

#### Welcome to

#### Temple Beth El of Augusta, Maine

embracing a spirit of community, lifelong Jewish learning, commitment to inclusiveness, and active participation in Jewish life in Central Maine

artwork by Lenora Leibowitz

P.O. Box 871 Augusta, Maine 04332

207-622-7450

bethela@gwi.net

Adar I 5774/February 2014

# From the desk of Rabbi Asch

It has been six months since my family and I moved to Maine, and we could not be more pleased. The kids have adjusted quickly to life here (though they wonder why there isn't more snow!) and Chris has embraced the cold (I'm still working on it). As I think back on the past six months, I have been struck by a number of things that I wanted to share with you.



- 1. We are a warm community and we like to spend time together: This is not true of every congregation. You may not know this, but it is not usual for the *oneg* to continue for 45 minutes after the service is over, or for people to stay for a relaxing meal after Torah study, or for more than a dozen members to come out for sledding at the rabbi's house. We really like being together, which is a great thing!
- **2. Geography presents a challenge:** Temple Beth El is *the* Reform Jewish community for central Maine and our members come from all over. That is both wonderful and challenging. We have Hebrew School students who travel an hour to be with us each week, and congregants who drive 30 to 45 minutes to come to Shabbat services or Torah study. It is fantastic that people are so motivated that they travel so far, but the distance can interfere with people coming more often.
- **3. Study is at the heart of what we do:** Almost twenty people attended Torah study when it was —7 degrees outside. I think that says it all! Seriously, this is a congregation that loves to study people excitedly discuss sermons and the Saturday morning text studies, and the Hebrew School students and parents are eager to learn and participate during Circle Time. I am inspired by your enthusiasm for learning!
- **4. Space is an issue:** I know this is not news to anyone here, but we need more room. Our sanctuary is a lovely space for worship and for our Hebrew School Circle Time. But things get tight when we have events like the Tu B'Shevat seder and during Hebrew school, when we have three (and sometimes four) classes meeting in our building. We use the *bimah*, the common space, the classrooms in the back, and even the kitchen! I am glad we will start to address this issue over the next several years.
- **5. People are willing to jump in and make things happen:** One advantage of being in a small congregation is that people *have* to lend a hand, and TBE members do so. From setting out chairs to bringing food for *oneg*, from setting up the printer to picking up the *challah*, members are willing to step up and do what is needed. And people have seized upon the High Holidays call to "ask what you can do for your synagogue." Since the High Holidays, we have started a *Rosh Chodesh* women's group, a book club, and a *kiddush* lunch after services. All of these are programs conceived, created, and coordinated by congregants, not by me.
- **6. Social action matters to us:** People want to be involved with social action in the community as part of Temple Beth El. We had 27 adults and children show up to volunteer at the food bank on Martin Luther King Day, some of whom even took the day off of work to be there. This type of enthusiasm shows that social action is something we want to do more of, and I would like to find more opportunities (and volunteers to run these programs) in the future.

# Hope Springs Eternal: Dozens Brave Frigid Weather to Celebrate Tu B'Shevat at TBE

A wonderful, inter-generational group of more than 30 Temple members heralded the beginning of spring (in Israel, at least) with a thought-provoking seder that featured dancing, singing, poetry, and plenty of fruits and nuts. Below, Judith Plano explains the deeper meaning of the festivities.



#### By Judith Plano

While we here in Maine are hunkered down in snow, ice, and freezing rain, in Israel the almond trees are getting ready to unfurl their dainty pink and white blossoms, and trees are planted to celebrate the Tu B'Shevat. At Temple Beth El, we celebrated with a seder that was originally invented by the Kabbalists in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Kabbalists saw Tu B'Shevat as a time of personal rebirth that happens in four stages

#### 1. Assiyah (Action)

We drank white grape juice, reminding us of the winter-sleeping world we live in. The children led us in the blessing over the wine. The fruits we ate during this section symbolized winter. We ate fruits with a hard outer shell like nuts or citrus fruit or bananas. On the personal level this section reminded us that we sometimes hide ourselves within a shell we have built for protection. Rabbi Asch led everyone in an Israeli dance to symbolize action.

