

CONGREGATION SHIR HEHARIM

(Song of the Mountains)



The Brattleboro Area Jewish Community

December 2009

Kislev / Tevet 5770

JOIN AND PARTICIPATE

Twenty centuries ago Hillel said “Do not separate yourself from the community.” As BAJC’s volunteer administrator, I want to believe that none of you wants to separate yourself from the community but I am having trouble finding out who actually is in the community! BAJC takes a census every year by asking you to fill out a membership commitment form so we know who our members are. It asks for a financial commitment, but only after assuring you that no one is turned away who wishes to be a member and that abatements and special arrangements are kept in complete confidence. So I am frustrated by the difficulty of taking the census—that is, getting folks to simply send in the form! There are still close to thirty “presumed” members who have not sent it in, this even after reminding you that we have a scholarship fund to make membership possible for those who want to be members but can’t manage even a minimal \$50 payment. We don’t want *anyone* to relinquish membership because of financial concerns! If you have any questions or want to make confidential arrangements for abatement or scholarship, just call me. Should you decide to separate yourself from the community (which would make us very sad!), please let me know so that I will stop bothering you with requests and reminders and pleas and newsletters and e-mails and phone calls. On a more positive note, if you are a newsletter subscriber who would like to become a member, call me!

I’d like to share with you some words from the Congregation Ahavas Achim newsletter. Rabbi Sarah Rubin writes “Community is more than the sum of its individual members,” urging members to “come and participate; come and make community happen. Share your skills by offering or suggesting adult education topics or fundraising ideas or by hosting and developing social events. Fill our building with your dreams.” Several BAJC newsletters, including this one, similarly have invited you to create community with your participation. BAJC offers many opportunities to do this! The President, the Administrator, and the Board alone cannot keep our community vibrant. We need you to volunteer, we need you to fill our building with your dreams, and we need you to help make those dreams come true with your participation.

B’tikvah,
Faith



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

This year, Hanukkah begins at nightfall on Friday, December 11, with the lighting of the first candle. We will celebrate at BAJC with our traditional latke potluck. Details can be found in this newsletter.

One of the most important observances associated with Hanukkah is the kindling of the Hanukkah lights on the Hanukkiya, a seven- or nine-branch candelabrum. On each night one more light is kindled, beginning with one candle on the first night of Hanukkah and ending with eight on the final evening. The lighting is accompanied by the chanting of appropriate blessings and the singing of songs. The ninth branch is reserved for the *shamash*, the servant light, which is lit first and used to kindle the other lights of the Hanukkiya.

In a broader sense the Hanukkah light symbolizes the light of religious, national and cultural freedom won by the Maccabees for their people. That victory gave new force to the faith that had waned under the influence of Hellenism, inspired Jewish culture to flourish again, and encouraged the Hebrew language, which had been largely supplanted by Greek, to come into its own once more.

President George H.W. Bush put forward an idea in 1988, based on the phrase "a thousand points of light," encouraging individual contribution to society.

"I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in."

At BAJC we have many "points of light" and I would like to acknowledge some of them now, in no particular order. These are members who help insure that our congregation continues to flourish. I do this offering my apologies to anyone I might accidentally have forgotten to include.

- Faith and Abe
- The Board of Trustees (Wendy, Paul, Sandy, Stuart, Vikki, Faith, Abe, Julie, Jeff, and Randy).
- The Membership Committee (Sandy, Faith Deb, and Jeff)

- The Education Committee (Wendy, Faith, Deb, and Robin)
- The Fundraising Committee (Susan, Faith, Norma, Sandy, Margie and Vikki)
- Jennifer
- Jim
- The Overflow Shelter Volunteers chaired by Bobbe
- The Religious School teachers (David, Jackie, Mara, Judith, David, Kate)
- Sheila
- Esther
- The Nominating Committee (Paul, Laura, and Sandy)
- The Cemetery Committee (Norma, Yael, Vikki, and Deb).
- Phil
- Diane
- The Social Action Committee (Judy, John, and Janet)
- The Rabbinic Search Committee (Paul, Enid Michael, Julie, Louisa)
- Our Chevra Kaddisha committee
- Felipe
- Jackie
- Eugene
- Service lay leaders (Andi, Paul, Julie, Bob, Moss, Elkanah, and Kate)
- The Brit Kodesh Committee (Allen, Julie, Randy, David, and Eva)
- And, all the *menschen* listed each month in our newsletter for their special donations.

