



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

March Calendar

Mon., March 3 (hybrid)

Soup and Study @ 6pm

Fri., March 7 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6pm

Sat., March 8 (hybrid)

Torah Study @ 10:00
 Shabbat Services @ 11:00
 Potluck lunch @ 12:15

Mon., March 10 (hybrid)

Board Meeting @ 6pm

Thurs., March 13 (in person)

Purim for adults @ 6pm

Sun., March 16 (in person)

Fiber Arts @ 1-3pm

Fri., March 21 (hybrid)

Shabbat services @ 6pm

Sat., March 22 (hybrid)

Daf Yomi @ 10am
 Torah Study @ 10:30 am
 Potluck lunch @ 12

Sun., March 30 (in person)

Israel/Palestine Dialogue @
 12:30-2pm

From the desk of Rabbi Asch...

In the Jewish calendar, March and April bring the two “P”s, Purim and Passover. They occur a month apart, but on the surface don’t share many similarities. Purim is a minor holiday. Its story isn’t found in the Torah, but in the Book of Esther, and it is a relatively easy holiday to celebrate. Eat a Purim meal, hear the story, give gifts of food to friends and neighbors, and give to those in need. We cook hamantaschen, dress up in costume, and generally celebrate.

The biblical festival of Passover, by contrast, requires much more preparation. We clean the leaven from our houses, host a seder (an elaborate retelling of the Passover story complete with special foods), and observe Passover for an entire week (or eight days; that is for another column). The beginning and end of the observance are *chag*, festival days where we do not work. And, on the last day of Passover we have a special *yizkor* service. Passover is one the most celebrated holidays in the Jewish community.

So what does it mean that these two holidays occur in such close proximity to one another? Purim is a holiday of joy, but also of revenge. When the ancient Jewish community of Persia was threatened, it survived because it was able to fight back. Their liberation came from the downfall of their enemies, and they rejoiced to see Haman and his sons hanging on the gallows. This macabre ending is immortalized in the children’s song, “Once there was a Wicked, Wicked Man”:

*“The guest of honor he (Haman) shall be/This clever Mr. Smarty./
 And high above us he shall swing,/At a little hanging party.*

CHORUS: *Oh today we’ll merry, merry be and nosh some hamantaschen.”*

While we might understand the desire for revenge, it is all a little bloodthirsty.

Continued on page 2

April Calendar

Fri., April 4 (hybrid)

Shabbat Services @ 6 pm

Sat., April 5 (hybrid)

Torah Study @ 10am

Shabbat services @ 11:00 am

Potluck lunch @ 12

Join us to celebrate

Natatsha's birthday!

Wed., April 9 (hybrid)

Soup and Study @ 6pm

Sun., April 13 (in person)

Passover Seder @ 5pm

Fri., April 18 (hybrid)

Shabbat service @ 6pm

With Annie Prusky

Sun., April 20 (hybrid)

Passover services with Yizkor
@ 9:30 am

Potluck lunch @ 11:30am

With Annie Prusky

Sun., April 27 (in person)

Israel/Palestine Dialogue @
12:30-2pm

Hebrew School

March 2, 9, 23, 30

April 6

Purim Carnival: March 16 @
10am

Teen Program

March 16, 30: Zoom @ 7pm

April 6 @ TBE

More info about Lunch and
Lounge in your inboxes.

Rabbi's Message, continued from page 1

In contrast, Passover is a holiday of liberation, but we do not rejoice in the downfall of our enemies. We take drops of wine out of our cups to remember the suffering of the Egyptians. Tradition tells us that not only did the Israelites escape Egypt, but a "mixed multitude," including Egyptians, left as well. And the destruction of the Egyptians comes not at the hands of humans, but at the hand of God, who famously chastises the angels for rejoicing at the downfall of the Egyptians saying, "My children are drowning." [This occurs in a *midrash*, a later rabbinic writing, and not the Torah itself.] In modern times we have recognized there are more universal implications for our particular freedom story and adapted the seder to explore other types of liberation.

This contrast does not mean we should throw out Purim. After all, we can never expect to get rid of our need for revenge. It is a natural human instinct to want to see the downfall of enemies. The holiday of Purim allows us to indulge in that fantasy for a moment, to be crazy, to let the rules fall away, and to experience chaos for a day before returning to our normal lives and the more measured response of Passover. We need both—a time to feel our anger and to rejoice in the defeat of evil, and a time to turn toward our ability for compassion for those who have wronged us. Please join us at TBE for both of these celebrations. I look forward to seeing your crazy costumes and celebrating our liberation together in the months to come.