#### 2. Yetzirah (Formation)

The second cup of wine or juice was pink – white with a little bit of red mixed in. This reminded us that spring is coming. The fruits of this section were those with a soft covering but a hard inside pit such as dates or olives. On the personal level these fruits remind us that we are centered by our families, our values, the Jewish community or whatever we find centering for ourselves. We sang *Tzadik k'tamar* ... the righteous shall bloom like a date palm...

#### 3. Beri'ah (Creation)

The third cup of wine/juice was light red – red with a little bit of white added. Spring is here! The fruits we ate reminded us of the fullness of spring. These fruits are totally edible: strawberries, blueberries, figs, grapes. We can continue the work of creation by our actions. Since this cup was about creation, Rabbi Asch challenged us to take 5 minutes and write a poem about some aspect of nature.

#### 4. Atzilut (Emanation/Nobility)

The fourth cup of wine is red. It reminded us of everything that grows in the summer. With this cup we ate bread instead of fruit. Making bread means we have to work: to mix, to knead, to shape, to bake. It reminds us that we are partners with God. On the personal level, that partnership entails a responsibility to take care of the world God created. Rabbi Asch asked the community what new things they would like to do in the coming year to help take care of the world God gave us. Two of the suggestions were to recycle more and to revive the synagogue vegetable garden.

We ended with the singing of Hinei Mah Tov. How good and pleasant it was for us to sit together and celebrate in unity, with all ages, from toddlers to synagogue elders.

# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Ice-Storm Wine Tasting to Feature Wines of Spain & Portugal

Please join us for a sampling of Sommelier Syd Sewall's selection of Crisp and aromatic wines from the Iberian Peninsula — the world's third largest regional producer.



On the Menu
Tapas

Spanish Fish Stew
Dessert
Coffee/tea

# Saturday, February 15th at 6:30 p.m.

\$50.00 per person with all proceeds to benefit the Temple Please RSVP to Nancy Kelly (622-4076 or ngkelly@roadrunner.com) by February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Sorry...No walk-ins & no-one under 21

# Adventures in China: Robert Katz Will Speak About His Travels at TBE on February 7<sup>th</sup>

In the summer of 2012, Temple member and UMA Professor of Art Robert Katz spent three weeks traveling through China. Katz was one of seven North American artists invited to exhibit his sculptures at a cross-cultural exhibition at the Jiangsu Art Academy. In addition, he was invited to present his video project ("Were The House Still Standing: Maine Survivors and Liberators Remember the Holocaust" that is permanently installed at the Michael Klahr Center on the UMA campus in Augusta) at Nanjing University. While in China, Katz was an official guest of the directors of the Memorial to the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre at the Hands of the Japanese Imperial Forces, as well as at the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum. Katz traveled thousands of miles through China by plane, train, taxi and hikes to explore historic sites. On February 7th, he will share his adventures at Temple Beth El.

Note: Because Katz's talk and images of China deal with sensitive topics such as the Nanjing Massacre, it may not be appropriate for young children.

# **TBE Creates New Policy for Rabbinic Services**

#### By Anya Goldey, TBE 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Recently, the Temple Board created a new policy for rabbinic services to provide the rabbi with guidance for lifecycle rites and pastoral functions and fees. These guidelines are designed to balance TBE's programming needs and ability to meet operating expenses. The new policy covers three items: 1) suggested honoraria (bris/baby naming, wedding, funeral, and unveiling) both for members of the TBE congregation and for non-members of the congregation; 2) communication of rabbinic services; and 3) *gerut* (conversion).

Briefly, the honoraria policy states that members of TBE (who have by their dues contributed to the rabbi's support) have an expectation to receive reasonable and appropriate rabbinic services in time of need for lifecycle rites and pastoral functions, provided that performance of such services shall not be contrary to the convictions of the rabbi. Under no circumstances will the full-time rabbi set a fee for officiating at lifecycle occasions for members of the congregation. Temple donations for these lifecycle rites and pastoral functions are welcome, and the policy proposes some suggested donations for these events. For non-members, TBE will charge a reasonable fee for each lifecycle rite or service provided by the rabbi. The Board and Rabbi will take reasonable steps to accommodate the religious and spiritual needs of non-members.

