

# CONGREGATION SHIR HEHARIM

(Song of the Mountains)



The Brattleboro Area Jewish Community

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September 2007

ELUL 5767 — TISHRI 5768

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## FROM YOUR SHALIACH TZIBUR

I hope that all of us had a lovely summer. And now, with the summer barely over, the High Holidays are upon us.

I hope we'll all be able to utilize these Days of Awe for the deepest soul searching about our lives, the directions our lives are taking, the people with whom we're spending time and the people who've been left out, the parts of our lives we're fully appreciating and those we might be taking for granted, and the blessings which have been provided to us (and which sometimes can help put the irksome parts of our lives in perspective.) What a great opportunity to reflect on all of this, to try to make sense of it, and then to resolve to adjust those pieces that need adjustment in order to make us the best people we can be! The High Holidays, like the Shabbat, are indeed among the great gifts our heritage provides to us.

I hope also, as we enter into these High Holidays, that we can be appreciating, once again, how extraordinary it is to be doing this at nearly the same that Jews all over the world are observing the New Year and the Day of Atonement. As our sages remind us, gathering *together*, in community, and doing this deep reflection *together* is more important than understanding all the words or, in fact, accepting all that's written in our prayer books.

This year we'll be experimenting with some interesting changes in our services. I'll be interested in seeing how well these work for us. Please let me know. This is all about stewardship and making these services just as meaningful as they can be for all of us.

The High Holidays are also a time for generosity, not just to our synagogue so that we can keep up with our extraordinary agenda of education, outreach and justice-related activities, but also generosity to those in need. It's not too early to begin putting non-perishables and warm clothing aside to bring along on Yom Kippur for the Brattleboro Drop-in Center.

And finally, since we're now well into the preparatory month of Elul, be sure to send me the Random (or not so random) Acts of Kindness you and your family members have been performing so that we can read them anonymously on Rosh Hashanah and send them heavenward.

Thanks in advance to the Ritual Committee, to the High Holiday "Bimah team," to the choir, to the set-up and take-down teams, and to all the others who work so hard to make these High Holidays work for us.

B'Shalom,  
Jim

## PLANNING AHEAD

Put these early October events on your calendar now, even before the October newsletter reaches your mailbox: a Sukkot celebration with the Hebrew school at 5:15 on Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by a potluck supper; Yiskor at 6:00 on Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, followed by a Simchat Torah service; Manya's bat mitzvah on October 6<sup>th</sup>; Galen's bar mitzvah on October 13<sup>th</sup>; Rosh Chodesh from 3:00 to 6:00 on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. The b'nai mitzvah services are at West Village Meeting House; all other events are at our shul.

## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It is that most special time of year, as the High Holiday season greets us, offering us the challenges of both looking inward and reflecting on the past year and the upcoming year, as well as looking outward to our neighbors and friends with whom we share prayers and song and conversation. It is a time to thank those who work behind the scenes and well as those on the bimah who help us celebrate during these days in a setting that fills our senses with joy and spirit.

In other articles, we have described the additional services that we are holding this year. I join in Jim's request that you give them a try, and let us know your reaction. I also ask that each of you try to take time to be welcoming to those who are new to our services and our community. There is no better time than the High Holidays to meet and get to know someone new, and I am sure that welcoming the stranger among us is very high on the list of Mitzvot.

We also know that the High Holidays is a time to reflect upon community. As Jim notes, there is a universality of practice and observation within the Jewish community at time such as this. Whenever I hear the Shofar being sounded, I cannot help but hear the sound being repeated around the world, from synagogue to synagogue, from mountaintop to mountaintop. As we recite together, with ancient tune and ancient words, the Kol Nidre prayer, it is as if the entire worldwide Jewish community is praying together with one heartbeat and one soul. Yes, there are many variations in how we pray, how we sing, how we teach and learn, and how we share. But one of the hallmarks of the High Holy Days is the recognition of the importance of commonality and community.

So, on behalf our community – the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community – let me welcome each one of you and wish you a happy and healthy new year. BAJC will be offering a wonderful array of events and programs. We hope to see you throughout the year, participating with us, sharing the one heartbeat that links us together.

B' Shalom,  
Paul

## FILMS, FOOD, FUN, AND FUNDS

The Israeli Film and Food Festival held on August 19<sup>th</sup> at the Mountain Park Cinema in West Dover was a huge success. In a well-orchestrated event, 180+ people viewed two provocative films that clearly demonstrated the vibrancy of the Israeli film industry, and dined al fresco on delicious Israeli and middle-eastern lunch and desserts. And, wonder of wonders, miracle of miracles—the event made A LOT of money for the building fund!

