

The Beth El Bridge

Keeping the Jewish Community Connected

Beth El Congregation

Harrisonburg, Virginia

October 2006

THE RABBI'S DESK

My dear fellow Valley Jews and Friends, SHALOM!

I am writing this article in mid-September, contemplating the High Holy Days that will arrive *very* shortly. The congregational year is off to a rousing start! Services are running, the religious school is in session, the youth group is active, adult education has started, and our community is active, vibrant, and wonderfully alive!

THE CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

We are now in the month of Elul, which runs until Sept. 22. Elul is the period of self-examination and repentance in preparation for Yom Kippur. I hope that you will forgive me any trespasses I have committed in the past year, as I do for each of you.

This is the time of observance of many holidays that are very close together on the Jewish calendar. Rosh Chodesh Tishrei is also known as Rosh Hashanah — the head of the year, the Jewish New Year for the sovereign, and the celebration of the anniversary of Creation — which this year falls on the evening of Sept. 22, and on Sept. 23-24. Yom Kippur, Tishrei 10, is the evening of Oct. 1 and the day of Oct. 2, with Sukkot hard on the heels of this holiday, starting the evening of Oct. 6 (Tishrei 15), and running until Oct. 14, which leads seamlessly to our celebration on Oct. 15 (Tishrei 23) of Simchat Torah. Oct. 22-23 is Rosh Chodesh for the month of Cheshvan. Phew!

Rosh Hashanah is a day of celebration, rejoicing in Creation and honoring G-d, the Sovereign. Yom Kippur is observed as a day of fasting, repentance, and atonement. Sukkot celebrates the harvest and G-d's creation by having us dwell in booths and attend to the "four species." Simchat Torah celebrates the giving of Torah, our law and instruction on how to live a godly life. On Simchat Torah we celebrate this "letter from G-d" and dance with the scrolls. We also recognize that we are always engaged with this text, and symbolize it by reading from the last section of the Torah and immediately going on to start reading from the beginning again. In this way, we maintain our continual cycle of engagement with the Torah, G-d's instructions to us for living.

As you can see, this is a season of many observances!

Yom Kippur Services

- **Memorial Service (Cemetery), Sunday, Oct. 1, 1:30 p.m.**
Rabbi Joe Blair
- **Kol Nidre Service, Sunday, Oct. 1, 8 p.m.**
Rabbi Joe Blair
- **Yom Kippur Services, Monday, Oct. 2, 10 a.m., 3 p.m.,
*followed by the break the fast, about 7 p.m.***
Rabbi Sue Elwell

THE CONGREGATIONAL CALENDAR

Allow me to point out a few items that are coming up soon:

- On Oct. 1, at 1:30 p.m., there will be a memorial service at the cemetery.
- The Interfaith Association will meet at EMU on Oct. 5, at noon.
- On Oct. 5, at 7 p.m., is the second in our four-part series on the Holidays, Sukkot and Simchat Torah, at THOI.
- Tot Shabbat will be Oct. 7, at 10 a.m., at the Apple home in Fishersville. Contact Shelby Apple at totshabbat@thoi.org for directions.
- Plan to come to the Religious school Sukkot celebration Oct. 8.
- Come to enjoy dinner in the Sukkah at 6 p.m. Oct. 9, then stay for the Board meeting.
- Simchat Torah and the Consecration service will be Oct. 13.
- Also attend the Religious School Simchat Torah celebration on the Oct. 15.
- The MAC Biennial is October 20-22 in Gaithersburg, Maryland.
- Adult Education on the Chevrah Kadishah at 7 p.m. on Oct. 26 at THOI. This is the highly honored society that helps prepare for funerals. We are thinking about forming such a group in our community, and this is a way to talk about what it covers and why. Please come!
- There will be a Torah Lishmah ONLY on Oct. 27 this month because of holidays and Rabbi Joe being out of town at the MAC Convention.
- Introduction to Hebrew class will begin Nov. 6 at 7 p.m.

Watch for information about Israel Trip planning meetings starting in January. Also, watch for an email or call if you have expressed any interest in participating in the trip. There is still time and room!