There are still more lights that can shine. We need both chairs and members for our Buildings & Grounds Committee and Adult Education Committee. We need additional members for our Education, Sunshine, Social Action and Ritual Committees. Volunteer now and let your light shine for BAJC.

Hanukkah commemorates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in 164 BCE. Hopefully, this year it will also commemorate your re-dedication to Congregation Shir Heharim.

As the great Jewish philosopher Reb Hallmark said, "May the warmth of Hanukkah be with you always."

On behalf of the BAJC Board of Trustees, as well as my family, Yael, Rachel and Jessica, I wish you a Happy Hanukkah.

B'shalom,
Marty

SERVICES AND MEETINGS IN DECEMBER

There is a special call for a minyan for a Kaddish on December 1st promptly at 5:15. The Shabbat morning service on the 5th at 10:00 will be led by Kate ; the Shabbat morning service at 10:00 on the 19th will be led by Moss and Elkanah. The only December Kabbalat Shabbat service is our Chanukah celebration and latke potluck, beginning at 6:00 on the 11th, led by Marty, who needs a couple of people to manage the potluck part of this event.

Torah study takes place at 10:00 on December 12th. The ritual committee meets at 5:30 on the 1st; the membership committee at 5:30 on the 18th; the education committee at 10:00 a.m. on the 20th; the Board at 6:30 on the 28th. The Significant Jewish Books Club will meet at 6:30 on the 3rd for potluck supper and discussion of *A Pigeon and a Boy* by Meir Shalav. The book for January is *Shanghai Diary* by Ursula Bacon. New members to SJBC are always welcome. Kim Friedman's yoga class meets on the 13th at 6:30; call Kim to let her know you will be there. The Mah Jongg Mavens play every Wednesday afternoon from 1:30 to 5:00 and welcome new members to learn or to play.

NOTICE ANYTHING NEW?

Did you notice the new drawing of our shul on the front of the newsletter? Esther, who drew the old picture, has drawn a new one to reflect some changes in the building and grounds. Thank you, Esther! It is our hope that we will call on Esther in the not-too-distant future to draw a third picture from a different focus, showing a new, expansive sanctuary attached to the existing building.

Did you notice the Tree of Life that has been "planted" on the wall in the meeting/dining area of our shul? Thanks go to Phil for installing the sculpture that was so generously donated by Elliott and Pam. Now all we have to do is sell lots of leaves! Each leaf is one-and-a-half by four inches and can be engraved with up to four lines, with 26, 21, 27, and 17 characters per line. Within that framework, you can have a leaf engraved to thank, to honor, to reward, to commemorate, to memorialize, to celebrate. All you have to do is send BAJC \$250 and engraving instructions for each leaf. Looking to the future, we hope the leaves will help finance a new building, so we will call on Phil to "re-plant" the Tree in the entrance foyer of a new sanctuary!

WELCOME (BACK) SHARON MYERS

BAJC is delighted to welcome Sharon back to the Board of Trustees., appointed by Marty Cohn to fill the unexpired term of Bobbe. Sharon was on the Board several years ago and is most welcome at this time as both a new and an experienced Board member.



CHANUKAH SALE; HANUKKAH EVENTS

There are eight ways to spell this holiday. All are correct. The only rule is that each spelling can only contain eight letters... one for each candle! It is definitely time to prepare for Chanukah, which comes early this year—December 11th through the 18th.

You have eight opportunities to shop for candles, decorations, books, and gift items at our BAJC gift shop (aka Faith's office): two Mondays (November 30th and December 7th) between 3:00 and 6:00, three Wednesdays (November 25th, December 2nd and 9th) between 1:00 and 6:00, and three Sunday afternoons (November 22 and 29 and December 6).

Our congregation's Chanukah celebration will take place on the first night, Friday, December 11th at 6:00 at a Kabbalat Shabbat service, led by Marty Cohn. It will be preceded by lighting of the first candle in many chanukiot and followed by a latke potluck supper and dreidel-spinning. Bring your candles and chanukiot along with sufganiot and/or lots of latkes to warm in our oven, and perhaps salads and other dishes. We will supply applesauce, sour cream, dreidels, Chanukah stories and songs. We need a couple of volunteers to warm and serve the latkes and other foods.

The Hebrew school Chanukah party will take place on the fourth night, December 14th, with more songs, stories, dreidels, and latkes. A flyer with more information about this will be sent home from school the week before.



