



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

May Calendar

May 5 (hybrid)

Shabbat service @ 6:00pm

May 6 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am

Torah Study @ 10:30am

Potluck lunch @ 12pm

May 7 (in person)

Lag B'Omer Bonfire @ 5:00pm

May 10 (hybrid)

Intro Class @ 5:15pm

May 12 (hybrid)

Shabbat service @ 6pm

May 13 (in person)

Carpool from TBE @ 9am

Shabbat with Goats @ 10am

May 20 (hybrid)

Bar Mitzvah of Max Orenstein @

10am (Lunch to follow service)

Havdalah @ 7pm

May 21 (in person)

Art Session #1 with Rabbi

Cohen @ 2pm

May 22 (in person)

Art Session #1 with Rabbi

Cohen @ 5pm

May 25 (hybrid)

Shavuot Dinner @ 6pm

Shavuot @ 6:30pm

May 26 (hybrid)

Shavuot Service with Yizkor @

9am

May 28 (in person)

Fiber Arts @ 1pm

From the desk of Rabbi Asch...

What is something you look forward to every year? Perhaps it is your birthday or the start of your favorite sports season. Maybe it is the appearance of the first forsythia blooms or a special trip you take. No matter what it is, I imagine that you have some sort of "countdown" to that special day. The counting helps to focus us on the coming event and helps to build excitement.

In contrast, in Judaism this is a season of "counting up." We count the Omer, counting from Passover to Shavuot. This was originally an agricultural counting from the first offering of barley to the offering of two



loaves of bread in the Temple. It later worked to link the holiday of freedom from slavery, Passover, to the holiday of entering into covenant with God, Shavuot. This year, I challenged us all to try to be more mindful of this time and to count the Omer. While this is a difficult mitzvah (remembering to do something for two days let alone 49 is pretty difficult) it serves a second purpose. This counting builds anticipation for the holiday of Shavuot.

Of the three pilgrimage festivals, Shavuot is the least well known. Passover has the seder, matzah, songs, and family gatherings. Sukkot features the building of the sukkah and time to be outside. Shavuot features...Torah study?

Yes, Torah study! Let us note that we have a lot of TBE members (and Jews all over the world!) who love studying Torah. Given how important Torah is to our people it seems fitting that it gets its own holiday. Moreover, it is a holiday to rededicate ourselves to Torah,

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June Calendar

June 2 (hybrid)

Shabbat Potluck @ 5:15pm
Shabbat services led by
Hebrew School @ 6pm

June 3 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am
Potluck lunch @ noon

June 4 (hybrid)

Nosh @ 9:30am
Annual Meeting @ 10am

June 9-Sunday, June 11 (in person)

Maine Conference for Jewish
Life

June 14 (hybrid)

Board Meeting @ 6pm

June 15 (hybrid)

Soup and Study @ 6pm

June 17 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
Torah Study @ 10:30am
Potluck lunch @ noon

June 30 (hybrid)

Shabbat services @ 6pm

Committee Meetings: Online
calendar and weekly email



Rabbi's Message, continued from page 1

Jewish learning, and our relationship with God. It does not require a whole lot of preparation (other than the counting). It is the only holiday where we traditionally eat a dairy, rather than a meat meal (bring on the blintzes and cheesecake!). Shavuot also reminds us of the importance of our sacred texts and that we each have some Torah to teach. I'm so pleased that we will have a number of members teaching this year on topics from Eve to Kafta to schmaltz. We'll be cooking blintzes so we can have a communal meal. Keep your eyes on the weekly email for more information and plan to join us on Thursday, May 25th. I'm counting the days until we can learn together!

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!!

We would like to take a moment to welcome all of the members who have joined TBE since January 2022. We have been remiss in not publishing this information in previous newsletters.

Joey LeBlanc (Feb. 2022)

Carrie McCarter (April 2022)

Lauren and Chris Hall (June 2022)

Rabbi Peter and Kerry Rubinstein (Aug. 2022)

Jenny Patterson and David Frydman (Sept 2022)

Rachel and Pacifico Gonzaga (Oct. 2022)

Betty Jespersen (Oct. 2022)

Deborah Felder (Dec. 2022)

Wendy Zamler (March 2023)

Debra Benveniste (March 2023)

Terumah Mailing

The 2023-2024 terumah pledge forms will be sent out in late May / early June. Please be on the lookout for your packet. We will be forever grateful for your quick response in completing and returning the pledge forms to TBE office. Thank you!!