SHORTY

Shorty (Youth Group) met Sept. 17, at which time the Board made dinner for the group. Then members were installed, and plans were formulated for the year. Shorty has an exciting year ahead, with a vast array of activities and opportunities, not the least of which are the Fall Kallah, Ski Weekend, TheVent, and Spring Kallah. If you, or someone in your family, are eligible for membership in Shorty (post-B'nai Mitzvah age through Senior year in High School), please get in touch with Rabbi Joe or Sherri Alt, and get involved! Also, those in 7th and 8th grades this year should be planning to attend the MAJYK event in Roanoke Nov. 10-12. Watch for more information in the next newsletter, or by email.

B'NAI MITZVAH

I am meeting with the B'nai Mitzvah students.

If you are interested in studying for and having your own B'nai Mitzvah, or in learning to leyn (read/chant) Torah and/or Haftarah, or lead services, please get in touch with Rabbi Joe.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Rabbi Joe is teaching the Daled Judaica class this year, as well as conducting assemblies and special events. We have also planned a total of five field trips, and two Family Education days, as well as our usual holiday celebrations. Ask your child about the "miles to Israel" program that the new principals have implemented to encourage the students to learn both by traditional methods of study, and by experiential means.

TORAH PARASHIOT

Torah parashiot (weekly portions) for this month include Bereshit and Noah, from Bereshit (Genesis) chapters 1 to 11. In addition, we read for the Sukkot and Simchat Torah celebrations from Vayikra (Leviticus) Emor 22:26-23:44, from Bemidbar (Numbers) Pinchas 29:12-16, and from Devarim (Deuteronomy) Vezot Habracha 33:1-34:12.

The Rabbi's message continues on Page 4

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---------|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1 Religious School, 9:30-12:30. Bagel Bar, 9-11:30. Memorial Service, Cemetery, 1:30. Kol Nidre 8 p.m., Rabbi Blair. | 2 Yom Kippur, 10 a.m., 3 p.m., Rabbi Elwell. Break-the-Fast, after service. | 3 | 4 | 5 Interfaith Assoc., EMU, noon. Adult Education, on the holidays, Sukkot and Simchat Torah, THOI, 7 p.m. | 6 Sukkot, Lay Service, 7:30 p.m. | 7 Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m., Appleby home, Fishersville, see Page 6. |
| 8 Religious School, 9:30-12:30, Celebrate Sukkot. Bagel Bar, 9-11:30. Rabbi's office day. | 9 Board Dinner, in Sukkah, at 6. Board Meeting, Temple, 7:30. Rabbi's office day. | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 Simchat Torah, Rabbi Service, 7:30 p.m. Youth Leader- ship, Oct. 13-15. | 14 |
| 15 Religious School, 9:30-12:30, Simchat Torah. Bagel Bar, 9-11:30. Rabbi's office day. | 16 Torah Study, 7 p.m., bring your own meal. Rabbi's office day. | 17 | 18 | 19 Men's Club Meeting, 6 p.m., Taste of Thai. | 20 Lay Service, 7:30 p.m. MAC Biennial, Gaithersburg, MD, Oct. 20-22. | 21 |
| 22 Religious School, 9:30-12:30. Bagel Bar, 9-11:30. | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 Sisterhood, dinner meeting, 6 p.m. Adult Education, Funeral Society, THOI, 7 p.m. | 27 Rabbi Service, 7:30 p.m. | 28 |
| 29 Religious School, 9:30-12:30. Bagel Bar, 9-11:30. Rabbi's office day. | 30 Rabbi's office day. | 31 | | | | |

RABBI'S AVAILABILITY THIS YEAR

The Rabbi's available days this year generally will be Sundays and Mondays in Harrisonburg, and Thursdays and during the day Fridays in Staunton. The rabbi is out and the office is closed for all Jewish holidays, Shabbat, and some secular holidays. The office is closed as well as during those times the rabbi is out of town or otherwise unavailable. You may leave a phone message at the congregation. Messages are checked periodically by the rabbi.

REACHING THE RABBI

If you wish to meet or speak with the rabbi, please email or call for an appointment, preferably on one of the available days in your location, to be sure that Rabbi Joe will be able to give you his full undivided attention, as you deserve.

Email: RabbiJoeB@hotmail.com

Beth El Congregation

Temple House of Israel

Home **[Emergencies only, please]**

540-434-2744

540-886-4091

434-971-4741

TORAH PARASHIOT (continued from Page 2)

Included among the topics in these readings is the portion of Noah, Bereshit 6:9-11:32. Talmud Torah Limud on Oct. 16 will focus on this Torah parashah and the various commentaries on it. This story is rich and wonderful. Come talk about it!