SOCIAL ACTION

The social action committee is pleased to report that our Jewish community donated 70 bags of groceries and \$260 to the Brattleboro Drop-in Center as a

result of our high holiday appeal. The committee's next project is to provide Friday night meals at least once a month for the Morningside Shelter. (Note: This is not the same as meals for the Overflow Shelter at the First Baptist Church.) Morningside Shelter has families and single parents with children living there for periods of time, but there is no provision for food and often the families cannot afford to buy enough food for their children and themselves. Last year BAJC families, groups, and/or individuals served a number of meals at Morningside on Friday nights when we were not having services. Social action chair Judy asks that folks volunteer, possibly with a friend or two, to cook a generous, nutritious Shabbat dinner for about twenty people, and stay to eat together and visit with the residents. Judy says "you will feel like you have had a very special evening, I absolutely guarantee it!" As with the Overflow Shelter, if you can provide a meal but need help to buy the food, that can be arranged, or if you can't cook and serve the meal but would like to donate money, you can send a check to BAJC with a notation that it is for Morningside Shelter. Please email Judy to reserve a Friday night. Possible dates for this year are December 4, 18, 25; January 1, 15, 29; February 5, 19; March 5, 19; April 2, 16, 30.

NATHAN E. COHEN MEMORIAL LECTURE AT CONGREGATION AHAVAS ACHIM

Rabbi Louis Reiser will be the guest speaker at the first of this year's Nathan E. Cohen Memorial Lecturess at 3:00 on Sunday afternoon, December 6th on the topic "The Hillel Narratives: What the First Rabbi Can Teach Us About Judaism." Rabbi Reiser, an old friend of BAJC, now rabbi of Etz Hayim Synagogue in Derry, N.H., and a regular teacher at the summer institute and winter retreat of the National Havurah Committee, recently published a book interpreting the true meaning behind the legends of the Hillel story told in the Babylonian Talmud. Admission to the lecture is free and all are welcome. For further information, call the CAA office at 603-352-6747.

OVERFLOW SHELTER DINNERS

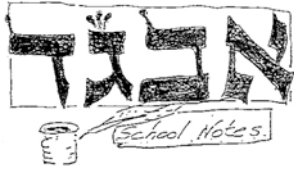
BAJC is once again participating with other faith communities, organizations, and businesses to provide dinners at the overflow shelter, housed at the Baptist Church on Main Street in Brattleboro. The amazing outpouring of generosity from members of our congregation has already given us enough people to serve meals, but we still need some decaffeinated coffee and lemonade donations, salad for December 29th, and chili or sloppy Joe's and brownies or cookies for January 12th.

Additionally, we have been asked to provide Christmas dinner. Bobbe, once again the mitzvah angel organizing BAJC's participation in helping to feed folks in need in our community, wants to provide a festive Christmas dinner. She is asking us for four pies, rolls, salad, cranberry sauce, a sweet potato casserole, and two or three turkeys (raw), which she will cook for the dinner. Please let Bobbe know what you can do to help. If you are unable to prepare anything, please consider a financial contribution to help with this mitzvah. You can send a check to BAJC with the notation that it is for the overflow shelter. Bobbe and all the folks who benefit from your kindness and generosity thank you.

A MITZVAH OPPORTUNITY FOR BOOKLOVERS (AND OTHERS)

If you love books and have some time to spare and a laptop computer, you could be the person to help bring the BAJC library into existence. Volunteers worked over the summer and fall unpacking, sorting, and shelving the hundreds of books that have long been in storage. The next step is to catalogue the books, listing them by title, author, and subject. The cataloguing work can be done at your convenience. More than one person can work on this, and folks can work alone or in teams, for whatever periods of time they can manage--morning, afternoon, or evening, weekdays or Sundays. Once we have the list, we can actually open the library and start circulating the books.

This would be a perfect mitzvah project for boys and girls in the b'nai mitzvah class, a perfect opportunity for students to fulfill required hours of community service, a perfect way for members not paying full membership dues or Hebrew school tuition to provide a much-needed service in lieu of money, and a perfect project for anyone who loves books and would like to see them available for our community to use. To volunteer, or for more information, please contact Faith...the sooner the better!



Dear Friends,

This letter is for both our children and our adults. I've decided to include some puzzles and activities just for fun. Kind of like a mini-mini pages supplement. Enjoy!

Activity 1. What can you tell about me?

Imagine this picture: A dark skinned teenager is sitting in a narrow stairwell. He's on the second to bottom step and his shoulders are almost as wide as the stairs. The picture is cropped close, only showing the wall leading up to his left and a sliver of a window to his right- the rest being the wall and handrail going up the stairs. He's leaning forward, arms crossed, with rounded moon-shaped eyes with drooping eyelids- he is not smiling. He has full lips and thin curly braids hanging down to his shoulders. He is wearing a skin-tight nylon stocking on his head pulled down to the middle of his forehead. He is also wearing clean blue jeans and loose plain white t-shirt.

