fairly widely accepted custom that weddings and celebrations can take place from Lag Be'omer (the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer) forward. This year Lag Be'omer falls on Friday, May 27.

Sefirat Ha'Omer is a lovely custom of mindfulness that helps to focus on making a connection between Pesach and Shavuot, Redemption and Revelation, but many people find it difficult to remember to count the Omer each day. If you can remember to do so, it only takes a few seconds each evening or morning. To help make it a little easier, some folks have come up with clever and funny ideas. One that I have enjoyed is fun for anyone who is a fan of The Simpsons comedy cartoon show. You can print out a calendar of the Counting of the H'omer (I recommend the week by week calendar for ease of use). Click to this web site and enjoy!
<http://www.jvibe.com/homer/Welcome.html>.

Enjoy this season of joys, especially now that the weather is so gorgeous. I look forward to sharing these celebrations with you.

Rabbi Joe Blair

ANNUAL BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD DINNER

Sunday, May 15, 6:30 p.m.

NOW is the time to mark your calendars for another delightful evening on May 15. This year our guests will be from the **Emanuel Episcopal Church of Harrisonburg**. Many of us know members of this church as friends, colleagues or business associates. Their pastor, Joy Rose, is new this year and she was very happy to accept our invitation.

As always, the evening will begin at 6:30 for a get-to-know you mixer, and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Dinner will be followed by a program jointly prepared by Rabbi Joe and Pastor Rose. Over the years this has been an exciting and great learning experience — fun, too — for us as well as our guests. We invite up to 40 church members, so we would like a **big turnout from Beth El** members. **Cost for dinner and the evening is \$8** per person. (Please, no children under 12.)

Any questions, or to **RSVP**, E-mail Jerry Minskoff at <minskojg@jmu.edu>, or call him at 434-6973.

Beth El Congregation

May 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 No Religious School.	2 Rabbi's office day, 11 to 7. Board Meeting, Temple, 7:30.	3	4	5	6 Lay Service, 7:30 p.m. Rabbi's office day, 10 to 5.	7
8 No Religious School.	9 Rabbi's office day, 11 to 7. Congregational Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	10	11	12	13 Adult Ed Torah Study, 6 p.m. Rabbi Service, 7:30. Rabbi's office day, 10 to 5.	14 Youth Group to Charlottesville, depart 9 a.m.
15 Religious School, 9:30. Last Day. Book Club, 11 a.m. Brotherhood/Sisterhood Dinner, 6:30.	16 Rabbi's office day, 11 to 7. Chinese Dinner/Auction China Jade, 6:30	17	18	19	20 Rabbi Service, 7:30. Rabbi's office day, 10 to 5.	21 Shabbat morning service, 10 a.m.
22 Religious School, farewell picnic, Purcell Park.	23 Rabbi's office day, 11 to 7.	24 Sisterhood Meeting, 6 p.m., at Taste of Thai.	25 Men's Club, Meeting, 6:30, at a member's house, to be announced.	26	27 Lay Service, 7:30 p.m. Rabbi's office day, 10 to 5.	28
29	30 Rabbi's office day, 11 to 7.	31				

News and Notes

Rabbi's Office Hours

Rabbi Joe's office hours in Harrisonburg are Mondays, 11 to 7, and Fridays, 10 to 5.

Please call ahead (434-2744) or email for an appointment: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com.

Book Club Meeting

Our last book club meeting of this series will be May 15 at 11 a.m. instead of our usual second Sunday (which is Mother's Day). We will discuss *Climbing The Mountain — My Search For Meaning, by Kirk Douglas*. After a near-death helicopter crash on 2/13/91, the 74 year-old son of a Russian-Jewish ragman went on a long quest of self-discovery — for meaning of life, relationship with God, and his Jewish identity. Told with warmth, wit, humor, and

deep passion, this book is inspirational in the best sense of the word.

Please come and join us!

Mona Wolf

Get Ready for the Yard Sale

As you do your spring cleaning, please remember that your junk may well become someone else's treasure.

The annual **Beth El yard sale** will be held Sunday, June 5. Your discards will help provide income to the sisterhood for their ongoing projects. Please do not drop anything off at the temple before May 30.

More information will follow in the next edition of the Bridge.

Lisa Giovanetti

Chinese Dinner/Auction

For the Benefit of the Beth El Sisterhood

Monday, May 16, at 6:30 p.m.

China Jade Restaurant

Tickets only \$15

Includes dinner buffet and non-alcoholic beverage.

Bring an unwrapped gift minimum value of \$5

At the door present your event ticket and turn in an unopened, unwrapped gift of a \$5 minimum value. You'll receive an envelope with 10 chance tickets, all with the same number. During dinner place the tickets from your envelope at gifts you would like to win. Winning numbers will be randomly selected from among those placed at each gift item. Additional chance tickets will be on sale during the evening if you would like to increase your odds to win!