ADULT EDUCATION

There are two adult education classes this month I want to emphasize.

On Oct. 5 at 7 p.m. at THOI we'll have a class on the Holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah. This will focus on customs, the background of the holidays, text study, and a look at some of the halachot (laws) related to it.

There is a Talmud Torah Limud session scheduled Oct. 16 at Beth El at 7 p.m., which will focus on the story of Noah.

On Oct. 26 at 7 p.m. at THOI, I will lead an initial class on the topic of the Chevrah Kadishah — the holy society that helps to prepare the dead for burial. I am teaching this class with the hope that there will be enough interest in our community to create such a group for our community.

The only Torah Lishmah this month will be Oct. 27 at THOI (all other times this month are holidays or I am out of town).

CONVERSION CLASSES

If you are interested in conversion, or simply learning about Judaism, please contact Rabbi Joe.

B'virvat shalom (with Blessings of Peace) and best wishes for the new year,

Rabbi Joe

YAHREZEITS FOR OCTOBER

| | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Carrye Kohen Annette Biatch | 17 | Rosa Wise |
| 2 | David Rubin | 18 | Harriet Gould |
| 5 | Jack Lichtenstein | 19 | Rabbi Edward L. Israel Mabel Rodbell |
| 7 | Paige Nash | 20 | Barbara M. Levin Ruth Shwayder |
| 8 | Leonard Raff | 22 | Ida Zindler Dorothy Donner Kaiser |
| 9 | Samuel Metzger | 25 | Leon Hirsch Helen Wise Sarah Lebin |
| 12 | Betty Nemoytin | 26 | Rosalie Amberg |
| 13 | Israel Smith Harry Katzen | 27 | Oscar Rodbell Marilyn Goldenthal |
| 15 | Hattie Hirsch Milton Trubitz Sarah Lovinger | 31 | Amalie G. Wise |
| 16 | Miriam Brooslin Cohen | | |

Donations

Beth El Congregation is grateful the following generous donations, received during the past month:

To the General Fund

In memory of Lila Hyman, Joyce Helbraun's sister: Chuck Slott.

In honor of the birth of Noa Rose Sachs-Kohen, granddaughter of Janet and Andy Kohen: Judy and Stuart Liss, Shirley and Dave Merlin, Kate and Alan Neckowitz, Michelle and Ron Ornstein.

A generous General Fund donation also was received from Jayne and Eric Rynar.

To the Building Fund

In response to Beth El's call for Building Fund donations: Ruth & Bary Berger, Esther and Jerry Minskoff.

To the Yahrzeit Memorial Fund

In memory of Julius Berman, Lenny's Father: Leonard and Marilena Berman.

In memory of Sarah Lebin, Dave's mother: Dave and Shirley Merlin.

In memory of Belle Neckowitz, Alan's Mother: Kate and Alan Neckowitz.

In memory of Alfred Raff, Irma's father: Irma and Gene Nemoytin.

To the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

With thanks for performing a Hanukat Habayit (hanging a Mezzuzah at their home): Stuart and Judy Liss.

To the Anne Mintzer Window Fund

A generous Window Fund donation was received from Jayne and Eric Rynar.

Greetings from the Religious School

We began our first couple of sessions and ended the year 5766 with enthusiasm and positive energy!

On the first day of class, one of our Alef teachers, Sara Lewis, who visited Israel this summer as a camp counselor, shared a photographic power point presentation with the whole school, including parents and the Beth El bagel bar attendees. She answered lots of great questions from our students about the culture and daily life experiences of Israelis.

Afterwards, the students enjoyed dancing to the Israeli folk song "Mayim Mayim," thanks to our music director, Roberta Stein. Music is as important a part of our curriculum as it is in our culture. Students have a half hour music class every Sunday, and Roberta also offers a Children's Choir after Religious School for enthusiastic singers.

We're also enjoying snack time, a great time for our students to socialize and get to know one another. On the session prior to Rosh Hashana, we enjoyed apples and honey with a round raisin challah to start the New Year with sweetness. Yummy food is an important part of our culture as well!