The fundraising committee, Faith, Marty, Bobbe, Deb, Linda, Margie, Norma, Sandy, Susan, and Vikki, worked for months planning the event and soliciting ads for the program journal, then for the weeks just preceding the event shopping, cooking, enlisting volunteers, and working out logistics. In addition to the entire committee, there were more than thirty other volunteers working in one way or another on the actual day of the festival and the two or three days preceding it: Leonard, Jennifer and Joe, Esther, Deb, Yael, Sharon, Betty, Kate, Sharon, Joe, Johnny Lee, Sarah, Mark, Jascha, Emily, Adam, Abe, Paul, Marilyn, Marion, Fran, Colin, Jessica, and Maggie, Amy, and Kellie. We were blessed to work with Geralyn, the cinema owner, who was extremely supportive and helpful.

Thanks to all the people who supported the project by buying tickets (even those who could not attend), and special thanks to the people who made extra donations, above and beyond the tickets. You can see their names in the patron ads and other ads in the program book. Thank to all our advertisers and to Landmark Impressions for printing the program book at no charge. (They are the generous folks who also printed our shul dedication program book at no charge!) Thanks to Joe Rosen for renting a truck so we didn't need to marshal a caravan of BAJC trucks, vans, and SUV's to get all the tables, chairs, and other equipment to West Dover. Thanks to the Harold Grinspoon Foundation for a generous grant to underwrite the cost of the films.

All the money is not in yet, nor are all the bills, so you will have to wait until next month for a precise accounting, but at this point it looks like our profit from the event will be in the neighborhood of \$10,000!

## **INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS**

This year we'll be experimenting with some new ideas for the High Holiday services, in with the intention of better meeting the varied spiritual needs of our congregants. All services will be held at the West Village Meeting House, and all are welcome to attend.

Our first-day Rosh Hashanah morning service will be similar to our services in years past. For the first time, we will have a second-day Rosh Hashanah service, which will be more informal and less time-structured. It will include both traditional prayers and those which are more contemporary or freer interpretations.

Our Yom Kippur morning service at West Village will be in two parts. The first will be similar to Yom Kippur in years past, if a notch more streamlined, and will culminate in the Yiskor service at 11:30. After Yiskor, we'll take a short break before continuing the service with traditional and contemporary prayers for those who wish to remain for Musaf, without time constraints. The Yom Kippur Ne'ilah Service will begin at 6:30 pm.

This year, we will not be having a dessert oneg after Erev Rosh Hashanah services or a potluck break-fast dinner at the end of Yom Kippur. We will, however, break the fast after Ne'ilah with challah, honey cake, cookies, wine and grape juice, supplied by BAJC.

Volunteers are needed to set up West Village Meeting House for Rosh Hashanah on Tuesday, September 11 at 8:30 PM, and to clean up after the second-day service.

Help is also needed to set up for Yom Kippur, probably on Thursday afternoon or evening, the 20<sup>th</sup>. Since Yom Kippur falls on a Saturday, we will need more volunteers to clean up after the break-fast to leave the space ready for the All Soul's Church worship service on Sunday. If you can volunteer to help, please contact either Faith or Marty.

We also need volunteers to be greeters for each service, arriving a half-hour before the service is scheduled to begin. We welcome those interested in Torah honors (aliyot, hagbah, glilah, carrying the Torah in procession, etc.) to contact Abe as soon as possible.

## **JOINT SELICHOT SERVICE IN BRATTLEBORO WITH KEENE CONGREGATION**

On Saturday evening Sept 8 at 7:30 PM at our shul, we will be holding our second annual joint Selichot service with Congregation Ahavas Achim in Keene. Many of us were present last year for the moving service held in the Keene synagogue. This year BAJC will be hosting. Selichot, which means "forgiveness," is traditionally held by Ashkenazic Jews on the Saturday night prior to Rosh Hashanah, while Sephardic Jews do Selichot prayers throughout the month of Elul.

Selichot prayers represent a culmination of the self-examination and preparation we do throughout the month of Elul to help prepare us spiritually for the Days of Awe. As this mood of repentance becomes more urgent, penitential prayers are recited at Selichot, a night-long prayer session often starting at midnight on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah. (We'll be less severe and begin at 7:30!) It has become a practice at such services to read the prayers of liturgical poets, the Payitanim, (some of these expressing the sadness that comes when we are distant from God, as well as our desire to change and repent), and to study particular Biblical verses and prayers from the High Holiday Machzor.