ANNIE PRUSKY JOINS US AT TBE

Annie will be with us **April 18-20th**. Join Annie for Shabbat services on Friday night, April 18th at 6pm. She will also co-lead our service for the 8th day of Passover on Sunday, April 20th. That service will also include a Yizkor service and will be followed by a potluck lunch. Annie will be doing other events while she is here; check the weekly email for more details.

TBE in Action!



On February 8th, Hildie Lipson led a Shabbat hike at the Small-Burnham conservation area in Litchfield, followed by lunch at the home of Fran Rudoff.



The annual Wine Tasting was a smashing success. We raised nearly \$10,000! See more on page 4.



Rolling Out the Red Carpet at TBE

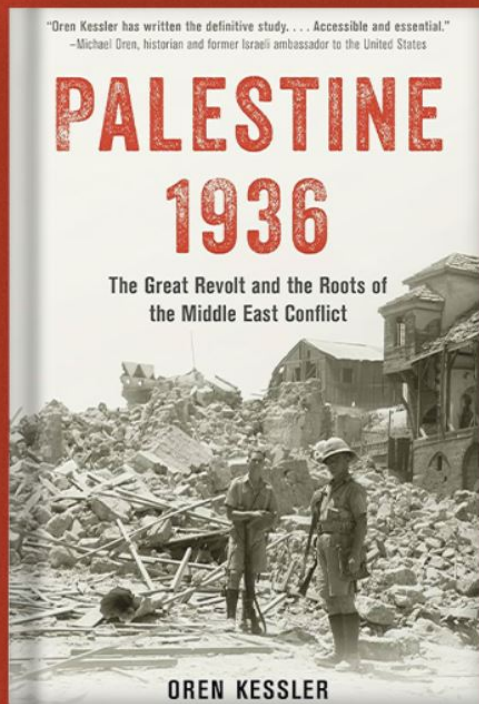
Thank you to everyone who attended the Wine tasting, bought raffle tickets, donated auction items, bid on auction items, and contributed towards committee baskets. The Wine tasting was a smashing success, raising over \$9700 for the Temple! While it may have been a small group that planned the event, it truly was a community-wide effort to make it such a success!

It was so much fun getting all dolled up and walking the red carpet into the sanctuary. The paparazzi's camera was flashing (thank you, Enigmah!), and the band was rocking! We enjoyed some of our favorite wines from years past and dined on delicious middle eastern food, all while raising money for a cause near and dear to our hearts. Thanks to all!! Cheers!

Use this [link](#) to view all the photos.



Wine Tasting Committee members. Peter Rosenberg, Syd Sewall, Chuck Cohen, Ellen Freed, Emily Bessey, Fran Rudoff and Lila Solomon



Join the Multi-Media Group on Monday, April 7th at 6:00pm on Zoom.

The group will discuss Oren Kessler's award winning book "*Palestine 1936: The Great Revolt and the Roots of the Middle East Conflict*"

The book is available in paperback, on Kindle and as an Audiobook.

Purim is for Adults, Too! Join Us!

Thursday, March 13 @ 6pm

It's happening, peeps! Purim officially begins on Thursday, March 13. Let the rejoicing begin! We'll have an amazing adult Purim celebration. See below for all the details.



- Arrive at 6pm **in costume** (yes, that means you!) Bring canned corn, canned soup, or peanut butter for the food pantry.
- Enjoy alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails. We'll also have pizza and snacks (we're not animals!), plus **hamantaschen** (of course!).
- **Our Purim spiel is back**—we don't have any idea what it will look like because Rabbi Asch just got back from sabbatical and has not even thought about planning this yet. You may be recruited to take part in it when you get there.
- We're bringing back the **white elephant/Yankee swap**/that thing that you have to do when you go to Christmas parties. Bring something from your house (no shopping people!) that is worth \$10 or less. Extra points if it is funny. Wrap it and let the fun begin.
- *NOTE: Last year many of you failed at the above task causing Rabbi Asch to both have to scour the Temple for random stuff and wrap it in chip bags. Bring a gift. Better, bring two for all the folks who forget!*
- **Get ready to bake!** Bring a Purim themed dessert. It doesn't have to be hamantaschen, but it does have to tie into the Purim story. Write three sentences on a notecard to explain the connection. The treats will be judged blind (well, the judges will see the treats, but not your name).
- **Will there be announcements?** Yes, yes there will. You'll have to be there to see whom we decide to roast.
- Also, there will be some sort of **game show/competition** happening. What will it be? Come and find out!

This fabulous event is happening **in person only**. Need a ride? We are HAPPY to get you to and from TBE. We know some folks don't like driving at night, or just feel safer with a ride after they've been celebrating. Contact Enigmah (Enigmah@protonmail.com) March 7th if you want transportation to our event.

