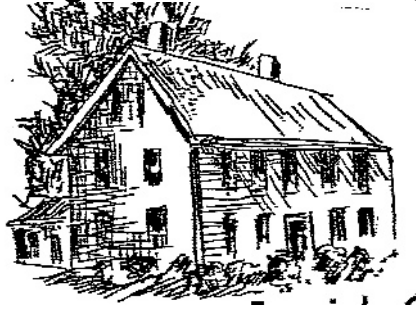


CONGREGATION SHIR HEHARIM

(Song of the Mountains)



The Brattleboro Area Jewish Community

March 2008

ADAR I / ADAR II 5768

FROM YOUR SHALIACH TZIBUR

Watching this year's national election process, it's been interesting to hear the refrain of "bringing America together" from at least one of the candidates. Quite a challenge!

But then adopting one of our favorite maxims: "think globally (or nationally) but act locally," I began wondering if, perhaps, a simultaneous "bringing our shul together" refrain might be in order.

Let's think about this. Of course our task is far less Herculean. We're mostly Jewish, after all, and mostly Vermonters, and we share at heart many of the same values. Issues that potentially divide us are miniscule compared to those that wreak havoc in other congregations. At the same time there *are* differences among us that we need to acknowledge and also need to respect. One has to do with religious practices. With only one local congregation, we have members coming from a broad range of religious traditions. I like to think we've been able to offer in our services a variety of prayer experiences that permits all of us to feel at home, and know that we'll always be respectful of those whose worship tradition differs from our own.

There also are differences among us in organizational style. Some of us are most comfortable in a congregation with a strong administrative structure, with clear guidelines and regulations, and with fiscally conservative policies on spending and investment. Such a congregation provides us with a sense of safety and security. Others of us are, by nature, less patient with administrative processes and the constraints they sometimes seem to impose on actions we'd like to take. Both are legitimate perspectives, yet lots of

organizations falter over just such issues. We at BAJC, by contrast, want to continue being a congregation in which kindness, consideration, mutual understanding, user-friendliness, and a genuine desire to reach win-win conclusions outweigh these differences in perspective. We are, after all, a faith community. If we can't overcome such differences as they arise, if we can't be a model in doing this well, who can?

As I wrote in my column last month, congregations need to have rules. If, however, these rules are as "user-friendly" and non-restrictive as possible, and if we listen carefully and sympathetically to one another and search for genuine accommodation, there's no question in my mind that our shul can continue being rich and vital and vibrant, and, at the same time, a comfortable Jewish home for all of us. So while we watch the national election drama unfold before us, let's think locally and endeavor to maintain that kind of unity in our own shul. We are a truly wonderful congregation, and this is a goal well worth pursuing. Paul Berch and I are committed to working together to help make this happen.

B'Shalom,
Jim

PESACH: CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

Each spring Jews around the world sit down together at the Passover seder. The Union for Reform Judaism has pages of resources, new and innovative *haggadot*, and more online to help you and your family celebrate this Pesach. Logon to www.urj.org/holidays/pesach to learn more.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As we approach the knotty question of how we begin the process of expansion of our facilities at our Synagogue, a moment of peace and reflection is in order. As a congregation, we have accomplished much during the past several years as we have successfully transitioned from a congregation meeting on a part-time basis at West Village Meeting House to a full-time congregation meeting full-time in our own home on Greenleaf Street. We have seen the increase in events that we are able to host and support. No less important is that we have transitioned from a congregation with an oral history to a congregation with a written history. (I might add that anyone who wants to help record our oral history while it can still be remembered should contact Marty Cohn, who has volunteered to be the BAJC archivist.) We have started to take on a sense of permanence. We are an organization that has a past to respect, a present to live, and a future to plan. We have created structure, rules, policies and procedures to guide our current practices and to provide a degree of consistency as we move into the future.

Jim Levinson and I are both aware of the strengths and potential pitfalls of this process in which we find ourselves. The gains of being more formalized and more organized are clear, giving us the ability to move forward in a planned and consistent way and making us better able to anticipate needs and work out solutions. It allows us to present a stable and comprehensible entity to those who would visit and join.