Door prizes will be awarded.

“Your fortune awaits your participation” — Confucius

People to contact for tickets: Sherri Alt, 249-5463; Cindy Baron, 433-1076; Dale Brothers, 298-1098; Joan Funston, 564-2631; Janet Kohen, 433-1898; Becky Mintzer, 438-1053; Roberta Stein, 434-3763.

Tickets also are available at the Bagel Bar

Sisterhood Meeting

The next Sisterhood meeting is Tuesday May 24, at 6 p.m. at the Taste of Thai Restaurant. We have reserved a room. Please let Sherri know if you plan on attending so I can give the restaurant an approximate number.

Sherri Alt

Religious School Report

Chocolate! What a great way to learn about Passover! The Religious School students participated in a Chocolate Model Sedar on Sunday, April 17. The rabbi provided us with special haggadot. Semi-sweet chocolate took the place of bitter herbs. Green M & Ms were the karpas. Charoset consisted of a mixture of chocolate chips and nuts. We dipped strawberries in chocolate and ate chocolate eggs. Of course, there were four cups of chocolate milk (complete with a special ending on the prayer). Chocolate-covered matzah rounded out the event. After all of the students (and a few parents) were "scraped off the ceiling" (due to a sugar overload), all agreed that it was a great idea! Many thanks to Juli Oberdorff for organizing the event.

We are just about at the end of our religious school year. We have one more day, on May 15, followed by our farewell picnic on May 22, at Purcell Park. Details will be given to students/parents in the near future.

Margee Greenfield

Yahrzeits for May

4	Bruno Hirsch	12	Lillian Coxe	23	Rabbi Seldon ben- Zvi Fleming
5	Ella P. Blatt	13	Paula Kaiser		
6	Rose Gelman	14	Edna Ash	26	Heinz Wallach Mildred Greenfield
7	Julia S. Ney	16	Sophia Blatt Lynn Miller	27	Charles A. Hammer A.M. Loewner
8	Theresa Hirsch				
9	Henry Myerberg Lillian Tassle	19	Minnie Wender	28	Ludwig Hirsch David Kohen Richard Kohn
		20	David Frankel		
10	Bob Nemoytin	21	Arnold Abriss	30	Jay Nusbaum Molly Huffman

Donations

Beth El Congregation gratefully acknowledges the following generous donations, received during April:

To the General Fund

With prayers for the speedy recovery of Joan Funston: Judy Freudenthal, Alan and Kate Neckowitz.

In memory of Lenore White: Mike White.

In memory of Rabbi Arnold Fink: Judy Freudenthal.

In honor of the naming of Danielle Marisa Hall: Dara and Michael Hall, Ron and Michelle Ornstein.

In honor of the birth of Gale and Charles Clemons' granddaughter, Kylie Shay Palmer, born to daughter Sara and her husband Kelly: Alan and Kate Neckowitz, Ron and Michelle Ornstein.

In appreciation of Janet Kohen's musical support for Naomi's Bat Mitzvah: Ron and Michelle Ornstein.

In honor of the birth of Leah Greenfield: Alan and Kate Neckowitz.

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of Naomi's Bat Mitzvah: Ron and Michelle Ornstein.

To the Handicap Bathroom Fund

In honor of their newest grandchild, Natalie Rose Singerling, born to daughter Sandy and husband Chris, on April 15, 2005: Jerry and Esther Minskoff.

In honor of Esther, on the publication of her second book, *Teaching Reading to Struggling Learners*, published by Brookes Publishing Co.: Jerry Minskoff.

With prayers for the speedy recovery of Joan Funston: Jerry and Esther Minskoff.

In honor of the Bat Mizvah of Naomi Ornstein: Jerry and Esther Minskoff.

In honor of the birth of Gale and Charles Clemons' granddaughter: Jerry and Esther Minskoff.

The Congregation also received a generous handicap bathroom fund donation from Karen & Steven Sodikoff.

Youth Group Report

As always we have been busy traveling around to spend time with other youth groups! We attended the Spring Kallah at Washington Hebrew Congregation April 7-10 for a wonderful weekend and farewell to the seniors. On April 15 we spent the evening with BITY (Beth Israel Temple Youth) in Charlottesville for services, a concert, and a shul-in. Saturday morning we attended conservative services together, and then we had an outing! SHORTY took a walk to the downtown mall in Charlottesville and had lunch and a confirmation meeting at The Tea Bazaar followed, by ice cream at Chaps. We had a lovely and ""filling" day!

Next Meeting: Our next meeting is Saturday, May 14. We will meet at the temple and go to the renewal services in Charlottesville, again followed by lunch and a meeting. I will send out more information as time gets closer.