Suggested Donation \$10-15 per person to cover the costs of food and drink.

**NOTE: this is an adults only party.
High school graduates (or older!) only.**

A Spiritual Journey Leads to Board Service

By Brian Harding

I began attending TBE in 2022 while on a spiritual journey. I was born into a secular Christian family that attended church but not on a regular basis. I never found comfort or meaning in this faith and started a spiritual journey of my own. I was drawn to Judaism and knew this was a path to follow.

Unfortunately, I became disillusioned about religion in general and chose to live a totally secular life for many years. When the pandemic was upon us I took the time to reflect on the most important elements in my life. Should I continue to feel disillusioned, or would I claim the faith I felt reflected who I truly am?

Attending TBE led to an "Introduction to Judaism" class that led to conversion to Judaism. Truly the most meaningful day of my life. Now, my next step is serving on TBE's Board of Directors. TBE has also become an important social component of my life. The friendships I have formed feel like lasting lifelong friendships. I know whenever I may be in need, someone will be there. And I can also be there for others. The feeling of community is unique and magical.

I will continue to grow and flourish with all congregants of TBE and my entire Jewish family.

Save the Date for the TBE Community Seder Sunday, April 13th @ 5:00pm

If Purim is coming, Passover is right around the corner! Join us for the TBE Community Seder, April 13th at 5:00pm. More details to come in your weekly email.

Here are the basics.

- Our seder will be in person only. Need a place to go for first night seder? Contact the office by March 31st and a TBE member would be happy to host you for a seder.
- As always, our seder is a potluck. This helps keep costs low. Look for an email with a sign up sheet. We'll count on you to provide the food!
- Cost will be \$20 per adult and \$10 per child. Advance payment is appreciated. We welcome additional donations to help offset our security costs.
- Our seder will include traditional foods, prayers, singing and a lot of fun! It is for all ages and everyone is welcome to join us.

TBE's New Outdoor Space Project is Completed!

We are pleased to report that construction of the pavilion and outdoor space has been successfully completed. In December, several dangerous dying trees were removed, which was the final step of the construction. While the project, like all construction projects, had its hiccups, it generally proceeded as planned - on schedule and on budget.

It will take a few years for the tree and shrub plantings to grow up and screen the area as planned, so the aesthetics should improve over time. The grass is well established, so the area should be fully functional in 2025.

We are almost done with fundraising for the project. Stay tuned for one final fundraising initiative in the new year to finish things off. You, our members, have been so generous in helping us complete this final piece of a decade-long building effort that has transformed Temple Beth El and created facilities that will serve us well for many years to come.

We had some excellent contractors working for us, most notably Michael Bancroft and his crew at Bancroft Landscaping in Chelsea. In addition, Abbott Fence Company of West Gardiner installed the fence and railings, J.F. Scott Commercial Construction of Winthrop came to the rescue to fortify the pavilion, and Target Electric of Gardiner wired the pavilion.

A dedication of the outdoor space is planned for spring 2025 at which we will recognize all who contributed to this great effort.

Our Teen Lounge is up and running

Thank you to all our donors who contributed to make our teen lounge absolutely awesome! The teens just set it up and are excited to use it. Thank you for helping to create a space at TBE especially for our teens. We are thrilled that our high school students want to hang out at TBE in their spare time.



Hebrew School Students Learn to Care for the Environment

by Lilah Goldey

Within the last few months, students have been focusing and learning about many different things. Recently, we have spent time learning about taking care of our environment and learning about Tu B'shevat. Students have also learned about the law of *Bal Tashit* through different activities, including seeing the effects of litter around our Temple. Within classes, we have been learning about a different Torah portion each week and the middle class has been creating a visual representation for each week.

All classes have been working on improving their Hebrew skills whether one word, their alphabet, or reading out prayers. In all, we have been having lots of fun while also learning lots!

Hebrew School Purim Carnival Extravaganza **Sunday, March 16th @ 10am** **(Madrachim arrive at 9:30 for set up)**

All right folks, you know the drill. Costumes required (you too, parents), hamantaschen making, games, nail/face painting, songs, a skit and whatever else we dream up! We encourage parents and grandparents to stay with their kiddos to join in the fun!