The policy for rabbinic services has been added to the temple's by-laws, and copies of the policy in its entirety will be available for review at the temple.



The B'nai mitzvah class put the stories of the Torah in order at Hebrew School.

# Now That the cats are gone The birds come To eat the seeds Of the sunflower. — TBE Anonymous A gentle breeze can make a humble bag dance like Baryshnikov. — TBE Anonymous

# Shabbat in the Wild Rescheduled for February

Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>
10:30am

The weather got a little too wild for our 13<sup>th</sup> annual Shabbat in the Wild – our third ice storm of the season forced us to postpone the annual wilderness Shabbat. It will now be held on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. Please join Susan Bakaley, Chris Marshall, and your hearty TBE friends in the Montville countryside. At this time of deepest cold and dark, a spark of life is stirring in the roots of trees, though growth hasn't yet begun. Trees can teach us about this hidden "inkling" that



precedes all creating, showing us how our own inner spark can grow and flourish. We will take our prayer outdoors along moderate trails, stopping at particular points to chant, offer readings, and share with each other.

Dress for the weather, wearing boots and layers. Bring warm hats, gloves/mittens, and snowshoes (if you have them), as well as some birdseed or bread crumbs. Skis don't work well on these trails.

There will be a dairy potluck lunch. Bring a favorite tree fruit to share for our dessert. Contact Rabbi Asch for carpooling information: rabbiasch@gwi.net. For more information, directions and RSVP contact Susan & Chris:

wiserock@fairpoint.net 589-4632

# Todah Rabbah (Thank You!)

- **Abigail Perry**, Director of the Augusta Food Bank, for coming in on her day off so that we could volunteer
- Jonathan and Nathan Milne for setting up the new TBE printer
- All who helped to set up for the Tu B'Shevat seder
- All who brought food for the Kiddush lunches after Shabbat services

# Mazel Tov

- **Deb and Syd Sewall** on the birth of their grandson Joshua.
- Our college seniors on their early decision acceptances to their first-choice colleges:

Harry Adams — Dickinson College Amy Bley — College of the Atlantic Jake Sclar — Boston University

## Ask not what your synagogue can do for you...



# TBE Sets Food Bank Record on MLK Day

The Katz twins (Noah and Ava) offer their insights about volunteering on Martin Luther King Day, when TBE sent 27 people to the Augusta Food Bank – the biggest volunteer group the Food Bank has ever hosted.

**Noah:** On January 20, 2014, Temple Beth El of Augusta helped out at the Augusta Food Bank. Members organized food that was donated and worked at jobs from sorting blueberries to sorting tater-tots. The members learned about the work and the thousands of meals that were given to people around the state.

**Ava:** At the warehouse, we all saw that they collected so much food for the many people who need a good meal to eat. They told us that if people can, they should bring in cans of soup and cans of fruit [low sugar]. We can collect them at the Temple and bring them over.

Mom: Martin Luther King's work for social justice and the anniversary of his birth seemed to be the right day for the large outpouring of volunteer action from our synagogue community. When Abraham Joshua Heschel marched with Dr. King, he was doing "tikkun olam" and said that he was "praying with his feet." It was great to see so many TBE families doing tikkun olam by working to feed those in need. Hopefully, this will be an ongoing tradition.





TBE sent quite a crew to volunteer at the Augusta Food Bank for MLK Day. Thank you to everyone who spent the morning helping out!

# Ask not what your synagogue can do for you...

#### **TBE Book Club**



The Man in the White
Sharkskin Suit:
A Jewish Family's
Exodus
from Old Cairo
to the New World
By Lucette Lagnado

Thursday, Feb. 27th 6:30—8:00pm Temple Beth El

Please email Gail Fels at gpfels@aol.com or Nancy Ross at nancyjeanneross@gmail.com to let them know about attendance and for more information.



#### **BACK TO BASICS CLASS**

Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> 5—6:30pm Temple Beth El

The fourth in a series of classes designed for adults who did not have an opportunity to learn as children or who want a "refresher" course in Judaism. New students are welcome!

