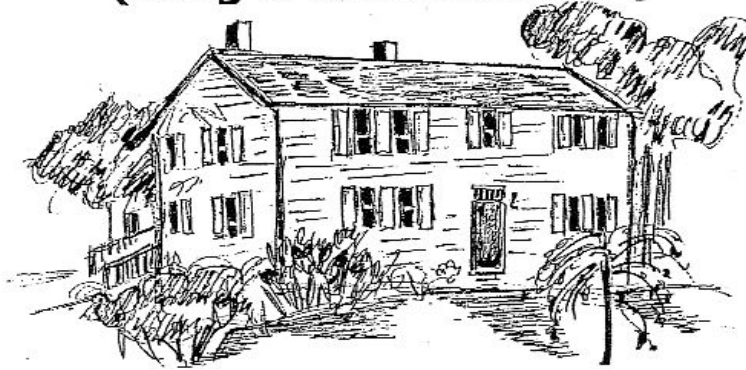


CONGREGATION SHIR HEHARIM

(Song of the Mountains)



The Brattleboro Area Jewish Community

July-August 2011

Tammuz / Av 5771

FROM THE RABBI WHAT YOU DO MATTERS

It's always nice when I meet someone and they say, "Oh, I've heard good things about you." As I begin my second year as rabbi in this community, I am frequently reminded that people are paying attention to what our congregation is doing. We may rarely see or hear from them, but they are paying attention. I'm happy about the publicity we receive for our events and programs. Much gratitude goes to Marty Cohn, who has not only served us well as our President but also has regularly kept our local media supplied with press releases and other newsworthy items. I'm also grateful for the assistance of those who help plan and implement programs that garner public attention. Beyond that, I'm grateful to anyone who is conscious of, and open about, his or her Jewish identity -- especially when serving the greater community with honor. When I'm out and about, I notice how important it is for there to be an identifiably Jewish presence in our community, not only through local media but through our members' daily activities and interactions.

When I meet strangers who tell me they're Jewish, I typically find that they are proud of their Jewish identity and want to connect with other Jews even if they're not interested in religious activities like worship services. I am pleased when I can invite them to programs we sponsor that involve aspects of being Jewish that might interest them. I'm happy to invite them to meet and get to know other members of their "extended family" of Jews. I'm thrilled just to know that they are proud of being

Jewish and are willing to come forward and identify themselves as such.

In the coming year, I hope to offer an ever-expanding variety of programs to let people know that we are more than a religious organization. We are a diverse and inclusive community of Jews who believe that we can and should make a difference in the world. BAJC serves as a "communal oasis"-- a place of gathering where people can find refuge, balance and connection - a place where people can come to forge meaningful relationships with others who share a commitment to social justice and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Through our interactions we come to appreciate each other's stories, concerns and strengths, recognizing and developing our shared capacity to be agents of effective social change for the common good. And we welcome anyone interested in participating and learning.

These are all important aspects of congregational life, but I have come to realize that so many of us are busy and do not always have time to participate in group activities. Fortunately, I have discovered just from being around town that there is another way in which each of us can further our congregation's mission: to "foster Jewish pride and identity." It's a joyful daily practice that doesn't require any additional time or money and it is simply this: **whenever you do or say something while being conscious of and open about your Jewish identity, you are doing a *mitzvah* -- a deed that has a far-reaching 'ripple effect' in all directions through space and time.** Whether it's something you do at work or something

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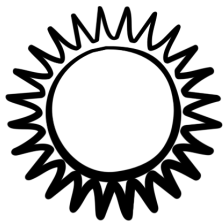
FROM THE RABBI

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you say to a friend while being conscious of your Jewish identity, what you do and say will influence how others feel about Jews and, in subtle ways, how we all feel about God and Israel and our prospects for peace in the world. It's all connected. You may not notice how what you do and say affects others, but I'm noticing something when people recognize me in town as the rabbi of BAJC and tell me they've heard good things.

I look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming programs and services for many good reasons, including the fact that you might enjoy meeting folks who have been drawn to our community (perhaps because of something you said or did)! But if you can't make it, know that I'll be there to welcome them, to engage them in meaningful ways, and to thank you for doing your part in serving our congregation and our community. Whether you notice it or not, what you do matters!