Yet, in becoming more formalized and organized, we must be ever-vigilant to preserve what makes BAJC what it is: the commitment to make our community a home for people of different spiritual needs and different spiritual history who wish to join together for worship and celebration, learning and sharing. We must dedicate ourselves to support both the needs of individuals and the needs of the congregation as a whole. As Jim suggests in his column this month, we want to continue being a congregation in which kindness, consideration, mutual understanding, user-friendliness, and a genuine desire to reach win-win conclusions outweigh differences in perspective.

My belief is that a strong, stable, unified foundation will allow this Congregation to initiate and expand activities and programs and to build for the future. A strongly-rooted tree can more easily support wide branches. Truly a win-win process.

The foremost problem we face, as I see it, is the need to expand our space. Our spiritual, educational, and communal needs cannot fully breathe in the space we have. Working together, I have every confidence that we will be successful in our expansion and we will continue to grow *chayil l'chayil*-from strength to strength..

B' Shalom,
Paul

NOMINATIONS FOR BAJC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

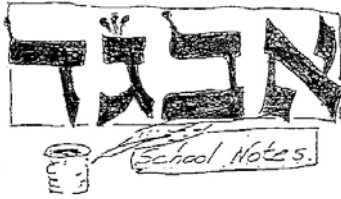
This year four Trustees will be elected for terms of three years. If you are interested in being on the Board, please submit your name to Paul Berch by April 12th, along with a brief statement introducing yourself and telling why you would like to serve. Names of all the candidates will appear in the May newsletter. The election will take place as part of the Annual Meeting, which will be held at our synagogue on June 2nd at 6:30.

Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings (usually the fourth Monday of the month), to chair at least one committee, to be active on other standing and ad hoc committees, and to maintain contact with a designated group of members on a regular basis. In addition, Board members plan and attend services, potlucks, and other events, and generally act as "ambassadors" within our congregation and in the larger Jewish community. Our by-laws require that Trustees be Jewish, as well as being members in good standing.

SUMMER LEARNING RETREAT FOR ADULTS

Ready for some high level, intensive study this summer? Then the Union's Adult Study Retreat is for you! This year's retreat at Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, NH., will focus on Israel@60, with wonderful faculty including Mira Angrist, Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, Lisa Grant, Anat Hoffman, Rabbi Jan Katzew, Rabbi Michael Morgan, Rabbi David Nelson, Rabbi Marc Rosenstein and Rabbi Mark Washofsky. Act now, because registration fills quickly. For more information please visit www.urj.org/educate/adultstudy/summer/ or contact Rabbi Joan Glazer Farber at jfarber@urj.org.





As in so many other aspects of our winter lives here in Vermont, Hebrew School has been ruled by the weather. After a couple of snow days, we were pleased and relieved to have a slightly-delayed and slightly-abbreviated celebration of Tu B'Shevat, with special thanks to Mollie, Paul's mother in Maryland, for a donation that allowed us to purchase seasonal and symbolic goodies for the holiday. Then we were able to begin our study of Life Cycle events on time and with much joy, as three of our students were welcomed to the covenant by being given Jewish names. Additional naming celebrations are being planned for later in the year to accommodate family and friends who wish to attend. Anyone, Hebrew School student *or adult*, who would like to arrange a similar ceremony (just a few minutes at the end of a Shabbat service) should speak with Jim.

News from the B'Nai Mitzvah Class: In addition to learning blessings and trope, the students have chosen to address local and global hunger as their project for the year. This month they are hoping to visit The Heifer Project's Overlook Farm, and next month they will be hosting a Hunger Banquet. We welcome the class back to "home turf," as they return from "out there" to meet in the red cottage behind the shul.

Many thanks to the parents who have been volunteering this year, especially Lauren Petrie, who has made a variety of delicious and interesting snacks for the school *every single week*. If you haven't yet helped us out, please sign up for a little sweeping or glass-washing. It doesn't take much time and there is a sign-up sheet conveniently located on the bulletin board just inside the door. There are lots of open dates for the rest of the school year-- which, because of snow days, will extend into June.

B'shalom,
Mara

GOT TOT SHABBAT?

Looking for new ways to celebrate Shabbat with your little ones? Log onto the Union's Early Childhood Shabbat page <<http://urj.org/educate/childhood/shabbat/>> to learn the blessings and find activities keyed to the Torah

portion for you to explore with your children. The new *T'rumah* issue talks about gifts, giving, and the gift of time.

MISSED THE BIENNIAL?