We will discuss the basics of the Jewish life cycle, holidays, history, prayers, texts and more. If you are interested in becoming an adult *b'nai mitzvah*, considering conversion, or just want to learn more, this class is for you. Bring your dinner (and some food to share) if you'd like.

#### ROSH CHODESH WOMEN'S GROUP

Come celebrate the new month of Adar-I!

Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> 5:00—6:00 pm Temple Beth El



Newcomers are always welcome! In addition to talking we love to nosh. Snacks to share are welcomed, but definitely not required. © Contact Janika Eckert (207-313-1694 or jeckert@johnnyseeds.com) or Arwen Roth (arwenroth@yahoo.com) for more information.

## NOSH 'N SCHMOOZE

Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> 8:30—10:00am Bagel Mainea



The Urban Dictionary defines "nosh 'n schmooze" as "a gathering of friends at a favorite local restaurant where everyone eats and shares stories with each other. Usually occurs at a place that serves bagels." That is exactly what we do! Join Rabbi Asch for bagels and conversation at Bagel Mainea. We'll discuss whatever is on your mind, Jewish or not. Come schmooze with us!

#### **Kiddush Lunches**

We are now joining together for a meal after Torah study each month. If you come to Torah study, we'd love to have you bring some food to share. Crackers and cheese, dessert or fruit are easy additions to our nosh. You are welcome to get creative as well! We hope you'll stay for a meal after study.

#### Mark Your Calendars

# **February Service Schedule**

February 1<sup>st</sup> — 10:00am Shabbat Service

# **February 7**<sup>th</sup> — **7:00pm Shabbat Service**Guest speaker and TBE member Robert Katz will talk about his adventures in China. See page 3 for more details.



# February 8<sup>th</sup> — 10:30am Shabbat in the Wild

Join us in Montville for this amazing hike through the woods. See page 5 for more details. If you want to carpool from Temple Beth El, please contact Rabbi Asch.

**February 15<sup>th</sup>** — **10:30am Torah Study and Kiddush Lunch at Rabbi Asch's house** This week we delve into the story of the Golden Calf. This Torah study will be held at Rabbi Asch's house (the Temple is going to be set up for the wine tasting later that night).

50 Academy St. in Hallowell.

Parking in the driveway and on the street. Bring a treat to share for Kiddush lunch.

# February 28<sup>th</sup> — 6:00pm Family Shabbat Service 6:45pm Congregational Potluck 7:30pm Shabbat Service

Everyone is invited to join the Family Service, which is geared towards children birth through third grade. We will sing Shabbat songs, have a short service, and hear a story from Rabbi Asch.

All are encouraged to come to the congregational potluck at 6:45pm. Look for an online sign up in the upcoming weekly email.

At 7:30pm we begin our traditional Friday night service including a *d'var torah* (teaching) from Rabbi Asch.

# March 1<sup>st</sup> — 10:30am Torah Study

Please bring a treat to share for the meal after study.

#### From the Hebrew School

## The Four Parts of Hebrew School Learning

#### By Rabbi Asch

You might not realize it, but there are actually four distinct parts to your child's learning at Hebrew School. All of them are important to helping to raise our children as educated, "menchy" Jews with a strong sense of Jewish identity and community.

#### 1. Social time

All of our students are all minorities in their secular schools, so it is vital that they are able to spend time with other Jewish kids and build a community of Jewish friends and adults. The 9:30-9:40 time before we start class is an important time to socialize, check in with other teachers (I often see Linda's old students giving her hugs), hang out with *madrachim*, and share what is happening in their lives. During class, teachers also incorporate activities which help our students get to know one another better and develop friendships.

#### 2. Judaic Content

We want our students to have a broad knowledge of Jewish texts, history, and values. Our youngest students study a different holiday or value every session. Uri's and Linda's classes work with the Chai curriculum to teach Jewish values. Our b'nai mitzvah students focus on different modules created by our four teachers. Each teacher will tell you more about this part of his or her class in forthcoming newsletter articles.