L'shalom,
Rabbi Tom



SUMMER SCHEDULE

We will be following our "regular" schedule of services during July and August, with Shabbat morning services at 10:00 on the first and third Saturdays of the

month and Kabbalat Shabbat services (followed by potluck dessert) at 7:00 on the second and fourth Friday evenings. Keep the newsletter calendar handy, but pay attention to the rabbi's weekly e-messages in case there are changes or additions to the calendar.

T'orah Tuesdays will continue to meet at 8:00 a.m. for yoga and shacharit. Mah jongg meets on Wednesday afternoons at 1:30. Book Club is scheduled for 6:30 on July 20th. The Israeli Film and Food Festival will take place on August 21st and 27th. There are Board meetins at 6:30 on the fourth Monday of each month. Otherwise, all is quiet as we delight in the lazy, hazy days of summer.



BAJC NEEDS YOU...EVERY ONE OF YOU!

The budget for 5772 (that's fiscal year 2011-2012) proposed basic membership commitment of \$1390 for families and \$820 for individuals. There is a membership form included in this newsletter but you need fill out

only the bottom portion if all your information (address, phone, e-mail) is the same as it was this year. If you need to make special arrangements for your membership (e.g.; financial assistance, automatic debit from your checking account, etc.), please contact Julie (julie@bajcvermont.org) or Faith (faith@bajcvermont.org). For those who can support our congregation at a higher level, sustaining family memberships of \$1500 (or more!) and sustaining individual and seasonal memberships of \$1000 (or more!) allow us to continue our policy of welcoming everyone, regardless of ability to pay, and to provide needed scholarships for Hebrew school. Membership for the new year begins on September 1st and includes seating for the high holy days (one seat for individual membership; two seats for family membership, and seating for children under 13).



THE ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

FIFTH ANNUAL ISRAELI FILM AND FOOD FESTIVAL

BAJC's fifth annual (and, probably, last!) Israeli Film and Food Festival will take place on Sunday afternoon, August 21st at the Mountain Park Cinema in West Dover

and Saturday evening, August 27th at the New England Youth Theater in Brattleboro. The festival celebrates the culture and cuisine of Israel with four award-winning Israeli films and a light repast during the intermissions. Tickets purchased in advance are just \$18 for each date; at the door tickets will be \$25. You can purchase tickets to both events, or to either one, by sending an order form and check to BAJC, or you can contact Faith (faith@bajcvermont.org) for tickets at any time. Remember that the two films shown in Brattleboro will be different from the two films shown in West Dover. Please make a special effort to obtain ads for the program book for this event, either your own personal ads or advertising from area businesses and services. Ads range from \$18 to \$300; use the form from last month's newsletter or contact Faith for more forms. It's the advertising that will make this event successful as a much-needed fundraiser for BAJC.

(NEW) PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am honored to be writing for the first time as Brattleboro Area Jewish Community's President, and humbled by the sacred weight of doing this work well. Thank you, in advance, for the help I know you will give me.

We have been blessed by Marty Cohn's dedicated leadership these last three years as President, and even longer on our Board. I am sure you know that Marty has done much, but I am also certain none of us realizes just how much, as he is often a quiet doer. Here are some things for which I am grateful to you, Marty: for your love of Torah, leading Torah study, providing Torah study guides, and including Torah study in our leadership meetings; for your commitment to ensuring that we can celebrate Shabbat in community nearly every weekend; for initiating the Israeli Film & Food Festival and for working with the fundraising committee to bring it to its fifth year this August; for building a remarkable library of Israeli films for us to borrow; for addressing anti-Semitism when it occurs in our area; for encouraging BAJC to take advantage of the many resources of the Union for Reform Judaism; for holding coffee klatches to hear people's thoughts about BAJC; for reinforcing to the Board the importance of outreach to all of our members; for initiating a *Brit Kodesh*, a holy covenant, with our spiritual leader; for working with the local press so that unaffiliated Jews can learn about our activities; for bringing us to this "shechianu time" when we have had a beautiful consecration service expressing the commitment between BAJC and our Rabbi; and for the too numerous to mention 'little' things, like driving a member to Boston for *kosher l'Pesach* food. I'm reassured to know you will still be involved and I hope you will be enjoying your Jewish community in new ways.

