



# The January 2010 Shofar

Temple Beth El, 3 Marion Avenue, Glens Falls, New York 12801

(518) 792-4364 \* [tbefny@gmail.com](mailto:tbefny@gmail.com)

Affiliate member of the URJ since 1950

## Shabbat Family Night

Please join us

**Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.**

Come and enjoy a Family Service

followed by a pizza dinner.

Please RSVP to Katie with your check or credit card payment by

Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>.



### Members:

2 and under: Free; Ages 3-12: \$5; 13 and up: \$8

Total not to exceed \$18 per immediate family

### Non-Members:

2 and under: Free; Ages 3-12: \$7; 13 and up: \$10

Total not to exceed \$25 per immediate family

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**Pizza & A Movie**  
Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

### **The Frisco Kid**

**Starring Gene Wilder and Harrison Ford (1979)**



Rated: PG (Parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.)

Armed with his yarmulke and a cross-country mission to reach San Francisco's Barbary Coast neighborhood, naive Polish rabbi Avram Belinski is a natural target for swindlers and thieves in the bustling port city of Philadelphia. But with a rough-and-tumble bank robber by his side, he takes on the American West -- and makes an unlikely friend in the process.



## Rabbi's Message

As we are now in the heart of the winter season, we Jews must look beyond the cold and find ways to help support those who are less fortunate. In some degree, Judaism emphasizes the concept of *tikkun olam*, translated in our modern context as "repairing or mending the world." We use this term in its most basic and fundamental principle to refer to the responsibility we have to mend our world in order to make it a more harmonious, safe and secure place, not only for us but for future generations to come. This term and its implication to fix our world became a concept introduced by the Kabbalists in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, most notably by Rabbi Isaac Luria, who proclaimed that the Jewish people are co-partners with God in repairing the world. The term itself did not, however, originate with the Kabbalists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but had its origin in the Mishnah (2<sup>nd</sup> Century C.E.) where its original context meant to keep the social order. Maimonides, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, expanded this notion of *tikkun olam* to include the rabbinic customs and rulings that would strengthen faith and enrich religion. It was the Kabbalists, under the influence of Isaac Luria, who brought this concept of repair. Their thoughts were that when God created the world, God's presence filled the entire universe. When God decided to bring the world into being, to make room for creation, God drew in His breath, and formed a dark mass. Then God said, "Let there be light" (Gen.1:3) and ten holy vessels came forth, each filled with primordial light. God then sent forth these ten vessels, like a fleet of ships, each carrying its cargo of light. But the vessels, too fragile to contain such powerful Divine light, shattered and broke open, spreading the holy sparks everywhere. It, therefore, became humanity's endeavor to find these sparks and bring them together in order to restore the world from its broken state. For Isaac Luria, the adherence to the commandments and the study and pursuit of Torah leads to the creating of these sparks, these rays of light, thus the importance of doing this *mitzvah* and ushering in a time when the world will soon be perfected. It was only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when the Reform Movement brought this concept back and detailed it as a defining and important characteristic of human development and relationship that social justice and social action became synonymous with the term *tikkun olam*.

May we always remember that we are in constant relationship with God and that one of our most important concepts is that we are in direct relationship with God to both heal and repair our world, not just for our generation, but for generations to come. May we strive to mend our world so that all people in the world will share the freedom and security that we enjoy and may we aim to put back the broken parts of our world to make it whole again!

Rabbi Matthew J. Durbin

## Tikkun Olam Classes

For a more indepth discussion on the concept of *tikkun olam* and its implications for our modern world, please join Rabbi Durbin on Tuesdays, February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Rabbi Durbin wrote his rabbinic thesis on the Development of *Tikkun Olam*: Its usage, interpretation and implications for the Modern Jewish World.

## Book Club

Here are the next four books that our book club will be reading:

January 12, 2010: The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

February 09, 2010: Mornings on Horseback by David McCullough

March 09, 2010: The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson

April 13, 2010: Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout

Don't forget, we meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. at the Temple. All are welcome and happy reading!