What do you imagine his life is like? Any guesses about family? School? Interests? Does his pose (leaning forward, arms crossed) suggest anything to you (the pose was created intentionally by the photographer)?

Does any of this change if I say that this image is a portrait at the Jewish Museum collected in a series exploring Jewish identity? After guessing at these questions, see below for the story of this teen.

Activity 2. Word Jumble- Pick the correct word for each clue. Then unscramble all the bold letters for the mystery word:

- The Hebrew month that brings in the new year?
___ ___ ___ ___ (first letter)
- The holiday of lights that is coming soon?
___ ___ ___ ___ ___ (middle letter)
- Hebrew for Father?
___ ___ ___ (middle letter)
- Moses' Sister who was also a prophet?
___ ___ ___ ___ (last letter)
- The Candle that is used to light the other Chanukah candles?
___ ___ ___ (first and last letter)

- The Month that Chanukah is in?
___ ___ ___ ___ (third letter)

Mystery Challenge Clue: A weekly greeting:

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Note: (the letter from the clue "the holiday of lights" has different forms)

Word Choices:

חַנוּכָּה **שָׁמַשׁ** **כִּסְלֵו**

(Chanukah) (shamash) (kislev)

תִּשְׁרִי **מִרְיָם** **אַבָּא**

(tishri) (Miriam) (abba)

Activity 3. A riddle from the riddle duel between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba:

What brings joy to birds and grief to fish? Coded Answer = 3-15-20-20-15-14 Can you figure out why?

Activity 1 response- This teen speaks:

My name is Jacob Goldstein and I'm 15. My father was Belizean, my mom is American, and I'm Jewish. So I'm one of a kind, you could say. I didn't know my dad because he died when I was little. But I grew up with my mom, and she's raised me all by herself, and she's done a great job. A lot of people thought I was adopted. But, when people think I'm adopted, I really don't think anything of it, I just have to tell them that, no she's my mom and my dad was black. I identify myself as being black, but I also identify myself as being Jewish, too. I think of myself more as an individual than like any other person, because I'm both, like I'm Jewish and I'm black, so I'm different from most other people. I like being different from other people. I like being a leader. I don't like to follow other people and what they do.

Dear Friends,

I hope you enjoyed these small activities. I was introduced to the portrait of Jacob Goldstein at the Mitnick Jewish Educators Conference that I just attended. Several teachers and I went to West Hartford for a half day conference where we learned from nationally-recognized educators everything from exploring the Jewish Museum (many of their 26,000 items have been scanned into their website with great zooming capabilities (www.jewishmuseum.org), to workshops on technology in the classroom, presenting values, and exploring ways to personalize curriculum for each student. No doubt these fruits will continue to be shared throughout the year.

I'll end by sharing with you three dates for your calendar:

November 30 (if not past already) is our **School Open House**. Parents are invited to stay for the afternoon and join in for our B'Yachad time (Hebrew for "together," which consists of a snack and full school activity), and explore the school from 4-5:30. We'll finish together again with some songs. Between 4 and 5:30 parents will have a chance to visit the classrooms for short introductions to the curriculum. Downstairs for parents will be a time for conversations about the school and about upcoming holiday celebrations, and the opportunity to share input and just plain schmooze. Coffee, tea and light snacks will be provided.

December 14 Chanukah Party: All parents our invited to our annual Chanukah party. Come prepared for Latkes, Menorah lighting, dreidel games and other surprises. Please email me at school@bajcvermont.org if you are willing to help with the latke snacks that day. The party will begin at 4:45 pm.

December 21 Mock Shabbat Seder: All parents are invited to this mid-week Sabbath celebration. We will begin at 4:30 with a small learning service led by our students, moving into the social hall for a Shabbat "meal" (hearty snacks) complete with candle lighting, grape juice and Challah. Songs, stories and teachings will flow. All parents are welcome- hope to see you there.

As always, if you have any questions, suggestions, or just a few kind words, you can email me at school@bajcvermont.org

Until next Month,

David
Interim Director, BAJC Community School
(aka Hebrew School)



REMEMBER TO:

Click on Goodsearch.com - a search engine which donates 50-percent of its revenue to the charities and schools

designated by its users. Enter Brattleboro Area Jewish Community as your charity and we'll earn money every time you click!.