I have been involved with BAJC for ten years, initially seeking enriching experiences for my pre-school daughters and grounding for myself as a Jewish parent. One of my earliest contributions to BAJC was creating our website. In 2004 I joined the BAJC Board of Trustees and over the years I've served on the ritual committee, the rabbi liaison committee, the *Brit Kodesh* committee, the rabbi search committee. For the past few years I've been "in training" as Vice-President. I look to Judaism for guidance when I face tough decisions, for humor in tough times, for joy in our life cycles, and for a community of support for me and my family. Now that both my girls are *Bat Mitzvah*, I feel that I will have the time to take on the

challenges of shepherding our congregation through the next three years.

I love BAJC for many reasons, especially for our tradition of creating myriad ways for a wide range of people to connect. Whether you come to *daven* (pray)--alone or in community, learn, sing, dance, do *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), read books, play mah jongg, teach our kids, or work our land, there is something for everyone. And if something is missing for you, we want to hear about it and work with you to fill the gap.

My hopes for the next three years are to see all of us grow in our commitment to BAJC's evolution, to support Rabbi Tom in his work to support us, and to create more usable space at our shul. Michael Knapp, chair of our building and grounds committee and newly-elected Vice-President, has us well on our way to beautifying our space, but we face challenging decisions about the building we want to create in the near future and how we will fund those dreams. I look forward to working with you on these challenges. Together we will continue the work that will ensure a Jewish future in southern Vermont.

L'shalom,
Julie Strothman

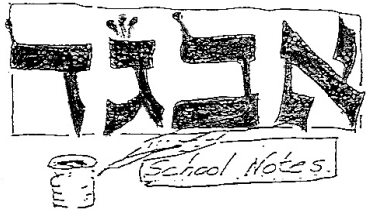
HONORING DEPARTED LOVED ONES



Once again we are preparing a Book of Remembrance to be used at the Yom Kippur Yizkor service and the three other Yizkor services throughout the year. If you made a donation for names

memorialized in the book in past years and would like to continue having those names in the book, please send a check to BAJC for \$7 per name. If you have names you want to add or if you want to make any other changes, or if you don't remember the names you had in the book or if you have any other questions, please contact Faith (faith@bajcvermont.org) before the end of July. The book will be available at the Yom Kippur service for you to keep, or you can have it mailed to you if you include \$2 with your donation.

We also honor loved ones by saying Kaddish for them at the service nearest to their *yahrzeit* dates. As a reminder, we publish the names and dates in our newsletter each month. You can let Faith know at any time if you want to have a name added to the BAJC *yahrzeit* list. If you don't know the Hebrew date, give the month, day, and year of the secular date and we can convert it to the Hebrew date. It is customary to make a donation for the *yahrzeit* and it is traditional to attend a service close to the *yahrzeit* date so you can say Kaddish.

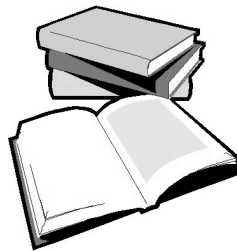


Hebrew school ended the year on a high note, with music, ice cream, games, mini-Torahs to consecrate the students new to our school this year, b'nai mitzvah students speaking about some of their Hebrew school accomplishments, and gifts for the teachers and aides. As we plan for next year, we are facing the possibility of changing our structure in order to be able to accommodate all who wish to attend without overstepping our legal limit of 50 people in the building and without overcrowding the classrooms. If necessary, we will have the three younger classes (Aleph, Bet, and Gimmel) meeting on Mondays from 3:45 to 5:45 and the two older classes (Dalet and Hey) meeting from 5:30 to 7:30. The decision to do this will be made during the summer and is dependent on the number of students enrolled. We already have several new students registered and we are expecting that all our current Aleph through Dalet students will return in the fall, along with all our current teachers. We will need several aides, including two with good Hebrew skills to help in the Dalet class for at least the language half of the class. If you are interested or know anyone who might be interested, please contact Rabbi Tom or Faith or Wendy. Tuition for the new year will be \$350 per child, but there is an "early-bird special" of \$325 if the tuition is paid in full by August 1st. (Reminder: you may already have paid a \$100 deposit.) Send checks to BAJC, PO Box 2353, Brattleboro 05303.



ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

BAJC members receive the newsletter each month as a benefit of membership. Many others who are interested in reading about what is going on at BAJC choose to subscribe to the newsletter. If you are not a member but want to receive the newsletter, please send \$36 to BAJC for a subscription. (Note: If you had a trial subscription or if there is an asterisk next to your name on the mail label of this newsletter, this is your last issue. We hope you will want to subscribe for the new year.) In addition to the monthly print newsletter, subscribers will receive frequent e-mail updates (unless you opt-out by not sending your e-mail address along with your subscription or by asking us to take you off the e-mail list.) If you decide to become a member (and we sincerely hope you will!), we will credit your \$36 toward your membership dues. Please contact Faith if you have any questions or to change your mailing address. NOTE: this summer issue covers July and August, but there will be frequent e-mail updates to keep you informed.



SJBC

The Significant Jewish Books Club will meet on Wednesday, July 20th at 6:30 for potluck supper and a discussion of *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743-1933* by Amos Elon, an important work of historical restoration that shows how a persecuted clan of cattle dealers and wandering peddlers transformed into a successful community of writers, philosophers, scientists, tycoons, and activists. In engaging, brilliantly etched portraits of Moses Mendelssohn, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Hannah Arendt, and many others, Elon traces how a small minority came to be perceived as a deadly threat to German national integrity. Although the title may suggest that the book is narrow and scholarly, nothing could be further from the truth. Elon has written a microcosm of the history of anti-Semitism and of Europe, bringing two centuries of history to life. If you'd like to join SJBC for this (or future) discussions, contact Esther at info@bajcvermont.org. The next two books we will read are *The Cookbook Collector* by Allegra Goodman and *Wherever You Go* by Joan Legant, dates of the meetings to be determined later this month.

The following resolution was passed unanimously by the BAJC Board of Trustees at its April meeting.

Israel's Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut) commemorates the declaration of independence of Israel in 1948, celebrating the declaration of the state of Israel by David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948, and the end of the British Mandate of Palestine. To honor this historic event in the history of the Jewish people, Brattleboro Area Jewish Community resolves to express our unconditional support for the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish State and opposes all actions and efforts to delegitimize and demonize the existence of the State of Israel.

CONSECRATION OF OUR RABBI

On Saturday, June 11, 2011, close to 100 members and guests of the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community attended a "Brit Ha-Rabbanut," service to consecrate Rabbi Tom Heyn's covenant with the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community. The congregation enjoyed appetizers, desserts, music, and even comedy under the tents that protected them from the rain and cool breezes. Keynote speaker, Rabbi David Meyer of Temple Emanu-El in Marblehead, Massachusetts, Rabbi Tom's rabbinic mentor, told the assembly "The act of affirming and consecrating the covenant between a Rabbi and



his congregation represents a sacred moment in the life of the synagogue. The Rabbi and congregation pledge their mutual commitment to the future of the synagogue and to the

strength of their holy obligations to one another." Pastor Susanna Griefen, representing the Congregational Church as well as the Brattleboro Area Interfaith Clergy Association, spoke words of welcome from Brattleboro's interfaith community.

The consecration ceremony was one of the most moving evenings in the history of BAJC. Two enormous tents, long linen-covered tables filled with magnificent desserts and appetizers, soft lighting and a small stage set the tone from the very beginning. Marty Cohn, as Master of Ceremonies, regaled the group with funny anecdotes and jokes. Rabbi David and his wife, Marla, Rabbi Tom, Andi, Dan, and Hebrew school students led the congregation in joyful song. Phyllis' music underscored the entire service. The focus of the consecration service, put together by Phyllis, Marty, and Rabbi Tom, was not just about a congregation accepting and welcoming a rabbi, but more about the whole range of shared responsibilities that this relationship engenders. As a congregation, we have to "step up to the plate" if we want Rabbi Tom to be able to lead, to teach and to provide spiritual guidance. He cannot do this in a vacuum and he can not do it alone; it requires exactly the shared sense of purpose evidenced in this evening. The service finished with Havdalah and moved on to desserts provided by members of the congregation--abundant, beautiful and incredibly good. Too many people helped to thank all of them individually -- almost everyone pitched in to run things back and forth from the synagogue to the

