

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

Cheshvan-Kislev-Tevet 5779-80/Nov.-Dec. 2019

From the desk of Rabbi Asch

What an amazing high holiday season we had! From our selichot services in Vaughan Woods to our High Holidays at the UU Church, from our Sukkot Festival at my house to our Simchat Torah celebrations in Bath and Waterville, our construction forced us to get creative with our observances this year. I hope that in the midst of all this newness, you were able to connect with something familiar.

This balance between newness and familiarity is something I felt particularly deeply during this High Holiday season. This was my seventh year of leading services and putting up the sukkah. The first few years I was at Temple Beth El, everything was new. I remember people asking me “How do we do tashlich?”, “How do we end Yom Kippur?” and many other questions. My response was always, “I don’t know how we do it, this is my first year!” But now, I do know how we “do” the High Holidays. I know which volunteers take on what projects, how long services will last, who the people are that I am inviting up the bimah, and what happened last year. That familiarity is wonderful; it feels good to know the liturgy and to know the community.

At the same time, familiarity can lead to complacency. There is a disincentive to try something new. Comfort is a powerful force. Being out of our regular space felt a little bit uncomfortable, but it also opened up new possibilities. What if we held a Sukkot celebration at someone’s house every year? What if we joined with another synagogue for Simchat Torah? What would it look like to change our Torah service? We were able to be open to the possibilities because we were not able to do what we have always done. We don’t want to replicate everything we did (moving all our books, Torahs, and ritual objects comes to mind), but having some distance allowed us to have a fresh look at our traditions.

As I prepare to enter my sabbatical at the end of this month (see pg. 3) I am excited about the possibilities that will come with having some distance. [Researchers have found that incubation periods can boost creative insight](#). When we take a break and focus on something unrelated to our original problem, we return more open to new possibilities. While some of my sabbatical will be filled with “work adjacent” activities — visiting Israel, working on Hebrew, studying Jewish texts, and visiting other synagogues — much of my sabbatical will be a break to focus on something other than the synagogue. My time with family and friends, the chance to travel, reading non-Jewish books, cooking and spending more time outside, will help to give me the distance and space to return rested and full of new creative insights.

Similarly, this sabbatical period is a chance for all of you to learn from new people. We have six guest scholars who will be joining us, and congregants will be leading services and Torah study. I have no doubt that all of these new people will expose the congregation to new ways of teaching, ideas, melodies, and more. My hope is that when I come back you, too, will have new ideas and insights to share with me based on everything you have experienced during the months that I am away.

Lastly, I want to offer a huge thank you to everyone who is making this sabbatical possible. So many of you are taking on new roles and responsibilities for the coming months. I appreciate your dedication to our congregation. Without your help, this sabbatical would not be possible.

TBE Schedule: November—December

Services

Friday, November 1
7:00pm Shabbat Service

Saturday, November 9
10:30am Shabbat Service
12:30pm Kiddush Lunch

Friday, November 15
6:00pm Shabbat Service
7:00pm Potluck Dinner

Friday, December 6
6:00pm Shabbat Service
7:00pm Potluck Dinner

Saturday, December 14
10:30am Shabbat Service
12:30pm Kiddush Lunch

Friday, December 20
7:00pm Shabbat Service

Torah Study

Saturday, November 2, 16, & 23
10:30am Torah Study & Kiddush Lunch

Saturday, December 7 & 21
10:30am Torah Study & Kiddush Lunch

Hebrew School

Sunday, November 3, 10, 17, & 24
9:30am Hebrew School

Sunday, December 8 & 15
9:30am Hebrew School

Sunday, December 22
3:30pm Chanukkah themed Hebrew School,
followed by Hanukkah party

No Hebrew School on Sunday, December 1 and 29

TBE Activities

Monday, November 4 & 25
Monday, December 16
6:30pm Introduction to Judaism

Wednesday, November 6
Thursday, November 14
Wednesday, December 4
5:30pm Soup & Study

Thursday, November 21
Thursday, December 19
6:00pm TBE Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 11
5:30pm TBE Book Club

Sunday, December 22
5:00pm Hanukkah Party

Interfaith Activities

Every Tuesday
12:30pm Volunteering at Addie's Attic

Today Rabah

- The **Augusta UU Church**, for letting us use their space for High Holiday services
- **Cree Krull** and the moving crew
- **Fran Rudolph and Chuck Cohen** for organizing food
- **Stacey Mondschein Katz** for the beautiful music
- **Noah and Ava Katz** for the Shofar service
- **Jay Franzel, Jen Tabek, Rachel Seizler Fletcher, Linda Kallen, & Yale Marienhoff** for help with Torah and Haftorah services
- the **Ritual Committee: Thea Zinck, J. Collins, Yale Marienhoff**
- **Nan Salvino** for all of her help during the holidays
- **Emily Bessey** for coordinating our amazing greeters
- **Chris Myers Asch** for children's programming
- All of the volunteers who made our holidays possible

Our Rabbi's Sabbatical

By Chuck Cohen, President

Several months ago [I wrote a review](#) of the book entitled the "New Rabbi," which I also used to introduce the topic of our Rabbi's upcoming sabbatical (see page 4). The start of Rabbi Asch's three-month sabbatical — November 28, 2019 — is now almost upon us.