Karen Marks



# Chai Society, Temple Beth El

Announcing a special Audio/Visual program featuring the backgrounds, careers and life stories of the World's

## GREATEST CANTORS

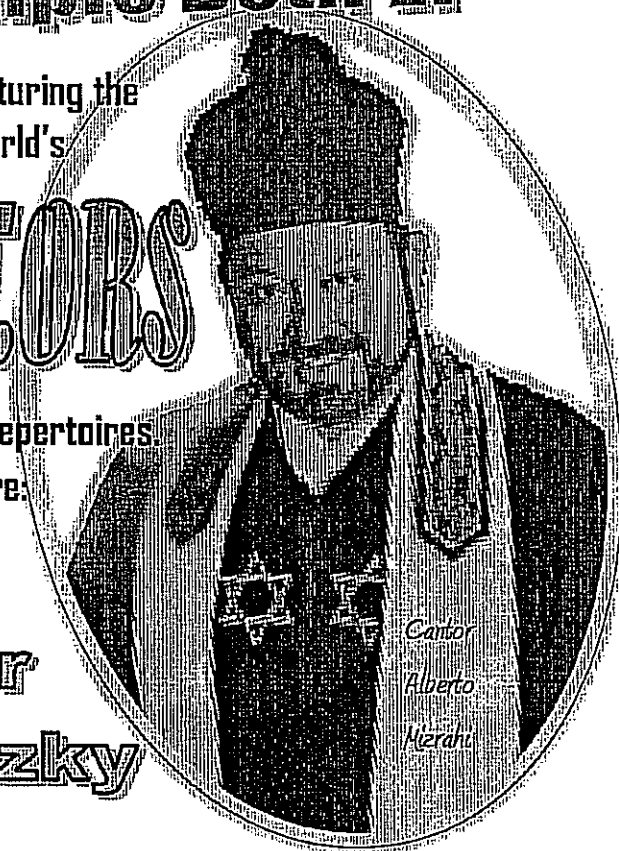
Renowned for their liturgical as well as operatic repertoires.

Among the voices that will be featured are:

**Jan Peerce**

**Richard Tucker**

**Moshe Koussevitzky**



The presenter, Mr. William Maher of Warrensburg, NY, has been an aficionado and lecturer on the operatic scene for over 50 years. His studio talks at the Marcella Sambrich Opera Museum in Bolton Landing, and presentations in other venues have always been well received. Over the last 30 years, Mr. Maher has also conducted monthly opera discussion groups which are usually SRO events.

Sunday, January 17, 2010—1:30 p.m.

**Temple Beth El**

3 Marion Avenue, Glens Falls, NY 12801

Office Phone: 792-4364

On street or rear of temple parking

Complementary "Coffee &" will be served. The program is open to all in the community.

Prior notice of intention to attend is not required but would be appreciated.

For further info., please call the Office Phone Monday thru Friday 9:00AM to 12:00PM.

In the event of inclement weather, please call the Office Phone, or, 832-7414.



## December 8th Ritual/Pulpit Committee Meeting

Following is a summary of some of the committee's more substantive discussions and decisions:

- \* Jack Hellman will conduct Friday services on December 25th and January 1st when the Rabbi and Diane Martin are on vacation.
- \* Temple Beth El and Congregation Shaaray Tefila will be exchanging pulpits on the weekend of January 29th when we will observe *Tu B'Shevat*, the New Year of the Trees. (Details can be found elsewhere in this issue of the Shofar.) Rabbi Boaz Marmon will be at Temple on Friday night and Rabbi Matthew Durbin will be at the Synagogue on Saturday morning.
- \* Plans are underway for the New Member Shabbat on February 5th. We expect to honor approximately eight new member-families and individuals who will receive gifts and participate in services.
- \* On February 26th, the congregations will celebrate a Purim Family Service and dinner to be coordinated by the Rabbi with assistance from Allison Levin and Rachel Gartner.
- \* Rabbi Durbin will have a draft of Temple Beth El's new *Haggadah* ready for Committee review by the end of February.
- \* Rabbi led services at The Glen on Saturday, December 12th in honor of Sonny Segan's birthday. Sonny was gratified by the turnout of friends from The Glen, the Synagogue and the Temple. Those in attendance also received copies of a Saratogian article about Sonny's accomplishments and his experiences during World War II.
- \* Rabbi Durbin is planning to invite members of area churches to occasionally attend Temple Services.