On Connecting with the Stranger

By Julia Underwood

Abraham's conduct in parashah Vayeira is considered the example par excellence of the Jewish virtue of "welcoming the stranger." Though he is recuperating from the *brit milah*, Abraham nevertheless rushes to attend to "three figures," providing them a sumptuous meal and an opportunity to rest during their travels. As we later learn, these guests are not "men" at all; they are three angels (or, possibly, God and two angels). Abraham's reward for his hospitality is news of impending fatherhood.

Every year when we read Genesis 18, I ponder this story and its implications. While Abraham's motives are admirable, it bothers me that the ideal example of "welcoming" is a host pressing his guests, quite relentlessly, to accept his largess. Abraham never inquires about or considers the strangers' needs, desires, or whether his actions impede them. (They are angels on their way to take out Sodom and Gomorrah. Who knows? Maybe they are in a rush.) So, while this story may be about welcoming, it is not about genuinely connecting with others. (For all I know, it may not be possible to connect with angels. Nevertheless, the point stands.)

It seems to me that connecting with strangers is as laudable as welcoming them, maybe more so in our time. This supposition led me to think about present day "strangers" – who they are, how they are, what they might be experiencing. As often happens, a poet provides insight:

Estranged

There are always
 Strangers among us.
 Some, so obvious,
 Some, so hidden,
 Estranged inside their hearts
 By the circumstances of life,
 By strange workings of the mind,
 And unusual workings of the body.
 Estranged,
 Inside the gates,
 Living perilously,
 Like a berry at the end of the branch,
 Resident, but alien
 Never fully embraced.
 [...]

Alden Solovy, *These Words: Poetic Midrash on the Language of Torah*, (New York: CCAR Press, 2023), 77.

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Max Orenstein Will Become a Bar Mitzvah on May 20th

Max is funny and creative and likes to play bass guitar, piano, saxophone and kazoo. He also likes to make all kinds of art and practices kickboxing when he can. Max joined the TBE community as a Hebrew School student just to hang out with his Crane Lake Camp friends, Robin Asch and Daisy Bessey. But as a bonus, there was acting! Max played a Jewish Network News reporter in Bria's class, and then in Rich's class, he recorded and edited reality TV-style interviews with such Biblical icons as Adam and Eve. For his mitzvah project, Max has been making toys for dogs at Midcoast Humane Society who are waiting to be adopted. (If you're looking for a new bestie, Max knows the place!) Max is busy working on his Torah portion and drash and looks forward to sighing with relief when he reaches the end of his bar mitzvah service.



Connection, continued from page 3

What the poet exposes so beautifully is the stranger's experience of disconnection. It leads me to ask, how should we connect with people who feel like resident aliens? How do we signal they are fully embraced?

When I search the Torah, I find stories that seem to speak to the experience of connecting with the disconnected, but they are not typically described as "welcome" stories. The first is Rebecca, responding to a simple request for water from a stranger, someone who is not from her community. The second is Jethro, who actively listens to Moses' troubles before offering advice. The third involves a character "living perilously, like a berry at the end of the branch" as the poet said, though with clarity, purpose, and resolution. That character is Tamar, who is at once extraordinarily vulnerable and strikingly resilient. Tamar declines to publicly expose Judah's hypocrisy, perhaps because she knows that humiliation has the potential to shatter a soul.

How can we apply these lessons? First, see to basic needs, as articulated by the newcomer. Second, be a listener; refrain from assuming we understand the newcomer's situation at the outset. Third, recognize that those on the extreme margins often have taken incalculable social risks to be true to themselves; provide them with a place of safety as they define it, not as we define it.

Rebecca, Jethro, and Tamar provide us with three perspectives on how we can connect and fully embrace those in our community who feel estranged. I would be interested to hear from others about other ways to connect with strangers, whether they are obvious or hidden, in and to our community.

Rabbi Valerie Cohen Joins Us as Our Hannaford Scholar in Residence

Join our pre-meeting on May 4th at 7:30pm! RSVP today!