tents, picking up at the end, or lending a hand with chairs and tables; however, a huge thank you has to go to Sharon, who coordinated the food and logistics; Phyllis, who coordinated the service and provided beautiful music; Rabbi Tom, Julie, and Marty who did the overall organizing; and to Dan who saved the day by figuring out the lights at the very last minute when everyone was despairing, and who rocked the tent with his song, "Rockin' Rabbi," reprinted herein! Watching the Rabbi smile through the entire evening brought joy to everyone. He seemed genuinely thrilled with the turnout and the commitment it represented to him as our rabbi. There was a recognition that this is the beginning of a very exciting time in the life of our congregation.

For folks who missed the event, the service program and photos and the rabbi's speech will be on our website, and there are copies of the program in the office which you can pick any Wednesday afternoon or any time the building is open for services or other activities. For folks who missed the rabbi's words, here is one short but poignant quote to close this report: *"...we have been together for a year and have gotten to know one another. I love being here and getting to know you. Every interaction has filled me with love and appreciation for who you are and what you have accomplished here. Building on a foundation that began forty years ago, the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community is like a jewel. It's not for me to say that I'm the perfect rabbi for you, but I am increasingly convinced you are the perfect congregation for me."*

"Rockin' Rabbi"

sung to the tune of "Rockin' Robin:"

He rocks in the temple all day long
Hoppin' and a-davhnin' and a-singin' the psalms
All the congregation on Greenleaf Street
Love to hear the Rabbi preach to the beat

Rockin' Rabbi (Do-Di-Li)
Rockin' Rabbi (Do, Do-di li)
Go, Rockin' Rabbi, You're really gonna rock
It's Shabbat!

He reads from the Torah every Saturday
People come to hear what he has to say
He twirls his tallis as he spins the scroll
All the mishpucha shout "Go, Tom go!"

Rockin' Rabbi (Do-Di-Li)
Rockin' Rabbi (Do, Do-di li)
Go, Rockin' Rabbi, You're really gonna rock
It's Shabbat!

CHANGING OF THE GUARD (SLIGHTLY)

At the annual meeting on June 27th, Marty Cohn retired from the Board of Trustees and the position of President. Julie Strothman was elected by the Board to become the new President. Julie has been on the Board since 2004 and has served as Vice-President for the past three years. Michael Knapp was elected to the position of Vice-President. He has been on the Board since 2008 and has been chair of the Building and Grounds Committee. Stuart Copans is the Board's clerk and Randy Terk is Treasurer. Two new Board members, Susan McMahon and Robin Patch, were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees, along with incumbents Julie and Michael.

Trustees who are continuing to serve terms on the Board are Wendy Bayliss, Sandy Brodsky, Stuart Copans, Vikki Dunn, Sharon Myers, Faith and Abe Schuster (sharing one seat), and Randy Terk. Board members serve for three years, with terms "staggered" so that only three or four are elected in any given year. The by-laws require that the Board consist of no less than seven and no more than twelve members. Anyone who is interested in serving as a Trustee, now or in the future, should contact Julie. In addition to regular monthly meetings, Board members are expected to chair or serve as liaison to a standing committee, to be active participants in services and other BAJC activities and events, and to connect with other BAJC members. Meetings, on the fourth Monday of the month, are open to all members.



DESPERATELY NEEDED: WEEDERS, WATERERS, REDEEMERS

The grounds around our synagogue have beautiful plants, flowers, and shrubs that need TLC over the summer. Jackie Gould, our head gardener, needs folks to help her water, weed, mulch, and trim on a regular or occasional basis. Contact Jackie (info@bajcvermont.org) for information or to sign up as a volunteer gardener--or just stop by for an hour or so any time and pick an area to tend or water whatever seems to need watering. There are some tools in the little shed but it would be best to bring your own tools and gloves. You can dump weeds and clippings on the compost pile between the little shed and the barn.