At a recent meeting with the Rabbi, I confessed that the thought of her leaving us for three months was making me a little queasy. She asked me why and I responded that I felt like our mother was leaving us out on our own. As I look back at those times when my mother did "leave me out on my own," such as camp or college, such times, while certainly nerve-wracking on one hand, were also real opportunities for growth and adventure.

As part of my previous article to you, I asked for volunteers to take on the numerous tasks that Rabbi Asch gets done and will need to continue to get done during her absence. Many members of the congregation have stepped up and volunteered. There are still some tasks — or "opportunities for learning" — that still need to be filled, however. We are looking for people to give rides, lead shivah minyans and services, visit people who are ill and update the Temple calendar and website. If you have not volunteered for an opportunity, or think you may be able to take on another one, please contact one of the members of the Sabbatical Committee (Jay Collins, Chris Zinck, or Fran Rudoff) at your earliest convenience.

Finally, I know that many of us, including myself, will be tempted to call the Rabbi with "just one question" or "ask her to do just one thing" during the sabbatical. My answer to that is that we can't give in to that temptation and go there if we are truly to fulfill our obligation to the Rabbi and allow her a peaceful and restful time away from her duties.

While the next several months will be challenging for us, I feel very confident in this congregation that we are up for the challenge, and like going to college, we will come out of it stronger and more capable. If you have any questions during the Rabbi's sabbatical as to who is doing what, how a particular task will get done, or if you believe that there is a situation of such gravity that a call to the Rabbi is warranted, please feel free to be in touch with me (youguy@roadrunner.com).

Rabbi Asch's Sabbatical: Frequently Asked Questions **November 28, 2019-February 23, 2020**

What is a sabbatical?

The term "sabbatical" is related to the word Shabbat (a time of rest). In the Torah, every seventh year is a sabbatical year where the land lies fallow. Sabbaticals are typically taken by rabbis in their seventh year of work for a congregation. During this period Rabbi Asch will not be working and will have the opportunity to rest, study, travel and gain new perspectives. Rabbi Asch's contract states that she will take three months of sabbatical this year and three months of sabbatical between July 2020 and June 2021.

More on page 4

Rabbi Asch's Sabbatical: Frequently Asked Questions (cont.) **November 28, 2019-February 23, 2020**

Who will serve the congregation during Rabbi Asch's sabbatical?

We have a talented group of lay leaders and visiting rabbis who will be leading services and Torah study while Rabbi Asch is gone. Regularly scheduled events like the Chanukkah party, the Tu B'Shvat Seder, Soup and Study, and Introduction to Judaism will still be happening. All of Rabbi Asch's regular responsibilities will be covered by congregants or guest teachers. This will be a chance for everyone to learn from some wonderful rabbis and Jewish scholars. Additionally, we have a talented team serving as our sabbatical committee to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

Who do I call if I have an emergency?

Nancy Kelly is serving as the contact person in case of a death or serious illness. In case of emergency, you can reach her at 622-4076. Several local rabbis have volunteered to be available to officiate at funerals and support families through the grieving process. We also have a dedicated group of volunteers under the leadership of Susan Bakaley Marshall who can help those who are ill with visits or meals.

Will Rabbi Asch be in contact with us during her sabbatical? Will she check email or answer her phone?

Rabbi Asch will not be checking in on the synagogue during her absence. One goal of the sabbatical is for Rabbi Asch to have the ability to step back from the day to day work of the synagogue to gain distance and clarity. This will help her return refreshed and renewed.

Email: Rabbi Asch will not be checking her email during her sabbatical. Please do not send her emails. If you forget and email her, you will receive a detailed "away" message directing you who to contact in her absence. When Rabbi Asch returns to work, she will delete all emails in her inbox without reading them.

Phone Calls and Texts: Rabbi Asch will also not be answering calls or texts to her emergency cell phone. Temple President Chuck Cohen will be in touch with Rabbi Asch if an emergency arises which the board feels needs her attention.

Social Media: Rabbi Asch will not be checking social media during absence and will not see your posts or Facebook messages.