#### 3. Hebrew

Having a basic knowledge of Hebrew helps our students pray in our community and in Jewish communities they encounter for the rest of their lives. This year, students are working with the same partners and *madrachim* each week and each group goes through the books at their own pace. When learning letters, we

are using <u>The Hebrew Primer</u>, a new book that has gotten good reviews from students and teachers alike. After mastering letters, students work in books that teach them the meanings behind the prayers as well as basic Hebrew vocabulary and root words. These books are a bit more challenging and go at a slower pace, so they are a bit of an adjustment. However, our students and *madrachim* are up to the challenge!

#### 4. Prayer

Circle Time is really a prayer service that helps to build community and teach students the basic elements of prayer. This is a vital part of our day together. Students learn the prayers by participating actively in Circle Time; parents can help by following along with their children. I often find that our students think they know the prayers, but mumble their way through large parts of them. This is a great time to pay attention to individual words and sounds—that is why I read slowly. This is also time to learn the structure of the service and basic prayer choreography (when to sit, stand, and bow). Finally, it is a time to have a group teaching about a Jewish value, a big question, a ritual, and other important topics.

#### **Hebrew School Calendar**

#### February 2nd

9:30—Noon

B'nai Mitzvah with Rich Goldman

#### February 9th

9:30—Noon

B'nai Mitzvah with Rich Goldman

#### **February 16th**

NO HEBREW SCHOOL (February Break)

#### February 23rd

9:30—Noon

B'nai Mitzvah with Rich Goldman

Visit by Leslie Zide, Director of Camp Kingswood and special circle time presentation. Parents are encouraged to attend to learn more about this fabulous Jewish camp!

#### **Donations**

#### General Fund

- Richard Fein
- Linda Hermans & Richard Goldman
- Thomas Isaacson
- Barda Leavitt
- Peter & Suzanne Rosenberg
- Robin & Rabbi Larry Rubinstein

#### Capital Improvement Fund

• Beth & Steven Shapiro, in memory of Jimmy Carvutto

#### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- Ethan & Emily Bessey
- Seth Greene
- Vicki & Richard Horowitz

#### Yahrzeit Donations

- Dean Corner, in memory of David Corner
- Patricia & Allen Davis, in memory of Alex Davis
- Ellen Bader Kandel, in memory of Dorothy Bader
- Linda Hermans & Richard Goldman, in memory of David S. Goldman
- Beth & Steven Shapiro, in memory of Daniel Bulba, Faye Goldberg Montell, and Hayden Goldberg



#### Rose Golden Mitzvah Fund

Email Joan Freiman at joanandlowellfreiman@gmail.com or call her at 845-2544 to send a Mitzvah Card, with a suggested donation of \$18, but any amount will do. Mitzvah cards with the beautiful design by Lenora Leibowitz shown above can be sent to express condolences or to share in the joy of a Bar Mitzvah, wedding, birthday, anniversary, graduation, or any notable event or accomplishment. If you wish to send a card but do not want your name to be listed publicly, just let Joan know.

#### An Alternative Way to Honor a Loved One

We will help you customize a bookplate to be put in our prayer books. The suggested donation is \$18. A book plate in honor or memory of a loved one will be inserted into any new books that you wish to donate to our reference or children's library. Please contact Rabbi Asch (rabbisasch@gwi.net) for our book wish list. Please email bethela@gwi.net and let us know how you would like your bookplate to read.

Making a donation to Temple Beth El is a special way to honor family and friends.

#### **General Fund**

This fund now includes the former Rabbi's Fund and covers temple operating expenses including Rabbi and staff salaries.

#### **Capital Improvements Fund**

Your contributions to this fund will be put towards general building and grounds maintenance.

#### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

This fund helps Rabbi Asch\_meet special needs in the\_greater community.

#### **Memorial Plagues**

Remember a loved one with a memorial plaque in the synagogue. Donation: \$200

Payment due at time of order.

#### **Tree of Life**

Acknowledge a milestone in someone's life by adding an inscribed leaf to the Temple's Tree of Life Donation: \$36. Payment due at time of order.

Please make checks payable to Temple Beth El. Indicate the fund to which you want to contribute and mail to TBE, Box 871, Augusta, ME 04332. Undesignated checks will go to the General Fund.