## Meet the Rice Family

[A portion of Sara Rice's Meet the Rice Family article was accidentally cut from the December issue of the Shofar so we are re-running her article in its entirety.]

I find it fairly ironic to be writing as a "new member" of Temple Beth El. My 17 month old daughter Sofia Rae is the fifth generation of my family to learn, pray and grow within these walls. We are hopeful that she and her soon to be born sister will be given the honor of having their Bat Mitzvahs on the same bima as my sister Meredith, who is also a 'new member', and I did when we were twelve.

My great grandparents Vilma and Charles Gelman helped lay the cornerstone for the original building and "Nana Vilma" was there when the cornerstone for the addition was dedicated. Both my grandmothers, Elsa Rosoff and Lillian Leibman, and my grandfathers, Sidney Rosoff and Raymond Leibman, participated in services, served on the Board, were in the brother/sisterhoods and gave their time to better the building and its congregation. My father served as president and my mother is still a part of the ritual committee and one of the 'go-to people' when a challah needs to be baked.

My husband Dan and I are grateful to be back in Glens Falls. We spent five years away, four of them in Maui. Wherever we were I attended services and temple events. I was comfortable with the Jewish knowledge I received growing up within the walls of Beth El to sing and participate in services. On Maui I was able to learn from a modern orthodox rabbi. He taught me to question. He made me want to know the 'whys' behind what becomes so routine. I am very pleased to have Rabbi Durbin to study with when the time comes and to continue my questioning.

As for my family, I am an occupational therapist and Dan is a stay-at-home father who just happens to have his master's degree in education. In his words, he has a classroom of one. She is one lucky student. We are expecting our second daughter in late February; another in the Rosoff line will be named in front of our wonderful, thankfully, ever-growing congregation. I look forward to the years to come.

Sara Rice



## JANUARY 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					<b>1</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> Shabbat Service / Oneg host TBA  <b>Temple Office                      Closed—New</b>	<b>2</b> <b>No Torah                      Study</b>
<b>3</b> <b>No                      Religious                      School</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue  <i>Rabbi Returns</i>	<b>7</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>8</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Pizza & Shabbat Family Service / Oneg host TBA	<b>9</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Service
<b>10</b> <b>9:20 a.m.</b> Religious School	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>10 a.m.</b> Book Club Meeting (The Book Thief)  <b>7 p.m.</b> Ritual / Pulpit Committee Meeting	<b>13</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue	<b>14</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>15</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> Hebrew Naming Service / Oneg host TBA	<b>16</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Study  <b>7 p.m.</b> Pizza & a movie (The Frisco Kid)
<b>17</b> <b>No                      Religious                      School</b>  <b>1:30 p.m.</b> Chai Society Program (Bill Maher)	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue	<b>21</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>22</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> Torah Service / Oneg host TBA	<b>23</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Study
<b>24</b> <b>9:20 a.m.</b> Religious School  <b>Noon</b> TSRS Board Meeting	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> TBE Board Meeting	<b>27</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue	<b>28</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>29</b> <b>7 p.m. Tu</b> <i>B'Shevat</i> Service (Pulpit Swap; sermon delivered by Student Rabbi Marmon) / Oneg hosted by Board of Trustees	<b>30</b> <b>9 a.m.</b> Service at synagogue (Pulpit Swap; sermon delivered by Rabbi Durbin)  <b>Tu B'Shevat</b>
<b>31</b> <b>9:20 a.m.</b> Religious School						