Please join us in welcoming our friends from Keene and sharing together in this ritual. The service, which will be led by Andi Waisman, will be followed by coffee, tea, and dessert.

## **GREEN, GREEN, GREEN THEY SAY**

All Souls Church and the West Village Meeting House are now certified GREEN. This means that plastic or styrofoam utensils and materials cannot be used at all in their building. This restriction applies to all renters too, including BAJC. Use of their flatware and glasses is encouraged, but paper cups and plates are okay.. Renters must recycle all plastic containers for soda, water, etc.

## **CULTURE CONNECTION**

"Culture Connect" will connect you with lots of interesting events going on in the Pioneer Valley and southern Vermont area. Check out [www.hgf.org/culture\\_connect/events](http://www.hgf.org/culture_connect/events) to find out some of the lectures, concerts, plays, and other special events you can enjoy just a short drive from our area.



### GOODSEARCH REMINDER

If BAJC had 100 supporters clicking on [www.Goodsearch.com](http://www.Goodsearch.com) twice a day, we would receive \$730 in a year! Change your vocabulary: don't "google" —"goodsearch" instead! Tell your friends and relatives to sign on as supporters of the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community, then goodsearch away!

### A BAJC MISSION TO CUBA

Last autumn, the Social Action Committee began thinking about new "tikkun olam" undertakings on behalf of our congregation. One idea that interested and excited them was applying for a religious license from the federal government to travel to Cuba to meet with and give support to Cuban Jewish communities. Thanks to Judy Greenberg's efforts, BAJC has been granted a two-year license to travel to Cuba as a congregation for purposes of religious activities. Now all we need is a delegation of folks who would like to participate in a trip, perhaps as early as this winter.

The license stipulates that we must have a fulltime schedule of religious activities while we are in Cuba, but the mission will be able to decide what their time there will look like and how many Jewish communities they wish to visit. The biggest Jewish population is in Havana, where there are many synagogues but they have more folks visiting them and donating supplies than the Jewish communities in the countryside. BAJC would have the chance to begin a long-term connection with a community we can continue to get to know over the years, to support, to share services and songs, to teach and to learn from, and to build face-to-face people-to-people bridges. The first trip will be from seven to ten days. Any one interested should contact Judy, even if you think you cannot afford such a trip. If you have questions, ideas, suggestions, or if you are interested in finding out more and getting involved, please e-mail [info@baicvermont.org](mailto:info@baicvermont.org) or call 257-1959.



### TIKKUN OLAM MITZVAH PROJECT

A simple, yet meaningful project is to collect the hotel toiletries from your stay and bring them to a collection basket at BAJC. The items will be donated to

Morningside Shelter and the Women's Crisis Center in Brattleboro.

### A NOTE FROM JACKIE ABOUT A WAY TO HELP HEAL THE WORLD

I have had the wonderful experience of taking fresh veggies from my garden over to the Drop-in Center, which serves as our local "food shelf". The director said that they served over 5000 non-repeat families this year! I have also brought fresh flowers, and new or nearly-new clothing that can be used to refresh street living or for a job interview.

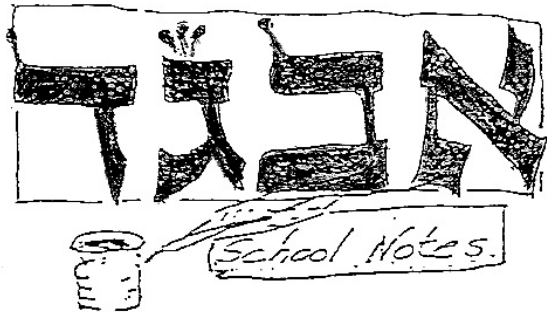
Perhaps some of you know the phrase "bread and roses." We all deserve beauty and dignity (roses) in our lives, in addition to food and shelter (bread). I highly recommend that you bring your produce, as well as other items that lend beauty and dignity to the lives of those in need, to the Drop-in Center on South Main Street. As with many acts of chesed, giving enhances the life of the giver as well as the lives of those who receive. Maybe that's why it's a commandment, a mitzvah. By participating in tikkun olam, we become the changer and the changed!

B'shalom  
Jackie

### TWO HUGE THANK-YOU'S

Huge thanks to Harvey and Sandi for a magnificent needlepoint torah mantle. To honor the marriage of daughter Jennifer to Ron, Sandi spent months working on a beautiful design, which she then had made into a torah mantle. Wait until you see this work of art at high holiday services...you'll be amazed and impressed. You can tell just by looking at it the love that went into it!