Speaking of the little shed: it is *overflowing* with bottles and cans to be redeemed. We desperately need someone to take responsibility for bagging bottles and cans and taking them to a redemption center. and we desperately need the money from

redeeming all those bottles and cans. You can do this as a mitzvah project on a regular basis, or you can just stop by every once in a while to bag all or some of what is in the shed. Send the redemption money to BAJC, where it will be put to good use. This could be an excellent school community-service project for some of our teens!

TISHA B'AV

Tisha B'Av, the Fast of the Ninth of Av, is a day of mourning that commemorates the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people, several of which have occurred on the ninth of Av. The ninth (day) of Av begins this year at sunset on August 8th. There will be a brief Tisha B'Av service and sermon at BAJC on Tuesday morning at 8:00, August 9th, during the usual time-slot of T'Orah Tuesday."

Tisha B'Av primarily commemorates the destruction of the first and second Temples, both on the ninth of Av--the first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E.; the second by the Romans in 70 C.E. It is also appropriate to consider on this day the many other tragedies of the Jewish people which occurred on this day, most notably the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Tisha B'Av, a fast day, is the culmination of a three week period of increasing mourning that begins with the fast of the 17th of Tammuz commemorating the first breach in the walls of Jerusalem that led to the destruction of the First Temple. During this three week period, weddings and other parties are traditionally not permitted and people refrain from cutting their hair. The restrictions on Tisha B'Av are similar to those on Yom Kippur: to refrain from eating and drinking (even water); washing, bathing, shaving or wearing cosmetics; wearing leather shoes; engaging in sexual relations; and studying Torah. In synagogue, the book of Lamentations is read and mourning prayers are recited.

A JEWISH JOURNEY

The Heart of Jewish Spirituality is a new year-long course that will integrate contemplative practices, profound mystical texts, weekly study with a partner, and personal wisdom gathered from journaling, art, and movement. This program is based on the curriculum of the nationally-acclaimed Institute for Jewish Spirituality. All are welcome to explore what it means to be spiritual Jews committed to compassion and justice. The nine-month program will be led by David Arfa and Sher Sweet, with monthly, five-hour sessions (dinner included) beginning September 22nd, and two Shabbat retreats. Tuition is \$1,000, with payment plan and limited scholarships available. Contact David at maggiddavid@gmail.com or call 413-625-2164 for more information or an enrollment form.

REFUAH SHLEMA

Although respect for people's privacy prevents us from mentioning names of people who are ill or troubled, there are members and friends at this time for whom we are saying prayers for healing. May their health be restored, their strength revived, their spirit renewed, and may they be rescued from trouble, distress, and illness.

It is an ancient Jewish custom to honor life cycle events such as yahrzeits, births, birthdays, anniversaries, and accomplishments by making contributions to funds committed to performing acts of justice (tzedukah) or furthering the general welfare of the community. There is a tradition of making monetary gifts in multiples of \$18 because that is the numerical value of the Hebrew letters spelling "lfe" (chai). However, no gift is too small

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

Spiritual Leader: Rabbi Tom Heyn

Board of Trustees:

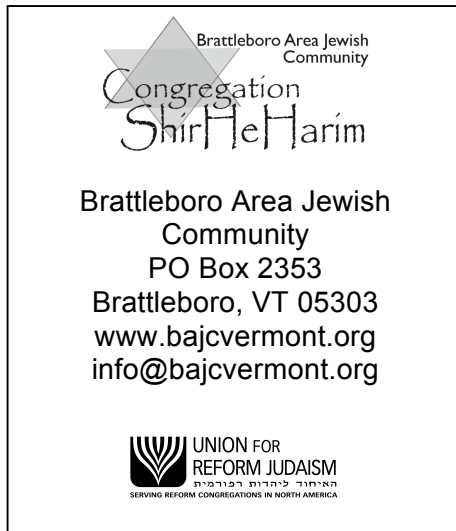
Wendy Bayliss
Sandra Brodsky
Stuart Copans
Vikki Dunn
Susan McMahon
Sharon Myers
Faith and Abe Schuster
Robin Patch
Julie Strothman
Randy Terk

Officers:

President: Julie Strothman
Vice-president: Michael Knapp
Treasurer: Randy Terk
Secretary: Stuart Copans
Immediate Past President: Martin Cohn

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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 5771. 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.)