**FEBRUARY 2010**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue	<b>4</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>5</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> New Member Service / Oneg hosted by Board of Trustees	<b>6</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Service
<b>7</b> <b>9:20 a.m.</b> Religious School	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <b>10 a.m.</b> Book Club Meeting  <b>7 p.m.</b> Ritual / Pulpit Committee Meeting	<b>10</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue	<b>11</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>12</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> Shabbat Service / Oneg host TBA	<b>13</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Study
<b>14</b> <b>No Religious School</b>	<b>15</b> Presidents' Day	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>No Hebrew School</b>	<b>18</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>19</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> Torah Service / Oneg host TBA	<b>20</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Study  <b>7 p.m.</b> Pizza and a Movie
<b>21</b> <b>No Religious School</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <b>7 p.m.</b> TBE Board Meeting	<b>24</b> <b>6 p.m.</b> Hebrew School at synagogue	<b>25</b> <b>2 p.m.</b> Intermediate Hebrew Study	<b>26</b> <b>Purim Family Shabbat Dinner</b>  <b>7 p.m.</b> Family Service / Oneg host TBA	<b>27</b> <b>10:30 a.m.</b> Torah Study
<b>28</b> <b>9:20 a.m.</b> Religious School  <b>Purim</b>						



## **Molly's Mitzvah Project**

On October 25, the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk was held at the Queensbury High School. There were many people who walked in this event, including my parents and me. Going back a few months, I chose to raise money and awareness for Breast Cancer as my Mitzvah Project. I started this project by realizing that there are many people in my life that have been and are affected by Breast Cancer. My grandmother, teachers and other family members have been diagnosed with Breast Cancer and gone through surgery, chemo and radiation treatments. Fortunately, these women have won the battle and are doing great. I visited the American Cancer Society, in the Mount Royal Plaza, to find out how a 12-year-old could help increase awareness or raise money for Breast Cancer. The people there told me of a walk that would be taking place at the Queensbury High School. It was a walk for Breast Cancer. I thought that it was the perfect event. I committed to Making Strides Against Breast Cancer and started raising money.

In order to participate in the walk, you have to make some kind of donation, whether it was from your own pocket or donations you collected from other people. My goal was to raise at least \$2,500. I went around my neighborhood to raise money and also had a very successful garage sale in which I sold my old clothes and toys. I wrote a letter about my interest in raising money for my mitzvah project, breast cancer awareness. I distributed this letter to my friends, my parent's friends, family members, a few local businesses, and Temple Beth El congregants. My parents also circulated the letter to the other teachers in their schools. I received many generous donations.

As the walk neared, my mom made wonderful jackets that read: "Molly's Mitzvah". We also counted up all of the money. At that point I had raised \$3,514. I was so excited because I knew that it was going to a worthy cause. We had great luck. We were so fortunate, the weather cooperated. It wasn't very cold out and for the most part, the sun was shining down. When I turned in my money, I found out that I was the first pace setter of the day. A pacesetter is someone that raises over \$2,500. As we waited for the actual walk to start, we looked around at the different tables disseminating pamphlets on Breast Cancer. Local organizations were also selling many pink ribbons. The introduction to the walk consisted of Breast Cancer Survivors stating how many birthdays they've had since they were diagnosed. It was very inspiring. Then the drums and bag-pipes began and we started to walk.

Once the walk ended people hung around and some people left. The organizers approached us and said that they believed that I raised the most money out of my age group in the state and maybe the entire country. I was thrilled. Later I found out that I raised the most money, in my age group, in the entire country. I thought that it was really neat. But more importantly, the money that I raised would be going to help find a cure for Breast Cancer and that the money would be going to help other women who were fighting for their lives. That's what really counted.

It's definitely an experience that I will always remember. I loved the feeling and knowing that this money that I raised was going to give other women another birthday, women that are near and dear to my heart and other women though I don't personally know them. This made me realize that Breast Cancer doesn't just affect women that have the disease but people and families who know the women. And by raising this money, I hope to make a better tomorrow for everyone.

Molly Lieberman

## **We Need a Reporter (or two)!**

We're looking for a student to report about activities in our religious school. What's going on? What's the latest project? And how about a picture? (That's one.)

The same goes for Temple families. We'd like another reporter to interview our families about upcoming special events and to take a picture. (That's two.)

Let's get the breaking news and keep in touch all year round!

Please contact Katie in the Temple office if you are interested in applying for one of these positions!