If you were unable to join the more than 5,000 Reform Jews in San Diego (including Faith and Abe) last December you can get a front row seat to many of the sessions on the Biennial Video Highlights page. By visiting <http://urj.org/biennial/sandiego/> you can watch excerpts from Rabbi Eric Yoffie's sermon, the interview with Eisendrath Award winner Michael J. Fox, the presentation of the *Torah: A Women's Commentary* and more are online for you to watch today.

SHABBAT SHA-BLOG!

Do you try to make Shabbat different from the rest of the week? Are you looking for ways to make that happen? Log onto the Shabbat Blog and join the Reform Movement-wide conversation about Shabbat. Read, comment on the posts and send us your ideas. Logon today at www.blogs.rj.org/shabbat to start "Sh-blogging."

GIFT OF BIRTHRIGHT: REGISTRATION OPEN

What could be better than a free 10-day trip to Israel for 18-26 year-olds? One that enables them to see Israel through a Reform lens. Registration for the Taglit-birthright Israel KESHER Trip is now open for those who have never been on an educational study program or organized peer group trip to Israel. Act now, more than 300 signed up the day registration opened.

rites of Spring: Purim and Passover

Plan on welcoming (or, at least, anticipating) spring as we celebrate Purim together on Thursday evening, March 20th, at 5:30, followed by a family potluck. Come in costume, bring noisemakers, hear the Megillah, sing silly songs, laugh at Purim shpiels. Bring vegetarian and dairy main dishes and, of course, hamentaschen.

For Passover in April, since we don't have space for a community seder in our shul, we would like to expedite seder matches. If you have room at your seder table for one or more guests, please let Faith know how many guests you can accommodate, what ages (child-friendly?), which night. For the other half of the matchmaking, if you would like to be invited to a seder, please let Faith know how many adults and/or children, and which night. All matches must be arranged before April 15th.

EASY TIKKUN OLAM

In addition to the personal care items you have been donating to BAJC for the Drop-in Center and Morningside Shelter, please bring recent, interesting magazines to BAJC (or you can deliver the magazines yourself if you're going to the Shelter or Drop-in Center with donations any time). Paul Capcara, Director of the shelter, said "being homeless can be boring, and the world tends to narrow tremendously, so some reading that is both entertaining and can open up a wider perspective on life can be helpful in unexpected ways." He specifically mentioned magazines like *National Geographic*. Paul also said "Many thanks for the continued support and generosity from the BAJC. There is no other community in Brattleboro that does more as quietly and consistently as yours does." So before you send good magazines to recycling, let them do some good. You can bring them to the shul any Monday or Wednesday afternoon, or leave them (wrapped well in plastic) at the door of the shul.

MORE EASY TIKKUN OLAM

When you recycle your computer printer cartridges with BAJC, you not only keep them out of the landfill and give them a second life, but you make money for BAJC. In 2007, BAJC earned \$220 for recycling cartridges! Bring your used printer cartridges to the shul anytime it is open, or leave them on the doorstep in plastic bags. Thank you.

GOOGLE VS. GOODSEARCH

If you all would do your internet searches on Goodsearch.com you will get the same results as you get on Google and BAJC will earn a penny for every click. Those pennies can add up to a nice amount of income for us!

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.



ISRAEL TURNS 60 THIS YEAR!

The State of Israel was established on May 14, 1948 - the 5th of Iyar. The BAJC board has formed an ad hoc committee to explore how we can celebrate this milestone. If you are interested in participating on this committee, please contact Marty.

As we gear up for this important occasion here are some basic facts about Israel.

- Israel is located in the Middle East bordering the Mediterranean Sea with Lebanon to the north, Syria and Jordan to the east and Egypt to the south and west.
- It is 290 miles long and 85 miles wide at its widest point (slightly smaller than New Jersey).
- Its population currently stands at 7.241 million.
- It is a Parliamentary Democracy. The Knesset is the law-making body. Ehud Olmert is the Prime Minister at this time.
- Religious breakdown: 75.6% Jewish, 20% Muslim (mostly Sunni), 4.4% classified as other (includes Christians, Druze)
- Hebrew and Arabic are its official languages; the national anthem is Hatikvah - The Hope.
- The capital is Jerusalem which is its largest city, but most of the population is concentrated in the center of the country around Tel Aviv.
- The currency is the New Israel Shekel.
- Major Industries include Hi Tech - (communications, computer aided design, medical electronics, software development), diamond cutting and polishing, and tourism.
- The lowest point on earth is in Israel--the Dead Sea at 1,315 feet below sea level.

WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY RETREAT CANCELLED

Unfortunately, due to a lack of response, the BAJC Women's Spirituality Retreat that was scheduled for April 11-13, 2008, has been cancelled. The next **Rosh Hodesh** celebration will be Sunday, March 9th from 3-6PM at BAJC. For more information, contact Yael.

ADULT ED IN MARCH

Learn-to-read-Hebrew (decoding) begins anew on March 3rd and will run for ten to twelve Wednesdays. 6:00 to 7:00-ish. (Starting time can be adjusted to 5:00 or 5:30 if that is better for the people enrolled.) There is a \$20 textbook required--Noah Golinken's *Shalom Aleichem*-- please register in advance with Faith.

Conversational Hebrew, taught by Rebecca Sullum, begins on March 12th at 7:00-9:00 and runs for three Wednesday evenings. Register online at bajcvermont.org or on the BAJC adult ed voicemail at 257-1959.

Pesach from Two Perspectives—the Details to the Deep Ecology is a one-time class meeting Sunday, March 30th from 2:00 to 5:00, taught by Susan Auslander and David Cohen. Register online or leave a message on the BAJC voicemail.

Drop-in classes: **Singing is Like Praying Twice**, a monthly sing, is moving from the second Wednesday of the month to the first Shabbat morning service of the month, from nine to ten, beginning March 1st. Get an early taste of Shabbat through song and stay, if you can, for the service that begins at ten. We will learn and share music as a means of enhancing our Jewish experience and community.

Torah study will take place on March 8th (Parashat Perkudei) at 10:00am.

Israeli Film Club will be showing "Broken Wings" on March 30th at 4:00pm. The film won several 2002 Awards of the Israeli Film Academy, including Best Film

Please register for adult ed classes on our website or by contacting Andi

SIGNIFICANT JEWISH BOOKS CLUB

The SJBC (Significant Jewish Books Club) meets every six to eight weeks to discuss--guess what?--a significant Jewish book. The group meets at 6:30 at the shul or at a person's house to discuss a book all have agreed to read and to select a book for the next meeting. Along with the focus on books, the club enjoys a potluck supper. This month the meeting is on Thursday, March 13th and the book is Nonie Darwish's *Now They Call Me Infidel*. You are welcome to join for all the meetings or to drop in for discussion of a book in which you are particularly interested. Call Esther for the location of the March meeting, if you have any questions, or if you need more information.

RABBI ALAN ULLMAN IS RETURNING!

On December 22, BAJC hosted a Torah Study with Rabbi Alan Ullman. The two-hour session, which focused on the Garden of Eden, with many thoughtful and insights and questions by the 26 participants, seemed to fly by, and many people requested an encore. Rabbi Ullman has agreed to return to BAJC with a series of sessions approximately 6 weeks apart. **The first of these Torah studies will be held on Saturday, March 22, 12:30-2:00.** If you are interested, please register and pay a session fee in advance. In order to insure the funding for the sessions, we need at least 18 participants at a cost of \$18.00 per session for BAJC members and \$25.00 for non-members. Please contact Yael as soon as possible if you are interested in studying with Rabbi Ullman, if you have any questions, if you need financial assistance, or to find out if there is still room in the class.

ISRAELI SUMMER SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

Why should the kids have all this fun? This summer, for the first time, the Union for Reform Judaism will offer an EIE-Adult Summer Institute in Israel, July 13-August 3, 2008. Stay on the beautiful Kibbutz Tzuba. Travel throughout Israel as we take an historical journey from Biblical times to the present. Registration is now open. Visit www.urj.org/educate/adultstudy/eieadult/ or contact Rabbi Joan Glazer Farber at jfarber@urj.org for more information.

GUEST SPEAKER AT OUR 'FOURTH FRIDAY' SERVICE

Following the Kabbalat Shabbat service on March 28th, there will be a dessert reception for Clemens Kalisher, an internationally famous photographer who has donated three of his photos to BAJC. Mr. Kalisher is renowned for his photos documenting the arrival in New York of European refugees between 1947 and 1949. Born in Germany in 1921 and later living in Paris, Mr. Kalisher was imprisoned in eight different internment camps but was fortunate to be saved by the American Emergency Rescue Committee. Mr. Kalisher will speak and answer questions after the service.