No doubt many of you will see Rabbi Asch around town during her time "away." We ask that you not discuss synagogue business with her when you see her around town. You should feel free to ask her if she has read any good books or cooked any new recipes lately!

What will Rabbi Asch be doing on her sabbatical?

Rabbi Asch has three goals for her sabbatical: rest, a change of perspective, and learning. Rabbi Asch and her family will travel to Israel for the month of December. There she will visit with family and work on her Hebrew. During January, Rabbi Asch will be teaching a JanPlan course at Colby College. In February, she and her family will travel through the South and spend some time in California with her parents. Rabbi Asch plans to visit other synagogues for Shabbat worship and engage in text study with colleagues. She also plans to spend time with her family, being outside, reading, cooking and listening to podcasts.

Who do I contact with questions about the sabbatical?

You may speak with Rabbi Asch or Temple President Chuck Cohen (youguy@roadrunner.com).

What's happening at TBE

Who is in charge of what during the sabbatical?

November 28, 2019-February 23, 2020

Sabbatical Committee: Fran Rudoff, Chris Zinck and Jay Collins will be serving as the sabbatical committee and making sure that everything runs smoothly while Rabbi Asch is away.

Hebrew School: Amy Bley and Bria Watson

Services: Jay Collins

Torah Study: Cree Krull

Pastoral Care: Susan Bakaley Marshall

Death and Serious Illness: Nancy Kelly is the contact person and will put you in touch with a rabbi.

Newsletter: Amy Bley and Chris Myers Asch

Weekly Email: Cree Krull

Soup and Study and Introduction to Judaism will have guest teachers



Save these dates!



Ice Storm Wine Tasting:

January 25

Shabbat in the Wild:

February 28

TEMPLE BETH EL
WELCOMES
RABBINIC INTERN
MADELINE COOPER

**FUN
FACTS
ABOUT
MADELINE**



- Before rabbinical school, Madeline worked as a political organizer in New Hampshire and met several presidential candidates-
- As a child, Madeline spent two summers at camp in Maine, where she developed a love of swimming in lakes and Gifford's ice cream
- Madeline spent her first year of rabbinical school living in Jerusalem
- In her free time, Madeline loves to cook, create art, and watch classic films
- Madeline loves musical theater, and knows all of the words to many musicals. Some of her favorites include Hamilton, the Sound of Music, and Les Miserables.

*Madeline will be joining us
November 15-17th*

Thank you to the **Center for Small Town Jewish Life** for making Madeline's visit possible.

Shabbat: Turn Off, Tune Out, & Read Every Word

By Cree Krull

For those of you old enough to remember the Sixties, you'll recall Marshall McLuhan's phrase "The medium is the message." For those of you young enough to engage in texting, you know this acronym: TLDR, aka Too Long Didn't Read. McLuhan smiles from the grave every time we skim content meant to be read word for word, because he grasped what's going on with media.

This isn't a discourse on McLuhan. Rather, I want you to follow my thread of thought about time and message, and frankly, dear readers, the odds are against us. You're probably reading this on a computer - a laptop, a tablet, a phone. For every one of you that prints out the bimonthly newsletter and reads it at your leisure with a cup of coffee at the kitchen table, there are five of you, I'll wager, who skim it sitting on the toilet with your phone in your hand. No judgment, people: I do it, too.

In 1983's "The Big Chill," Jeff Goldblum's character Michael writes puffery for *People Magazine*. Nothing, he explains, can take longer to read than the time it takes the average American to take a shit. Prescient, as we've become nothing but *People Magazine* readers, everything bullet-pointed and bolded to make sure we only have to pay attention at the lowest level, our attention like a thrown rock skipping across the surface of a lake. For many of us - and I hesitate to specify an age range because the effect is all too universal - reading is a luxury too expensive for our time budgets. If you're skimming this article on the john, you're going to miss that last line, which is the lead-up to my next thought: just put the phone down. Print this entire newsletter out (sorry, trees) and savor the pretty words I'm stringing together for you.

And don't read it just any day - read it on Shabbat. Why Shabbat? Because if you're diligently crossing items off your to-do list on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday before sundown, then come Shabbat, you'll find you have time to read on Saturday. You will have created the island of slow time in your week that will allow you to read this entire article, even without the bullet points. And let's face it, dear readers: if I've described you and your skimming habits, you need Shabbat. I know I do, and - plenty of judgment here - so does nearly everyone I know. By candle-lighting I feel like a runner gasping for breath at the end of a hard race, hauling myself across the finish line. Only on Shabbat do I find the space-time to stop and read *every word*. If you're not in the habit, I invite you. Twenty-five hours of feeling like you have all the time in the world? Who doesn't want that?