## **Temple Beth El History**

### Part 25 - "The Mansion of My Soul"

[Following is an excerpt from the early history of Temple Beth El, written by Ella Cline. This concludes the second volume, "The Mansion of My Soul," dated 1926.]

During the September meeting our president read a most interesting report of the Sisterhood in the eighteen months of its existence. During that time we had earned one thousand nine hundred eighteen dollars and seventy-eight cents. Of this sum one thousand eight hundred sixty-five dollars and forty-eight cents had been spent for the good of Beth-El, leaving a balance of fifty-three dollars and thirty cents in our treasury. Mrs. Bronne mentioned that three sisters had been added to our membership during the year - Mrs. Adolph Ochs, Mrs. Reuben Cohen and Mrs. William Erlanger. May we do as well in the coming eighteen months! She also told us that though our members now counted thirty-six, several lived out of town; our active members were less than twenty. This report was spread on our minutes.

At this meeting Carrie Goldstein handed ten dollars to our treasurer as a New Year offering. Julia Jacobson said that the treasurer need not bother about the bills for the refreshment for the welcoming party for the rabbis. They had already been paid by her.

Just before the High Holidays the Temple was presented with fifty Psalm books by Mr. and Mrs. Dave Bronne. These were bought by Rabbi Alpert in New York.

The High Holidays began in 1926 on September 8. Rabbi Alpert officiated in a dignified and impressive manner. There was a message for each of us to take home from Temple to help us in our daily routine.

September twenty-eight our Temple was dedicated. Rabbi Alpert arranged the program. Dr. Maslon was chairman for the evening. Nearly a thousand men and women found seats within its walls. Hundreds came who could not be accommodated. Our Temple has worked as a magnet here, bringing to us some of the great men of our times. At the laying of the cornerstone Mr. Adolph Ochs and Bishop Stires came to speak and to add dignity to the occasion. For the dedication Dr. Stephen S. Wise came to deliver the main address of the evening.

Every denomination and school in town was represented on the platform and in the audience. The decorations were autumn leaves, palms and roses. The music of a full choir was particularly fine. Since it took place during the week of Succoth, Rabbi Alpert combined the dedication with a Succoth service.

Many friends were with us to share our joy. One was absent whom we loved and greatly missed. Because of a slight illness, Dr. Adolph Guttman could not travel just then. He sent us his congratulations. His three score years and ten would not have kept him from us on this occasion.

It is not for me to comment on an address delivered by Rabbi Wise. How can the mere historian of any sisterhood be expected to do justice to a theme of an orator of that high rank? In the magic of his personality, words and voice we ceased to be a handful of Jewish men and women striving for self-expression. We became part of a great people who "had built a shrine that God might dwell in the midst of them." Hope and courage and faith came to us and a quiet pride in what we had dared and what we had done.

Before leaving the Temple that evening, the Jews of our little community pledged nearly five thousand dollars, to be paid in five years, for the Jewish Institute of Religion of which Dr. Wise is the guiding genius. Could any act be more appropriate as the first act after dedication?

Till now we have worked with the energy of a creative idea. We can look upon that which we have accomplished and say that it is good. Many happy days are before us. Still there may come a time when friends must part and we shall sadly say, "God be with you till we meet again." There must come a time when from a mourning heart, we can only sigh, "Blessed be the true Judge." Let us then in loving kindness work for each other's happiness while we may.

Ella Cline, Historian.

October, 1926.





## Contributions

### GENERAL FUND

#### **David & Sari Erlanger**

In honor of Sandy Searleman and Fred Fagelman for their years of service to Temple Beth EL