Temple Beth El accepts Visa & Mastercard. Please contact the office with any questions.

#### **Temple Beth El**

Phone: 207-622-7450 Rabbi Erica Asch 207-242-9792

Email: rabbiasch@gwi.net

President
David B. Offer

davidboffer@hotmail.com 623-7820

Past President:

Fran Rudoff 582-3826

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:

Anya Goldey 622-1919

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:

Shira Adams mommagecko@yahoo.com

<u>Treasurer</u>:

Hildie Lipson hildielipson@gmail.com

Secretary:

Judith Plano jplano12@gmail.com

Hebrew School:

Jennifer Yoder 873-7466 Emily Bley 685-9938

Religious Committee:

Judith Plano 622-2067

Membership:

Anya Goldey 622-1919

**Events:** 

Nancy Kelly 622-4076

Building:

Syd Sewall 623-5013 George Viles 547-3384

Financial:

Sumner Lipman 485-2390

#### Board of Directors:

Richard Goldman, Julia Hanauer-Milne, Stacey Mondschein Katz, Nancy Kelly, Jill Rubinson, Stanley Sclar

#### Trustees:

Peter Bickerman, Joel Davis, Jerry Bley

#### **Honorary Trustees:**

Julius Goos, Sumner Lipman, Syd Sewall

# Refuah Sh'lemah Get Well to:

Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto

Martha Child Natalie Cohen Alan Davis

Harriet Eisner

Jay Franzel

Carol Graham

**Bob Gross** 

Sherri Joseph

Dick Kelly

Nancy Kelly

Maria King

Barbara Marionhoff

Marsha Mogk

Wayne Mogk

Sy Mondschein

**Harold Robbins** 

Angelo Sacks

Rosemary Schiff

Ted Schiff

Jack Shapiro

Lillian Slater

Stuart Smith

**David Wells** 

רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵכָּוּה

## Portland Chevra Kadisha

Jewish Funeral Home

In time of need, one Jew caring for another

471 Deering Ave. Portland, ME 04103 207.774.3733



## **February Yahrzeits**

Perry Bakaley David Bentkofsky Chaim Cohen Lia P. da Cunha de Araujo **Bud Earle** Erik Eckert Leah Deborah Freed Laura Goldstein Lauraine Goodrich Helen Hannaford Frederick LaPenna **Edwin Aaron Macy** (Alchanah ben David) Robert Perlberg Milton Prager Harry M. Slosberg **Irving Smilowitz** Sidney J. Sussman

# **Lovejoy Dental Center**

Allen S. Goldey D.D. S., P.A.



P.O. Box 125 Albion, ME 04910 207-437-2100

# The Storage Depot

878 Brunswick Avenue Gardiner, ME 04345 207-582-4800 Offering storage units starting at \$37/month for a 5'by 5'

# Keep in Touch

# **February Service Schedule**

Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am Shabbat Service

Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm Shabbat Service with Guest Speaker Robert Katz

Saturday, February 8th at 10:30am Shabbat in the Wild (Montville)

Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am Torah Study and Kiddush Lunch (Rabbi Asch's house)

Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>
6:00pm Family Shabbat Service
6:45pm Congregational Potluck
7:30pm Shabbat Service

Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:30am Torah Study

# **Upcoming Events**

Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 3:00pm Second Annual Hearts for Ezra Auction and Fundraiser

Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am
Bat Mitzvah of Eliana Brown

Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to Noon
Purim Carnival

Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm Shabbat Service with Guest Speaker Jon Weiss "The New Anti-Semitism in France: The Dieudonné affair"

**Saturday, March 29**<sup>th</sup> **at 7:00pm**Havdallah service and dessert



Temple Beth El P.O. Box 871 Augusta, ME 04332 207-622-7450 www.bethelaugusta.org

Temple Beth El embraces a spirit of community, lifelong Jewish learning, sense of inclusiveness, and active participation in Jewish life. The congregation provides opportunities for its members to engage in prayer, study, and Jewish ethical practices.

Don't forget to grab a green Clynk bag for your returnable bottles! We raised more than \$600 last year with our Clynk program. Thank you to all who participate!