Bring deposit bottles and cans to BAJC– rinse them and leave them in the shed next to the barn

Recycle your used printer and copier cartridges – bring them to the shul, the office, or the shed.

POLISH SYNAGOGUE TO HOLD SHABBAT SERVICES AGAIN

October 14, 2009; from the **Jewish Telegraphic Agency** -- Shabbat will come to a Polish synagogue for the first time since the Holocaust. Services will be held Friday night and Saturday at the Kielce synagogue, which was reconstructed after World War II and since 1951 has been used as the district archives. A traditional Shabbat dinner, a guided walk through Jewish Kielce and a Havdalah ceremony will be followed by a party.

Some 25,000 Jews lived in Kielce before World War II; 20,000 were murdered by the Nazis. The town is infamous as the site of the last pogrom in Poland, a massacre of 42 Jews by a mob who attacked the Jewish community house more than a year after the war was over, on July 4, 1946.

The Kielce weekend is the latest in a series of Shabbaton programs in long-disused Polish synagogues organized by **Michael Traison**, an American lawyer who has an office in Warsaw. Earlier events took place in Pinczow, Piotrkow Trybunalski, Przemysl and Lublin. Traison said he wanted to remember the destroyed communities, and to demonstrate that the Jewish people survived and thrived, and still exist in Poland. He also wanted to bring together Poles and Jews, as well as "provide a Jewish religious experience for people who would like to participate in such an experience and enjoy a good Shabbat."

Note: Michael Traison is the brother of BAJC's own Harvey, who is quite proud of the work his brother is doing.

SECOND RUN VIDEO



BAJC now has a film library of more than 20 Israeli full-length films for your DVD viewing pleasure. For a small, suggested donation (\$2), you can borrow one almost any Monday or Wednesday afternoon from the BAJC

office. Here are just a few of the titles currently available: *Seven Days*, *About Yossi*, *Bittersweet*, *It All Begins at Sea*, *It's Not Me It's My Sister*, *Julia Mia*, *The Last Suspect*, *Nymphs in the Mist*, *Socrates on a Scooter*, *The Woman in the Bubble*, *Noodle*, *Love and Dance*.

WHAT'S THE PJ LIBRARY AND WHAT DOES IT DO FOR ME?

The PJ Library seeks to engage Jewish families with young children by giving each participating child in our community a high quality Jewish children's book or CD every month from birth through age five. The books and music include a wide array of themes related to Jewish holidays, folktales, and family life. Every book and CD comes with resources to help families use the selections in their homes. ***The PJ Library is FREE for participating families***, financed by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation based in nearby West Springfield, MA. You can pick up a brochure for the PJ Library in the BAJC office, or you can go online to sign up at <http://www.pjlibrary.org/signup.php>.



THREE PRE-CHANUKAH EVENTS IN NEARBY MASSACHUSETTS

December 6th at 2:00 --Craig Taubman in Concert at Temple Beth El, 979 Dickinson St., Springfield, MA: a special musical event for the whole family, featuring Craig Taubman and Band. "Craig's fusion of pop music and liturgy has invigorated sanctuaries and concert halls across the country." This concert is open to the public, free of charge. Call 413-737-0170 for more information.

December 6th at 4:30-- A Celebration of Jewish Music & Food at the Jewish Community of Amherst, 742 Main St., Amherst, MA: Listen to music, join in the dancing! Vocal music by Mak'hel, the Jewish Chorus of Western MA and Kolot, an a cappella group from UMASS, and klezmer music by Klezmir's Amy Rose and Jason Moses and Hu-Tsa-Tsa. Henry the Juggler will also be there! Enjoy an a la carte Middle Eastern feast including hummus, tabouli, babaganoush, pita, baklava, Egyptian chocolate cake and more by the Rehovot Catering Committee. This event is a benefit for Project Rehovot, which helps immigrant and needy children in Rehovot, Israel. The cost is \$5 for under 18; \$10 for others. Call 413-253-0336 for more information.

December 9th -- Family Hanukkah Happenings at the Springfield Jewish Community Center, 1160 Dickinson St., Springfield, MA., at 12:30 p.m. and again 4:30 p.m.: latke baking, dreidel games, stories, songs and crafts. This event is free and open to all families with children ages 15 months old through elementary school. Please RSVP to Preschool director Deb Cohen by Friday, December 6, to assure enough latkes to go around. Call 413-739-4715 (ext. 311) or e-mail dcohen@springfieldjcc.org.

BAJC MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a context and structure for people to be Jewish together in a rural environment. This 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

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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 5770. 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.)