#### **Dr. Richard & Jane Reisman**

In memory of Madeline Bassin

#### **Robert & Carol Kafin**

In honor of Fred Fagelman

#### **Philip & Erma Gordon**

In memory of Robert Gordon

#### **Christine McDonald**

In honor of Sandy Searleman and Fred Fagelman

#### **Judith Metzner Shepherd**

In memory of Charles Wodicka

#### **Judith Metzner Shepherd**

In honor of Barry & Ami Goldstein becoming members of Temple Beth El

#### **John Dye**

In honor of Fred Fagelman

#### **David & Carol Aronson**

General Donation

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

#### **Marta Flaum**

In honor of Rabbi Durbin officiating at Elliott Pearl's Unveiling

#### **Marie Pearl**

In honor of Rabbi Durbin officiating at Elliott Pearl's Unveiling

### ENDOWMENT FUND

#### **Mike & Gilda Siegel**

In memory of Charles Wodicka

### CEMETERY FUND

#### **Dr. Carol Suitor**

## Torah Portions

### **January 2:**

Gen. 47:25-50:26

Pr. I Kings 2:1-12

### **January 9:**

Ex. 1:1-6:1

Pr. Is. 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

### **January 16:**

Ex. 6:2-9:35

Num. 28:9-15

Pr. Is. 66:1-24

### **January 23:**

Ex. 10:1-13:16

Pr. Jer. 46:13-28

### **January 30:**

Ex. 13:17-17:16

Pr. Judges 4:4-5:31

## TSRS Update

The religious school's *Channukah* celebration was enjoyed by all who attended. Unfortunately, I had a last minute cancellation from the Israeli dance teacher, but I will be rescheduling her for next month. I owe a big thank you to Dave Lieberman for ably filling in at the last minute with a wonderful magic act that was enjoyed by all of the children. Those in attendance also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Elaine Sobel for making hundreds of amazingly delicious latkes.

The Saratoga *Klezmorim*, led by Judy Korot, sounded fantastic. They also led the audience in dancing and allowed the children to play along with some percussion instruments.

A personal highlight for me was seeing all of the creative *chanukkiyot* that were created by the students. Materials used in construction ranged from clothespins to pencils, although my favorites may have been the edible ones.

I hope that everyone had a wonderful *Channukah*.

Sincerely,

Adam Fine

TSRS Director



### We Remember

Mourners Kaddish for the following individuals will be recited in Temple on the noted dates:

#### January 1

\*Samuel Armour, \*Moses Murray Fallas, \*William Feigenbaum, Anna Fogel, \*Mary Gartner, Monroe Kaphan, Jean Kmiecik, Julius Leinoff, Bertha Hess Liebman, Morris Miller, \*Louis Nachman, \*Morris Wasserman, Dr. Samuel Waterman, Sarah Wolf

#### January 8

Nathan Barry, Charles S. Drew, \*William Erlanger, Catherine Erlanger, \*Dr. Jacques Grunblatt, \*Anne G. Jacobson, Louis Lazarus, Rose Leinoff, \*Helen Marcus, Rebecca Proller, Izabella Savarin, Betty Steiner, \*Sheldon Tucker, \*Berdie Yafa

#### January 15

Saul S. Agranov, \*Joseph Bittman, Irving Comora, Herbert Creager, \*Ruth Didakow, \*Jacob Fagelman, Lillian Hattem, Maya Helmstetter, \*Marion Weinman Leopold, \*Meyer Lunchick, \*Louis Mauer, Donald Miller, Mildred Miller, Louis Perlman, Lillian Prail, Bayla Schectman, Herman Silver, \*Minnie Spero Susman, Henry Wallace

#### January 22

\*Arthur Hecht, Bernard Schenkel, \*George B. Shepherd, Jr., Gertrude Swartz, \*Samuel Weissman, \*Rose Winer

#### January 29

\*Louis E. Brown, \*Max Burick, Rose Charnow, \*Charles Ginsburg, Rita Housman, \*Abraham Kohn, \*Samuel T. Kohn, David Krantz, Matthew Markowitz, Hyman Proller, Abe Siegel, Fred Siegel, Robert Siegel, \*Samuel Slater, \*Harry Sobel

*(\*name appears on yahrzeit plaque in the sanctuary)*

### Mia Corton Update

Mia Corton has moved to a brand new long term care facility and she is doing really well in her new home. Her new contact information is:

Mia Corton

Newbridge on the Charles

Gloria Adelson Field Health Center

7000 Great Meadow Road, Room 7215

Dedham, MA 02026

Her phone number is 781-234-7215.