Huge thanks to Mark (and his daughters) for clearing out old cabinets in the BAJC office, then building and installing two handsome birch and oak bookcases -- and charging us absolutely nothing! What a generous donation! We will now actually be able to start our library, making available to our members some of the great books we have had stored in cartons for several years! We have a volunteer (an experienced librarian) ready to set up our library but, before we can do that, the bookcases need to be polyurethaned. We need a volunteer (or volunteers) to do this job as soon as possible. Please let Faith know if and when you can do it. Once the bookcases are polyurethaned, Mark can secure them to the walls and we can get our library set up for all to use.



Shalom aleichem,

Hebrew School is approaching rapidly, with the first class on September 10th. I hope all of the students have had a nice relaxing summer, because the teachers have been meeting regularly and have come up with dozens of new projects and activities. It's going to be a busy year, so rest up now while you still have a few days of summer left.

We are making several changes this year. Our obvious challenge has been the discrepancy between the size of the building (small) and the number of students (wonderfully large). Our goal is to have no more than ten students in each class. We have therefore added a sixth class and are thrilled to welcome Emily to the teaching staff. She and her family relocated to Brattleboro this past summer—as far as we are concerned, not a moment too soon.

The school day will follow a slightly different schedule. We will all meet at 3:45 to say our snack blessings together, but B'yachad (the classes all meeting together), which we did at the beginning last year will be during the final fifteen minutes of the day this year. Parents and younger siblings are more than welcome to participate when they come to pick up their children.

Last year I often felt that I was not as available to the parents as I would have liked and was not able to fully focus on their comments and questions. This year, Laura, the Chair of the Education Committee, will be available most Mondays for “curbside consultations.” She will convey comments to the appropriate person and help set up parent-teacher meetings when required.

Hebrew school will begin on Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:45—and we will begin promptly at 3:45. Please make sure you have taken care of registration before then!

Contact Faith if you need a registration form or if you have any questions. She'll be happy to help you, and is always happy to receive checks!

B'Shalom,  
Mara

## **GETTING MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION UP-TO-DATE**

In addition to sending in your completed membership forms, please let Faith know whenever you have a change of address, a new telephone number, or a change of e-mail address. Equally important, please let Faith know when someone is ill or hospitalized, or just needs a bit of cheering up, or when there is a “mazal tov” type event occurring.

## **WRJ CALENDAR AND CARDS AVAILABLE**

Now is the time to order your 5768 pocket and wall calendars and High Holiday and blank greeting cards from the Women of Reform Judaism. These materials feature the work of Cesan d'Ornellas Levine, a Canadian artist whose art gives voice to symbols of the conscious and subconscious through layers of color and texture. To order please visit [www.womenofreformjudaism.org](http://www.womenofreformjudaism.org)

## **SJBC**

The Significant Jewish Books Club meets every other month for potluck supper, discussion of a book, and selection of a book for the next meeting. It is always open to new members, either for one particular book discussion or to participate in all the discussions. SJBC meets on Thursdays, sometimes at a member's house and sometimes at the shul. The next meeting is on Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 at the shul. The book for discussion is *The Jew in the Lotus* by Rodger Kamenetz. Call 257-1959 for more information or to let us know you are coming.

## **HOLIDAY SOCIAL ACTION GUIDES**

With the Jewish holiday season just around the corner, consider downloading the Social Action Holiday Guide for the High Holidays and Sukkot for you and your family. Complete with readings and activities for the individuals and small groups, the Social Action Holiday Guides can help you establish new traditions while honoring the old. To download your copy of the Holiday Guide please visit [www.rac.org/pubs/holidayguides](http://www.rac.org/pubs/holidayguides).

## BAJC Mission Statement

**The Brattleboro Area Jewish Community provides a context and structure for people to be Jewish together in a rural environment. Our community fosters Jewish pride and identity by participating together in religious, spiritual, educational, social and cultural experiences. We welcome anyone interested in participating and learning.**

## BAJC Directory

**Spiritual Leader:** James Levinson

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### NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

This online copy of our newsletter is a much-reduced version of the real thing! The print version includes Honorable Menschen, Yahrzeits, and other individual member news. If you are not a member but would like to receive the newsletter, we ask that you contribute \$36 to BAJC for a subscription for the year 5767. Your subscription will include frequent e-mail updates. (If you want the newsletter but do not want to receive e-mails, please let Faith know.)