As a rewarding and fun mitzvah, many members of our Religious School and Jewish community attended a children's event in support of the Kurdish community on Sept. 16. As you are probably aware, the fathers of many of our area's Kurdish families were investigated and poorly treated by the federal government. Events to reach out to the children of these Kurdish families have been initiated by Eileen Magruder, who is involved in Standing With Our Neighbors, along with her church, the Otterbein Methodist Church. At this "Autumn Party," the attending children enjoyed a variety of games and activities, including cookie and cupcake decorating, face painting, caramel apple dipping, and pumpkin decorating. We'll keep you apprised of any other upcoming events in support of the Kurdish community.

Meanwhile, please save the following dates and join us for fun activities and treats during Religious School:

Sukkot Celebration on Sunday, Oct. 8.

Simchat Torah Celebration on Sunday, Oct. 15.

Also, we look forward to seeing you on Friday night, Oct. 13, for the Simchat Torah and Consecration Service for new Alef students at Beth El.

In closing, the Religious School would like to thank the Goldbergers and the Ornsteins for their donation of books, and the Roses for donating the carpet in the Gimmel classroom. We truly appreciate your generosity!

L'shanah tovah! May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year!

Dara, Ruth and Linda

News and Notes

Report from the board

The Beth El Board of Directors is dealing with the roof leaks in the sanctuary. We are also moving ahead with the stained Glass Window project, as soon as the window framing can be taken care of. I have also been updating the Beth El website. Members should go to: <http://va014.urj.net/bethel.html> to view the site.

Gary

Welcome to new members

Beth El welcomes the following new members to the congregation:

Elissa Girouard, 150 Al Good Drive, Stanley, 22851, 540-778-3260, issa_rose@hotmail.com, and Joe Landson, 310 Vine St. Apt. D, Harrisonburg, 22802, 571-228-8670 (cell), jlands2001@yahoo.com.

Help update the congregation list

I'll soon be preparing the new congregation list. Please let me know if your address and zip code on last year's list are current and accurate. Also, 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.

Last year we also started listing cell phone numbers. If that's a better way for you to receive calls, please send that to me too. Also, if you have a college age student, I can send the temple newsletter via email or snail mail. If you are not sure what address/telephone or cell phone number I have for you, please call or email me the latest information so I can verify it. Please contact Judy Freudenthal, 867-5648, or jfreudy@aol.com, with any changes. Thank you.

Judy

Todah Rabah

Sincere thanks to the following families hosting JMU students for festive dinners before Erev Rosh Hashanah services and before Kol Nidre: Mo and Mike Goldberger, Arnie Kahn, Janet and Andy Kohen, Kate and Alan Neckowitz.

It is great to begin the new year with a mitzvah, and feeding the hungry qualifies (even if they are JMU students!). Because many of the High Holy Day services fell on the weekend, the number of students

seeking home hospitality was lower than in other years, but we remain happy to accommodate them.

Andy

Too automated?

Have We Become Too Automated? (today's Jewish chuckle). In early September, a letter was received from the URJ requesting support of the Reform Movement's Israel Emergency Fund. The address:

Beth El Congregation Library
PO Box 845
Harrisonburg, VA 22803-0845

And the greeting was as follows:

Dear Beth,

Stained glass windows

The Trustees deeply regret the slowdown in installation of the stained glass windows to adorn the sanctuary. It results from our discovery of serious deterioration of the window frames into which they'll be installed, and the need to get bids on replacing the window frames and the outer windows (probably with higher quality double-pane windows). Because of the vibrant economic conditions in the Valley and the continuing housing boom here, getting appointments with contractors, carpenters, etc. has been very challenging. However, with the able assistance of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds, we are making progress and are hopeful that work will have begun soon after you receive this issue of the Bridge.

Andy

Good health to Don Smith

Our organist, Don Smith, is recovering well from eye surgery, and is gracing us and the choir with his accompaniment during High Holy Day Services.

Tot Shabbat

The next Tot Shabbat program will be a special Sukkot program at the home of Kevin and Shelby Apple in Fishersville. The program will take place in the Apple's own Sukkah at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 7. There will be sukkah decorating, singing, stories, and crafts. Families will also get to learn how to hold and shake a lulav and etrog! If you are interested, please contact Shelby at shelbyapple@yahoo.com for directions and more information.

Rabbi Joe