#### Committees

Ritual/Pulpit Chair, Jack Hellman

Fundraising Chair, Mike Siegel

Cemetery Chair, Michael Seidel

Membership Chair, Lydia Adler

Personnel Chair, Kathy Naftaly

Musical Director, Diane Martin

*Rabbi Durbin and President Adler will be ex-officio members of all committees.*

#### The Shofar

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## Tu B'shevat

On January 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, Temple Beth El and Congregation Shaaray Tefila will be hosting a special *Tu B'shevat* (Celebration of the Trees) Shabbat evening and morning services where both student rabbi Boaz Marmon and Rabbi Durbin will deliver sermons as a pulpit swap. We encourage both congregations to attend these services which will prove to both engaging and stimulating where we will be examining the important of the environment, both as it pertains to the human body, and the impact we have on the physical environment and all those who share in our world.

*Tu B'Shevat*, also known as *Chamishah Asar B'shevat* (the fifteenth day of the month of Shevat) has a long and varied background in Judaism. Jewish literature of the first several centuries of the Common Era informs us that *Tu B'Shevat* was the New Year for trees. It was the date on which trees in Israel were determined to be mature enough for their fruit to be harvested. This date was also the New Year for the annual tithe (*ma'aser* in Hebrew), which refers to one-tenth of one's produce set aside as a religious offering. *Tu B'Shevat* was the date designated because by then the early winter rains had largely subsided and the period of "budding" was just commencing. *Tu B'Shevat* is a celebration of renewal.

*Tu B'Shevat* is considered a minor festival without many prescribed observances. It is customary to eat fruits grown in Israel, especially the fruit of the carob tree (*bokser*). In the Ashkenazi communities in Europe, it was customary to eat fifteen different kinds of fruit on the fifteenth of Shevat, and special preference was given to the kinds of fruit grown in the Land of Israel. The Sephardi Jews gave the New Year of Trees a greater significance. By the Sixteenth Century, the custom of eating fruit and reciting Psalms on *Tu B'Shevat* had been expanded by the mystics, and it became a central celebration of the kabbalists of Safed in Northern Israel. For the kabbalists, trees were a symbol of human beings, as Scripture says, "For a human is like the tree of the field" (Deut.20:19). In connection with their general concern for *tikkun olam* (restoring wholeness to the broken world)—the kabbalists regarded eating a variety of fruits on *Tu B'Shevat* as a way of improving our spiritual selves. More specifically, they believed that eating fruit was a way of expiating the first sin—eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. Similarly, trees were symbolic of the "Tree of Life," which is a visual representation of the flow of divine energy that carries goodness and blessing into the world. To encourage this flow and to affect *tikkun olam*, the kabbalists created a *Tu B'Shevat* seder, loosely modeled after the Passover seder.

Today, the most commonly associated theme ascribed to *Tu B'Shevat* is the environment and environmental issues. It is considered a festival of nature, full of wonder, joy, acknowledgment and thankfulness for God's creation as we anticipate the renewal of the natural world. Linking these ideas and *tikkun olam*, during this festival we consider our obligation to care for God's world, of which we are the custodians, and our responsibility for sharing the fruits of God's earth with all. Since the rebirth of the modern State of Israel, there has been a focus on the reforestation of the Land of Israel during *Tu B'Shevat*.

## Gail Hamel, New Judaica Shop Chairperson

In 1955 Louise Binns "stepped up to the plate" to become the chair of the Temple Beth El Judaica Shop. Louise generously and valiantly managed the shop "with distinction" for a total of fifty years! (She took a leave for the four years she served as President of our Sisterhood.) Now Louise is ready to retire! Actually she's been ready to retire for a number of years but no one was ready to take over this responsibility . . . UNTIL NOW.

Long-time Temple member Gail Hamel has volunteered. She met with Louise to discuss the transfer of responsibilities. Channukah offered the perfect opportunity for Louise to mentor Gail and now Louise is ready to "let go." Gail has some exciting ideas to make the gift shop more "user-friendly" when she sets up a web-site for use by its customers. We are secure in the knowledge that Louise is available to advise Gail as needed and Katie Weaver will continue to assist customers during her regular office hours and to take messages and special requests for items that will need to be ordered. I am assured that the transition will go smoothly.