Since we started with the Sixties, let's finish there by reclaiming Timothy Leary's old maxim, 'Turn on, tune in, drop out' from its illicit connotations and repurpose it for today. We're all on full-time now, and tuned in more than we want. For this coming Shabbat, try this: Turn off, tune out, and read every word.

When will we have our building back??

We will be holding services in the new space starting **either** November 15th or the

**Exploring Kashrut: Did our
biblical ancestors eat
treif?**

With guest, Max Edwards

**Thursday, November 14th
5:30-7:00pm**



SOUP AND STUDY

**JOIN FOR A DELICIOUS DINNER
AND STUDY AND DISCUSSION OF
JEWISH TEXTS AT TEMPLE BETH EL,
AUGUSTA**

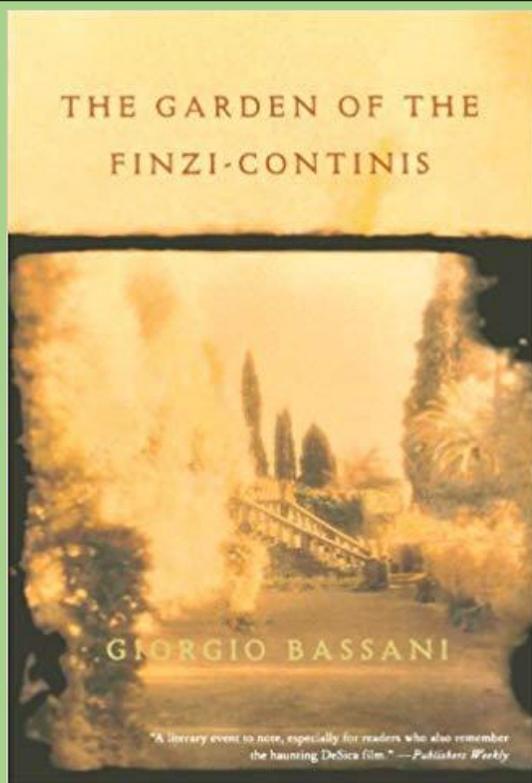


**Chewing on Torah: Torah as
a food memoir**

With guest, Sarah Rockford

**Wednesday, December 4th
5:30-7:00pm**

What's happening at TBE



TBE Book Club
Wednesday, Dec. 11
5:30pm
@ TBE

We are reading *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* by Giorgio Bassani for our next meeting in December. Everyone is welcome to read and join in the discussion. We have snacks!

Shabbat at TBE with Rabbi Darah Lerner from Beth El Congregation in Bangor

Friday, December 6th @ 6:00pm Shabbat Service
Saturday, December 7th @ 10:30am Torah Study



Rabbi Darah Lerner grew up in Southern California. She received her Bachelor's degree in Political Science at U.C. Berkeley and her Master's Degree in Hebrew Letters and Rabbinic Ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Prior to entering the rabbinate, Rabbi Lerner worked in San Francisco and Albuquerque. Rabbi Lerner's love of movies, interest in the environment, and commitment to intra-Jewish community cooperation is still evident in her sermons and throughout her work in the Bangor and Downeast Maine Jewish Community.

Rabbi Lerner has been active in social justice issues, including working for marriage equality and supporting the work of such organizations as Food and Medicine. She speaks widely on Jewish issues, ethics, and diversity in the community. She lives in Bangor with her wife and their dog.

TBE Hanukkah Party!

Sunday, December 22

3:30-5:00 Latke making and arts & crafts

5:00pm Menorah lighting, singing, and potluck supper!

Please bring a dish to share and menorah to light!



Get Air with the Teens on Nov. 17!

Join us on Sunday, November 17, for a great time eating, learning, and BOUNCING together with Jewish teens from across Maine at [Orono Trampoline Park](#) (6 Stillwater Avenue, Orono). There will be pizza, there will be Jewish texts, and there will be lots of trampolining fun!

Activities will run 2:30 - 4:15pm, and food will be provided. A parent or guardian must fill out the trampoline park's [online waiver](#) before the event (or do it at drop off), or the teen in question cannot bounce. Use code 376024 in the waiver. Questions? Need help organizing a carpool from your synagogue? Email Mel Weiss at maweiss@colby.edu or Rabbi Erica Asch at rabbiasch@gmail.com.



TODAH RABAH! Thank you so much to everyone who came out to celebrate Sukkot with the Hebrew School!