Rabbi Cohen is the rabbi at Temple Emanuel Sinai in Worcester, Mass., and an artist. She knew Rabbi Asch before Erica was even a rabbi and mentored her when she was applying to rabbinical school. Rabbi Cohen will lead us through the process of making our own art focused on a prayer that is meaningful to us. No experience necessary!

Saturday, May 20th (evening)

Havdalah and Teaching by Rabbi Cohen

Everyone is welcome to attend this program, even if you do not attend the next two sessions.

Sunday, May 21st (morning)

Hebrew School

Rabbi Cohen will spend the morning with the Hebrew School.

Sunday, May 21st (afternoon)

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Art Session #1.

Monday, May 22nd (evening)

5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Art Session #2, followed by dinner.

You are encouraged to attend both art sessions if possible.

Each participant will have the opportunity to make an accordion journal or reflection page focusing on one of two prayers: *Mi Shebeirach* or *Oseh Shalom*. No experience with drawing is required. These projects will use collage techniques and are designed to be accessible to anyone! All materials are provided.

If you are interested, please RSVP to the office so we can send you more information: **bethelaugusta@gmail.com**.



REGISTER FOR THE MAINE CONFERENCE FOR JEWISH LIFE!

The Maine Conference for Jewish Life is a pluralistic opportunity for superior Jewish learning and joyous celebration in central Maine. Living far from America's major urban centers (and from one another), Jews in northern New England rarely gain access to the Jewish world's finest scholars and cultural innovators, or the experience of being surrounded by a critical mass of other Jews.

Our Maine Conference for Jewish Life schedule is filling up and we have many remarkable learning opportunities in store for the Maine Jewish community.

The Conference will be held in person at Thomas College in Waterville, **Friday, June 9-Sunday, June 11**, with a wide offering of inspirational programming and community building events. A provisional schedule, which is being added to daily, can be found on the MCJL [website](#). Check back regularly and follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates!

We can't wait to see you and celebrate Jewish life in Maine together! Questions? Contact Conference Director Mel Weiss: maweiss@colby.edu



**THE MAINE
CONFERENCE
FOR JEWISH LIFE**



June 9-11
Thomas College
jewishlife.colby.edu

Save the Date! Temple Annual Meeting Sunday, June 4 @ 9:30am

This will not be your normal, maybe dull, meeting! NO WAY!

We will reveal exciting plans for landscaping and a wonderful outdoor pavilion at Temple Beth El. You'll want to be among the first to see the terrific drawings that will show you what's planned and to hear how we plan to make it happen. Also, of course, we will elect new board members and officers and honor two Temple members for outstanding service to the congregation.

Join us for bagels and conversation at 9:30. The meeting will start at 10. We will send you more details in a special announcement soon, but for now, save the date!

Goos Event Recipes

We enjoyed many fabulous dishes at the Goos event on Sunday, April 23rd. There were a lot of requests for copies of the recipes used and Birdie Newman Katz (aka Mama Bird) graciously agreed to share them with us. Check your weekly email for a link to all the recipes. Enjoy!!

BABA GANOUSH

NOTE: You can make this with freshly roasted eggplants (which is great), but I discovered delicious smoky jarred eggplant in Halal stores - very good!!!

Ingredients

- 2 18-20oz jars of roasted or grilled Eggplant
- 1/4 cup tahini paste
- Juice of 1 Lemon
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 TBSP Greek Yogurt or Labne (richer than Yogurt)
- 1 teaspoon Sumac
- 1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper or red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup Olive Oil

METCH

(Armenian variation on Taboulleh)

Ingredients

- 2 cups fine or medium cracked wheat (bulghur)
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 bunch parsley, chopped
- 3 or 4 scallions
- chopped ½ bunch mint, chopped (opt.)
- Juice of 1-2 lemons
- 1 TBSP pepper paste (or ½ tsp. crushed red pepper)
- 1 ½ cups tomato sauce
- Salt to taste

Heat ¼ cup of olive oil in a pan and fry the bell pepper and the onion until pale in color. Stir in the cracked wheat. Blend in the tomato sauce, lemon juice, and crushed pepper. Cover and remove from heat. Let cool for 15 mins. Add parsley, scallions, mint, rest of olive oil, and chile pepper. Mix together. Chill!!