ESTHER'S DAY (*Sung to the tune of 'Yesterday' by the Beatles*) - music by Paul McCartney

Esther's Day is when Jewish folks will have their say
And cru-el Haman will just go away O we believe in Esther's Day
Mordechai says that we don't really have to die
Now that's just a lot of cha-zer-ai
So have the King tell Haman, "Bye"
Why we're hated so We don't know - and who can say?
Esther, help us now When our skies are dark and grey-ay-ay-ay
Esther's Day is when Haman will be sent away
Or forever we will say oy vey O we believe in Esther's Day
We believe in Esther's Day

IF I HAD A SIDUR (*Sung to the tune of 'If I Had A Hammer' by Lee Hays and Pete Seeger*)

If I had a sidur, I'd daven in the morning
I'd daven in the evening, all over this shul
I'd daven mincha, I'd daven ma'ariv I'd daven shacharit
with my tallis and tefillin All over this shul (oo)
If I had a megilla, I'd read it in the evening
I'd read it in the morning, all over this shul
I'd read about Esther, I'd read about Mordechai
I'd read about the way they saved all of our people
All over Shushan (oo)
If I had a gregger, I'd shake it in the morning
I'd shake it in the evening, all over this shul
I'd listen intently, to the whole megilla
I'd shake it as loud as I could when they get to Haman's name,
yea All over this shul (oo)
We've got a megilla, and we've got greggers
And we're gonna boogie, tonight all over this shul
We're gonna march in costumes
We're gonna sing those Purim tunes
We're gonna have some fun till the evening's done
All over this shuuuuuuuuul!

Esther's Coming to the Castle (*sung to the tune of "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain"*)

Esther's coming to the castle on Purim
Esther's coming to the castle on Purim
Esther's coming to the castle, yes; she's coming to the castle.
Yes, she's coming to the castle, the Purim queen.
And she'll see uncle Mordechai when she comes
And she'll see uncle Mordechai when she comes
And she'll see uncle Mordechai. What a very brave and smart guy!
And she'll see uncle Mordechai when she comes.
He will help her get the message to the King
He will help her get the message to the king

Then the King will surely know, that Haman has to go
He will help her get the message to the King.
And we'll have a Purim party in Shushan
And we'll have a Purim party in Shushan
Where we'll eat and drink and dine, and have a wonderful time
And we'll have a Purim party in Shushan.

PEANUT BUTTER, POPPY, PRUNE, OR CHOCOLATE HAMENTASHEN

to the tune of Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious by R. M. Sherman & R. B. Sherman words by Erik Contzius

Peanut Butter, Poppy, Prune, or Chocolate Hamentashen

If Purim is the Holiday this snack you will be Noshin'
It's Haman's hat or ears or eyes (on this, I am not Joshin'!)

Peanut Butter, Poppy, Prune, or Chocolate Hamentashen!

Yum-diddle diddle diddle yum diddle-eye...

When I was just a little kid, a long long time ago

The month Adar had just come in, but how was I to know that there was such a holiday with food I would sequester

That yummy treat I love to eat when reading about Esther

Peanut Butter, Poppy, Prune, or Chocolate Hamentashen...

Yum-diddle diddle diddle yum diddle-eye...

The first time that I saw these things, triangular in shape,

Their smell was oh, so heavenly that there was no escape

I took a bite, my appetite just grew and grew and grew
Without Oznei Haman and Purim, oh what would I do?

Peanut Butter, Poppy, Prune, or Chocolate Hamentashen...

Yum-diddle diddle diddle yum diddle-eye...

So when we read 'bout Mordechai around this time of year

Just don't forget a mitzvah which will bring all lots of cheer

We give out gifts to one and all, they're called shaloch manot

(SPOKEN: And in English, that's presents of food!!!)

So put Hamentashen in MY boat! MMM!! MMM!!)

Peanut Butter, Poppy, Prune, or Chocolate Hamentashen... (4X)

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

Board of Trustees

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Martin Cohn
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Joe Rosen
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President: Paul Berch
Vice-president: Linda Heimerdinger
Treasurer: Randy Terk
Secretary: Martin Cohn

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Mondays when Hebrew school is in session, or by appointment

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Newsletter deadline: 15th of each month

Webmaven: Julie Strothman



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 5768. 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.)