Donations

In Honor Of

- Ellen Freed & Carol Barlow in honor of Jerry Bley
- Theresa Kerchner & James Perkins in honor of Joel Davis
- Jean & Bill Seager in honor of the 15th wedding anniversary of Rabbi Erica and Chris Asch

Yahrzeit/Memorials

- Augusta Fuel in memory of Joel Davis
- Barbara Helen Baker in memory of Joel Davis
- Stefanie Barley & Cheryl Ring in memory of Joel Davis
- Robert Beaudoin in memory of Joel Davis
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- Danielle Dannen & Micah Mador in memory of Joel Davis
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- Judith Graber & Paul Kuehnert in memory of Joel Davis
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- Roberta Katz in memory of Joel Davis
- Yale Marienhoff in memory of Abraham Nekris
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- Barbara Mayer & Chuck Acker in memory of Joel Davis
- Mary McCutcheon in memory of Joel Davis
- Hilary Neckles & George Lapointe in memory of Joel Davis
- Avra & Daniel Novarr in memory of Belle Grodinsky
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- Rosemary Presnar & Edith Bicknell in memory of Joel Davis
- Sharon Rosen & John Newton in memory of Joel Davis
- Peter Rosenberg in memory of Elma Samuels Rosenberg
- Peter Rosenberg in memory of Joel Davis
- Deb & Syd Sewall in memory of Joel Davis
- Beth & Steven Shapiro in memory of Joel Davis
- Beth & Steven Shapiro in memory of Belle Grodinsky
- Beth & Steven Shapiro in memory of Richard Kelly
- Doretta Shapiro in memory of Joel Davis
- Howard Solomon in memory of Joel Davis
- Odette Thurston in memory of Joel Davis
- Nancy Weingarten & Stephen Diamond in memory of Joel Davis
- Dace & Jon Weiss in memory of Joel Davis
- Marty Weiss in memory of Joel Davis
- Jennifer Yoder & Greg Bazakas in memory of Jess Yoder

Building Fund Capital Campaign

Emily & Ethan Bessey
Emily & Jerry Bley
Roberta de Araujo & Ronald Kreisman
Judith Feinstein
Vivian Flamm
Anya & Allen Goldey
Seth Greene
Roger Katz
Cree Krull
Carrie McCarter
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Mary Beth Paquette & Chuck Cohen
Phyllis Santer & Carl Suchar
Stanley Sclar
Jean & Bill Seager
Sarah Shed
Liz Sizeler & Charles Fletcher
Joyce Katz Tapper
Heather Wolfe & Dan Friedland

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

Terumah

This fund includes the former General Fund and Dues and covers all temple operating expenses.

Building Fund

This fund is for major repair and rebuilding of our facilities.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

This fund helps Rabbi Asch meet special needs in the community.

Yahrzeit/Memorials/Honoraria

These contributions are made in memory or honor of family and friends.

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.

Temple Beth El

Phone 207-622-7450
Rabbi Erica Asch 207-242-9792
Email: bethelaugusta@gmail.com

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Goldman, Nancy Kelly, Cree
Krull, Fran Rudoff, Lila
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Julius Goos
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Emily Bley (Hebrew School)
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Fran Rudoff (Fundraising)

November Yahrzeits

November 2 Elizabeth Dana
Clare Nolin
Helen Bicknell Shed
November 6 Robert Johnston
Dorothy Drickey
November 8 Dorothy Cohen Moser
November 9 Sally Gilbert
November 11 Eliizabeth Lieb
November 13 Joseph Sclar
November 14 Sophie Goldberg
November 15 Herbert Gross
November 16 Martha Simmons
November 18 Bennett David Katz
John Ray
November 21 Marjorie Curtiss
Anthony Plano
November 23 Malvin Mayer
Iris Brock
November 25 Beatrice Freiman
November 27 Daniel Bulba
November 28 Bart Bakaley
Harold Lipman

December Yahrzeits

December 1 Abraham Goldberg
Sam Goos
December 2 Leonora Q. Dana
Cathy Mattin
Julia Feldman
Murray Freed
December 3 Pasyah Fersht Schneider
December 4 Sylvia Rudoff
Robert Sax
December 5 Fanny Yoder
December 7 Jeanette Johanssen
Pierette Zinck
Lucille Zisquit Goldman
December 11 Rosemary Marshall
December 16 Anna Norken Lipman
December 17 Beatrice Sewall
Sidney Katz
December 21 Eli Bulba
December 26 Fannie Weiss
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December 30 David Slosberg
Samuel Lipman
December 31 Arlene Fine
Edith Katz



Portland Chevra Kadisha Jewish Funeral Home

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Refuah Sh'lemah (Get Well) to:

Carole Fitzgerald
Vivian Flamm
Julius Goos
Michael Libby
Judy Plano