Lag B'Omer with Temple Shalom (Auburn) and Beth Israel Congregation (Waterville)

Sunday, May 7th @ 5:00pm

Temple Shalom 74 Bradman St, Auburn, ME

Join us for a bonfire, music, smores and fun.

Want to carpool? Contact the office and we'll see if we can arrange transportation.



Todah Rabbah

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful Passover. It was so nice to be in person with all of you.

We want to especially thank **Mike and Sarah Drickey**, our event coordinators. We could not have done this without you!

Nancy Kelly coordinated all the kitchen logistics including making a lot (so many!) of matzah balls. Thank you, Nancy!

Thank you to **Deb Sewall** who also cooked matzah balls and coordinated our greeters.

Thank you to **our set up and cleanup crews** (many hands make light work) and all who helped out over the course of the evening. It was so nice to be back in person with everyone and we are glad so many could join us on Zoom as well.



Shabbat ShaGoat: Experiential Farm Shabbat with Baby Goats *Saturday, May 13th*

We'll spend Shabbat morning on Ten Apple Farm with Margaret and Karl Schatz. Meet at TBE at 9 a.m. to carpool to the farm (located about 50 minutes away). We'll spend time in nature together with a brief service, some study, and a potluck lunch. Karl reports that there is a goat potentially giving birth that day, so who knows what HaShem has in store for us on this very special Shabbat outing. RSVP ASAP to the office if you plan to join us.

*******I know we always say to RSVP, but this time we really, really need you to RSVP as soon as possible. If we do not receive a critical mass of responses, this event will not go forward. Ten Apple Farm is graciously holding this time for us, and potentially turning down requests from other visitors.**



5:00 Blintz Making
6:00 Dinner
6:30 Interactive Learning with
Rabbi Asch
7:15 Teaching
8:00 Dessert & Schmoozing
8:20 Learning
9:45 Closing Ritual

SHAVUOT

THURSDAY, MAY 25TH

**Contact Rabbi Asch if
you want to teach!**

Hebrew School Studies History & Celebrates Freedom

We have been having a great time at Hebrew School. The kids recently journeyed through 1000 years of Jewish history. They picked a place to live: Babylonia, Egypt, Poland, Spain, etc. Then, they heard a little bit about what was happening in that country in a certain period of time. [Spain in 900–great! Spain in 1400–not great!] After hearing about what was happening, they got to decide if they wanted to move or stay where they were. We learned that travel was difficult, each country had challenges and benefits, and we had a lot of fun.

We also did a quick review of Passover. The kids cleaned the Temple of *chametz*, learned about the ritual for getting rid of *chametz*, did a model seder, and learned about what you can and cannot eat on Passover. We have been studying our value of *cherut*, freedom. Not only is Passover about freedom, so is Shavuot. We decided that sometimes having rules is better than having no rules at all!

We have been enjoying being outside and are volunteering at Vaughan Woods at the end of April. We are looking forward to our Hebrew School service on Friday, June 2nd. Join us at 5:15pm for a potluck dinner and 6pm for services led by our Hebrew School students.

Sign Up for Summer Funtensive!

We are happy to offer two weeks of Funtensive this year. Games, friends, Jewish values, art, hikes in the woods, and more! We welcome children 4 and older. Anyone over 13 is welcome to work as a madrich/madracha. Sign up today.

Sign up for Funtensive with the Center for Small Town Jewish Life July 10th-14th

<https://colbycollegejewishlife.regfox.com/funtensive-2023>

Sign up for Funtensive with TBE August 14th-18th

<https://forms.gle/gfybrCaWjqNH22jg8>

Hebrew School Schedule

Hebrew School will be **in person** from 9:30am until 12:00pm on:

- May 7, 14, & 21

Hebrew School Service: Friday, June 2

- 5:15pm: Potluck dinner
- 6:00pm: Services

Supporting TBE



Building Fund

- Seth Greene
- Deb & Syd Sewall

General / Other

- Petra Hall and Rhonda Feiman
- Richard Forcier
- Bob and Ava Gross
- Betty Jespersen