Until the transition is complete, I would encourage customers to leave a message for Gail with Katie Weaver, the Temple's administrative Assistant until Gail has established her own procedures for serving her new customers! So it is time to send Louise best wishes for a well deserved retirement and to extend a most sincere "thank you." Gail's offer to run the shop was totally unexpected and more appreciated than she can imagine. May we have a long and profitable relationship.

Steve Adler



### Happy Birthday!

Donna Futia (1/1), Robert Kafin (1/1), Jonathan Segan (1/2), Howard Serlin (1/4), Phillip Nafaly (1/5), Paul Amengual (1/5), Aaron O'Brien (1/5), Kenneth Schwartz (1/7), Scott Wodicka (1/8), Glennis Swinson (1/8), Benjamin Steuer (1/11—2 years old!), Benjamin Brown (1/11), Rebecca Steuer (1/11—2 years old!), Olivia Steuer (1/11—2 years old!), Stuart Wieder (1/12), Daniel Katz (1/13), Monica Corton (1/21), Tom O'Brien, Jr. (1/24), Ronald Binns (1/25), Matthew Brender (1/27), Sidney Hellman (1/27), Ralph Leinoff (1/28)

### Get Well Soon

Lydia Adler, Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon, Ronald Binns, Paul Cattabiani, Mia Corton, John Dessingue, Victor Friedman, Allan Gordon, Jacqueline Gordon, Mark Grunblatt, Mike Jucowics, Paula Knight, Joan Forrest Latz, Ellen Leibman, Linda Leinoff, Joan Livingston, Jan McBean, Irit Mendelsweig, Gilbert Metz, Gerald Miller, Sade Paige, Donnalee Peters, Dave Peyton, Edie Rudnick, Alan Schwartzer, Sonny Segan, Ariel Sharon, Frank Sheridan, Helen Silverstein, Allen Suckman, William Vogt, Jarod Winchell, Bertel Wolfe



### Our Condolences

**Susan Shpeen**, wife of Rabbi Scott L. Shpeen (Senior Rabbi at Congregation Beth Emeth in Albany) and mother of Hilary Shpeen and Adam Shpeen, died on Tuesday, November 24 at the age of 52.

**Basilisa Riquelme**, grandmother of Temple's Minette Riquelme and great-grandmother of Isaiah, Quincy, Imana and Jasmine, passed away on Monday, December 7, 2009 at the age of 92.

**Jacob Herbert Goldstein**, husband of Hanna Goldstein for 68 years, father of Temple's Barry (and Ami) Goldstein, Paul (and Roni) Goldstein, and Ronald (and Joanne) Goldstein, 9 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren, passed away on Friday, December 11, 2009.

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### **Writing for *The Shofar*? Think Ahead!**

Writing something for *The Shofar*? REMEMBER YOUR DEADLINES. Articles and announcements for *The Shofar* should be sent to the Temple Administrative Assistant, Katie Weaver, well in advance of the desired publication date. The deadline for each issue (usually the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the preceding month) is shown on the Calendar page, but your article should arrive as early as possible. *The Shofar* is published before the first day of each month, and PUBLICATION WILL NOT BE DELAYED for late articles and announcements.

Remember: If your article will be timed to coincide with a holiday or event, you will want it to appear at least as early as the issue preceding the event. And if you are asking for volunteers, for reservations, or for advance ticket or merchandise purchases, your article or announcement may need to appear several months in advance. Even for something that is several months away, it is never too early to submit an announcement to get *The Shofar* readers to "save the date"!

The Editors welcome letters and other reader contributions. E-mail submission ([tbegfny@gmail.com](mailto:tbegfny@gmail.com)) is preferred. Submit your article as an e-mail message or as an attachment. If you lack internet access, you may deliver or mail your submission to the attention of Katie Weaver at Temple Beth El, 3 Marion Avenue, Glens Falls, NY 12801, to arrive prior to the deadline.

**The deadline for getting articles to Katie for the February issue of  
*The Shofar* is Friday, January 15th!**



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