Supporting TBE



General / Other

- Stephanie Natale, in honor of Cindy Langewisch
- Stephen & Ellen Eldridge
- Joe O'Donnell
- David and Sherri Joseph

Rabbi Discretionary Fund

- Hildie Lipson, in memory of Robert Lipson
- Rich Dana
- Kate McLinn
- Sue and David Offer
- Jamie and Karin Orenstein
- Cindy Langewisch & Nick Rehagen

Teen Lounge Donations

- Anonymous
- Arwen & John Agee
- Beth & Steven Shapiro
- Blair & John Rubinstein
- Chris and Erica Asch
- Cindy Langewisch & Nick Rehagen
- Dean Corner
- Deb & Syd Sewall
- Julia Underwood
- Lake Dunton
- Lauren & Christopher Hall
- Mike Levey
- Peter Rosenberg

Yahrzeits/Memorials

- Robert Katz and Elaine Hanish, in memory of Harriet & Sidney Katz
- Sarah & Mike Drickey, in memory of Dorothy Drickey
- Rich Dana, in memory of Jacob Dana

- Ellen Bader Kandel and Laurence Bader, in memory of Dorothy Bader
- Deborah Gussoff, in memory of Judith Shankman Kosak and Alvin Kosak
- Steven & Beth Shapiro in memory of James Carvutto and James & Faye Montell
- Beth Koopman, in memory of Jane B. Koopman
- Marcia & Michael Parker, in memory of Genevieve Kus
- Judith Feinstein, in memory of Martha Feinstein
- Arwen & John Agee, in memory of John Underwood
- Deborah and Jeffrey Gussoff, in memory of Rabbi Jacob Kestin Shankman
- Deborah and Jeffrey Gussoff, in memory of Clara Greenberg
- Rich Dana, in memory of Selma Dana
- Deb and Syd Sewall, in memory of Louise Macy and Edwin Macy
- David and Sue Offer, in memory of John Underwood
- Emily Bley, in memory of Lauraine Goodrich
- Emily Bessey, in memory of Ezra Bessey
- Emily Bessey, in memory of Richele Gross
- Sarah & Mike Drickey, in memory of Davis Spalding



Board of Directors

President

Arwen Agee

Vice President

Jamie Orenstein

Treasurer

Julia Underwood

Secretary

Mike Levey

Board of Directors

Emily Bessey, Chuck Cohen, David Faigin, Ellen Freed, Richard Goldman, Brian Harding, Nancy Kelly, David Offer, Liz Sizeler

Honorary Directors

Anya Goldey
Hildie Lipson
Deb Sewall

Contact Us

Office Manager

Dawn Fecteau
207-622-7450
bethelaugusta@gmail.com

Rabbi

Rabbi Erica Asch
207-242-9792
rabbiasch@gmail.com

Rabbi Emerita

Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto

The office is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.

March Yahrzeits

March 1	Todd Michael Greene
March 3	Milton Prager
March 3	Samuel L. Gershon
March 3	Sadie Frankel
March 3	Hyman Norken
March 3	Sydney Sewall
March 7	Joan Graber
March 8	Laura Goldstein
March 8	Evelyn Weiner
March 9	George O'Brien
March 9	Rose Golden
March 13	Aaron Archie Kraus
March 13	Susan Knowlton
March 13	Molly Libben
March 16	Elenor Sylvia Slosberg
March 17	Esta Brickman
March 17	Mildred Tapp
March 18	Daniel Moyer
March 19	Katie Zamler
March 19	Daniel Clifford Gross
March 20	Joseph Shapiro
March 22	Perry Bakaley
March 22	Edwin Aaron Macy
March 22	Dora Brittain
March 23	Lillian Freiman
March 23	Elizabeth Sax
March 23	Nick Scott
March 24	Cynthia Haderski
March 28	Naomi Faigin
March 29	Shirlie Goldman
March 29	Toby Rudginsky
March 30	Charles Bader
March 31	Lewis Brown



April Yahrzeits

April 1	Jonathan Schiff
April 2	Lillian Lerman
April 4	Hyman Sandler
April 7	Erwin Lewis
April 8	Irving Berman
April 9	Richard Harding
April 9	Shirley Siegel
April 10	Christine Econemou
April 11	Hymen Bresloff
April 11	Abraham Gusoff
April 11	Leonard Dansky
April 12	Shawn Walker
April 14	Morris Weiss
April 14	Ken Allen
April 14	Bruce Hollander
April 15	Lillian Shapiro
April 15	Jane Kaminsky Millette
April 16	Martin Evenchik
April 17	Robert Sandler
April 18	Lena Slosberg Lait
April 20	Samuel Kosak
April 22	Maria King
April 24	Rose Parkin
April 25	Daniel Cohen
April 25	Ann O'Donnell
April 25	Henry S. Price
April 26	Irving Weiss
April 27	Abraham Slosberg
April 28	Sidney Goldstein
April 28	Eleanor Mayer
April 28	Tishelle Glant-Scheinman
April 28	John Marshall
April 29	Edith Sclar
April 29	Jill Bresloff

Portland Chevra Kadisha
Jewish Funeral Home

471 Deering Ave.
Portland, ME 04103
207.774.3733