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Rich Dana
- Kate McLinn

Yahrzeits/Memorials

- Anya and Allen Goldey in memory of Laura Goldstein
- Anya and Allen Goldey in memory of Lillian Freiman
- Anya and Allen Goldey in memory of Sidney Goldstein
- Chuck Cohen and Mary Beth Paquette in memory of Milton Prager
- Ellen Kandel and Larry Bader in memory of Charles Bader
- Jay Collins in memory of Anna Imondi
- Jay Richardson in memory of Anthony Imondi
- Joan & Lowell Freiman in memory of Laura Goldstein
- Joan & Lowell Freiman in memory of Sidney Goldstein
- Joe O'Donnell in memory of Ann O'Donnell
- Joe O'Donnell in memory of Henry Price
- Jonathan Weiss in memory of Clara Miller Weiss
- Jonathan Weiss in memory of Irving Weiss
- Judith Lurie in memory of Jean Dietz
- Judith Graber and Paul Kuehnert in memory of Joan Graber
- Judith Graber and Paul Kuehnert in memory of Susan Knowlton

Yahrzeits/Memorials (continued)

- Leon Bresloff and Mary Bayer in memory of Hymen Bresloff
- Leon Bresloff and Mary Bayer in memory of Jill Bresloff
- Marcia and Michael Parker in memory of Sylvia Parker
- Marty Weiss in memory of Sam Weiss
- Paul Linet in memory of Susan Linet
- Richard & Jane Golden in memory of Rose Golden
- Sarah & Mike Drickey in memory of Shawn Walker
- Seth Greene in memory of Ann O'Donnell
- Seth Greene in memory of Charles Bader
- Seth Greene in memory of Leonard Dansky
- Seth Greene in memory of Rose Golden
- Seth Greene in memory of Samuel Weiss
- Steven and Beth Shapiro in memory of Rose Golden
- Steven and Beth Shapiro in memory of Shirley Siegel
- Susan and David Offer in memory of Samuel L. Gershon



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Rabbi Emerita

Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto

The office is open Tuesday,
Wednesday and Friday.

May Yahrtzeits

May 1st	Aaron Frankel
May 1st	Rebecca Slosberg
May 2nd	Mechel Frydman
May 3rd	Max Slosberg
May 4th	Elizabeth Lipman
	Winter
May 7th	Meyer Schwartz
May 8th	Suzanne K. Rosenberg
May 10th	Robert Bien
May 10th	Hilbert Tapp
May 11th	Benjamin R. Slosberg
May 14th	Tyler Lessard
May 15th	Carol Bernstein Hecht
May 15th	Leigh Ann Lee
May 16th	Edwin Eckert
May 16th	Symour Pfeferstein
May 17th	Clara Miller Weiss
May 18th	Julian Sacks
May 19th	Erika Ellen Briggs
May 19th	Marion Fusco
May 20th	David Boughton
May 21st	Dorothy Moyer
May 21st	Daniel Moyer
May 21st	Fred Slater
May 22nd	Gertrude Rudoff
May 23rd	Albert Freiman
May 23rd	Justin Blauner
May 23rd	Fred Sewall
May 24th	Jean Bakaley
May 24th	Bruce Pfeferstein
May 24th	Josep Schatz
May 25th	Samuel Lerman
May 27th	Stuart Boughton
May 27th	Asher Pfeferstein
May 29th	Matthew Peter McLinn
May 30th	Robert Powell
May 30th	Joan "Jet" Price
May 31st	Julius Sussman

June Yahrtzeits

June 1st	Howard S. Slosberg
June 6th	Jack Drickey
June 7th	Albert Abraham
	Rosenberg
June 7th	Joseph Schatz
June 7th	Joseph Leroy Shed
June 8th	Aviva Schnur
June 9th	John Thielman
June 10th	Reginald
	Hannaford
June 12th	Paul Adler
June 12th	Beverly Gass
June 14th	Erica Sandler
June 14th	Webster Shipley,
	Jr.
June 15th	David Pollack
June 19th	Beatrice Director
June 20th	Ruth Gross
June 20th	Miriam Weiss
June 22nd	Sol Moser
June 24th	Gloria
	Mondschein
June 27th	Seymour (Sy)
	Mondschein
June 28th	Dora R. Slosberg
June 29th	Charlotte Goos
June 30th	Marcia Allen
June 30th	Linda Weiss
	Manson
June 30th	Benjamin
	Rubinstein

Portland Chevra Kadisha
Jewish Funeral Home

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