Sherri Alt, Youth Advisor

More News and Notes

Men's Club

The Men's Club will meet on Wednesday, May 25, at 6:30 p.m., at a member's house to be announced.

The Men's club is also sponsoring the **Brotherhood/Sisterhood Dinner** on Sunday, May 15, at 6:30 p.m., at the temple. Emanuel Episcopal Church has been invited. This will be a stimulating evening of interfaith discussion and as such is intended for teenagers and adults only. The cost is \$8 at the door. **RSVP's** strongly encouraged. Contact Mike White for more information.

Mike White

Tot Shabbat

Families with **preschool-aged children** are invited to attend a Tot Shabbat program at the Temple House of Israel in Staunton on Saturday, May 21, at 10 a.m. The program will include **songs, stories and crafts about Shabbat and the Jewish holidays**. Everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, please contact Shelby Apple at shelbyapple@yahoo.com, or call her at 540-943-6934.

Thanks! Shelby

Notes from our President

Many thanks to **Ruth Clayman** for the beautiful pictures which she donated to the Sisterhood. And thanks to **Sisterhood** for having them framed. The

"picture/plaque" committee will be placing them in the social hall where they can be seen to best advantage. Keep your eyes open for this new addition.

Thanks, also, to **Blaine Brumbaugh** who crafted the new Sisterhood Gift Shop Display case. Blaine is one talented man, and we are so fortunate to have his talents to call on. Great job, Blaine!

Beth El welcomes to membership **Rabbi Lynne Landsberg** and **Dennis** and **Jesse Ward**.

B'ruchim habayim!

Janet Kohen

Books of Jewish Interest

There are three new **books of Jewish interest** in the non-fiction section of the Massanutten Regional Library in Harrisonburg:

Bar and Bat Mitzva Book, by Linda Burghardt.

From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History, by Arthur Kurzweil, with a forward by Elir Eirsel.

Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture, by Daniel Libeskind.

from Bo Rose

Congregational List Correction

Please make the following correction to your Congregational list:

Tom and Clare Aycock's telephone exchange is 249, not 248.

from Judy Freudenthal

Adult Education

Although the year is drawing to a close, we are still keeping busy and there are a number of classes ongoing!

The next **monthly Torah study** at Beth El will take place on Friday, May 13, at 6 p.m. Once again, bring your own dinner, eat and join in as we discuss the Torah portion.

A **weekly Torah study** meets on Thursdays (except the second Thursday of the month) at noon at THOI. All congregants are welcome to drop in and take part.

Weekly Hebrew classes meet about three times a month, on Mondays at Beth El, and Thursdays at THOI. You can join in the class at any time. Call for more information.

The **Adult B'nai Mitzvah class** has shifted into a more individual mode for those who are participating. If you are interested in pursuing this goal, please speak with me.

If you have any particular requests for **lectures, classes, or discussions**, please let me know, as I begin to plan for the coming year.

B'virkat shalom (with Blessings of Peace),

Rabbi Joe

NEWS from **B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL**

STUDIO J NEWSMAGAZINE LAUNCHED BY
B'NAI B'RITH RADIO

Jewish 'All Things Considered' Available Throughout North America

B'nai B'rith Radio presents **StudioJ** — the first-ever nationwide Jewish news and feature radio magazine. Broadcast each week from B'nai B'rith headquarters, Studio J offers a livelier, Jewish version of National Public Radio's acclaimed show "All Things Considered."

StudioJ reveals, in-depth, the feature stories behind the weekly headlines, and covers the culture, music, arts, and entertainment events of world Jewry.

Scheduled for nationwide broadcast syndication this summer, Studio J presently can be heard on:

Sunday
3-4 pm EDT (noon-1 pm Pacific)
SIRIUS satellite radio Channel 115

Ballot

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Board presents this slate of candidates for the Beth El Board for 2005-06. Nominations also may be made from the floor at the annual congregational meeting on May 9, 2005 at 6:30.

Please bring your ballot to the meeting. Absentee ballots for those not at the meeting must be signed and **must be received by May 7, 2005.**

Please remember that only ballots of paid-up members will be counted. Send absentee ballots to Beth El, P.O. Box 845, Harrisonburg, 22803, c/o Bill Ney.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 with cake and coffee.

President: **Janet Kohen**

Vice-President: **Margee Greenfield**

Treasurer: **Bill Ney**

Secretary: **Gary Stein**

Members At Large: Vote for TWO

Dale Brothers
 Joan Funston
 Linda Kohn
 Becky Mintzer

Previously determined members of the 2005-2006 Board

Men's Club President:
Sisterhood President:
Trustee (Life): **Andy Kohen**
Trustee: **Judy Freudenthal**
Trustee: **Eddie Ney**
Immediate Past President: **Ron Ornstein**

Absentee's Signature _____