

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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April 2015

Phone: 518-482-5283

visit us at www.bnaisholomalbany.org

NISSAN/IYAR 5775

JOIN US FOR THESE SERVICES AND STUDY SESSIONS

Friday, April 3	EREV PESACH-SEDER - at home (no service)	
Saturday, April 4	PESACH I NO TORAH STUDY:	9:30 AM
Friday, April 10	YIZKOR	7:30 PM
	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, April 11	TORAH STUDY: <i>Sh'mini</i> Lev. 9.1-11.47	9:30 AM
Wednesday, April 15	Albany Communal Yom Hashoah Observance At Congregation Ohav Sholom "Remembering Hidden Children" Guest Speaker: Ilse Loeb, who survived the Holocaust as a hidden child	7:00 PM
Friday, April 17	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE Synagogue Scholar: Sharona Wachs "Dance and Movement in the Bible and Prayer"	8:00 PM
Saturday, April 18	PSALMS STUDY with Breakfast	9:30 AM
Friday, April 24	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE Social Action Shabbat	8:00 PM
Saturday, April 25	TORAH STUDY: <i>Aharei Mot-Kedoshim</i> Lev. 16.1-20.27	9:30 AM
Friday, May 1	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, May 2	TORAH STUDY: <i>Emor</i> Lev. 21-24.23 SHABBAT SERVICE Bar Mitzvah of Luca Negriz	9:30 AM 10:30 AM

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation, a Reform Jewish synagogue, is a community that fosters individual, family and congregational spirituality by engaging in worship and prayer, promoting learning on all levels, supporting each others' needs, bettering our community and our world, and forging connections with worldwide Jewry.

We take pride in being warm, welcoming, informal, progressive, open-minded, diverse, and participatory.

We strive to create a vibrant Jewish present, linking our ancient traditions with the promise of the future.

From our Rabbi....

Why is this Hebrew class different from all other Hebrew classes?

I've been teaching Hebrew for close to 45 years (yes, since High School), and I have two cardinal thoughts about it.

- Truism #1: There are few things more boring as sitting in a room waiting your turn while other people decode a phrase or sentence or passage of Hebrew letters and vowels.
- Truism #2: You are not going to learn enough in one class per week to (a) translate the Bible; (b) carry on a conversation with an Israeli; or (c) read Talmud.

So what can you learn in one hour per week?

Actually, you can learn plenty, if you're a well-motivated learner. You can learn more especially if that one hour is building upon a foundation that is already there. And if you take the time to review the material between class sessions, you can really acquire facility in the material.

For these reasons, I am offering – based on requests over the years – a Hebrew class designed to give tools to people who already have ability in decoding (“reading”) and familiarity with common prayer texts. Students will deal with the patterns inherent in Hebrew words, and with the common prefixes and suffixes. Hopefully by being able to look at a word and discern its form, students will be able to increase their ability to decode unfamiliar texts. We will also look at the big picture: what these words, and ideas, mean.

There is a midrash which teaches that the Israelites merited redemption from Egyptian slavery for several reasons, one of which is “they didn't change their language.” In other words, according to this legend which appears in at least four different versions, they spoke Hebrew during the entire enslavement. The historicity of this statement is certainly questionable, but it is not farfetched at all to say that the Israelite People have been speaking and writing in Hebrew for three thousand years. This brings me to

- Truism #3: Hebrew is the common bond of Jews through time, space, and ideology.

What do Reform Jews, Hasidic Jews, secular Jews, and Jews in every corner of the earth have in common? Hebrew. Whether it is prayer, the newspaper, children's songs, contemporary fiction, political discourse, or any other type of communication, Jews do it in Hebrew. And today, it is the first language for more than 5 million; more people speak Hebrew now than at any other time in history.

A FAMILY CONVERSATION TO HAVE AT PASSOVER – but not at the seder table

Many families get together for Passover with extended family. Aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents may be some of the people we share seder with. This is a good opportunity to get information about your family medical history. As we learn more about genetics, it is important to know what lurks in our family trees.

A year and half ago I told you about my genetic testing for the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene, and how liberating it was to find out that I do not have this gene –much more prevalent among Jews than in the general population - which increases the chances of several types of cancer. You can become a bit freer this Pesah knowing what you need to be aware of. While it may cause new concerns, I believe it is better to be forearmed with knowledge. Talk to your extended family members.

If you would like a personal conversation with me about this topic, please don't hesitate to call. You may want to know how to broach the topic, or what to do with the information you learn, or how to communicate it with others. I am eager to assist you.

Best wishes to you for a happy and joyous Passover.

Rabbi Don Cashman

See the enclosed Adult Education flyer and registration form for the Rabbi's upcoming class, “On the Pathway to Understanding: Hebrew Hints in prayer.”

Make **your** voice heard!

The Social Action Committee will be supporting Reform Jewish Voice Advocacy Day at the New York State Capitol on May 4, 2015. All BSRC members are encouraged to join RJV and numerous social justice leaders from across the state to learn about key issues and what Reform Jewish values can teach us about those issues. You will also have the opportunity to meet with program staff of your State Assembly Member and State Senator to speak with them about those issues. Whether you have been to Advocacy Day before, or this is your first time, it is a wonderful, exciting experience to interact with your elected officials and speak to them about important issues from a Reform Jewish perspective. Please contact Social Action Committee co-chairs Becky Marvin at rmarvin@nycap.rr.com or Yossi Koren-Roth at yossikr33@gmail.com if you are interested in attending. More information and registration forms may be found at <http://rjvnys.org/advocacy-day>



New initiative launches at Social Action Shabbat, April 24

Please join the Social Action Committee at Shabbat services on Friday, April 24, when we will introduce our newest program. Family Promise is an inter-faith organization for families in transition which brings shelter, meals and support services to families without homes. There are over 5,000 congregations and 135,000 volunteers already making up these networks across the country and there are many ways that our congregants will be able to help. We are looking to everyone to help us with our efforts in *Tikkun Olam*.

B'nai Sholom Celebrates Purim

B'nai Sholom sported its usual irreverent (but tuneful) songs, colorful costumes, prizes, loud groggers, hamantaschen, and tequila at the Erev Purim Megillah reading held on Wednesday, March 4.

The evening started off with time allotted to mingle and enjoy a selection of delectable hamantaschen from the Mount Pleasant Bakery provided by Judy Fruiterman. This was a nice opportunity to survey the costumes before the traditional costume parade during the service.

There were Purim-related costumes, Fiddler-on-the-Roof-related costumes, and funny pun/play on words costumes. Very entertaining! All children in costumes received prizes, of course. In the adult category, winners of awards for best costumes this year were Amy and Yossi Koren Roth, with Amy portraying Tevye the Dairyman and Yossi as the cow; Ann Shapiro, as Motel the tailor; and Sarah Davis as a stunning Queen Vashti. All received Spectrum movie tickets. Check the B'nai Sholom website or the BSRC Facebook page for lots of photos of the prize winners and many others!

The Purim service featured songs sung to the tunes of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Continuing this year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Broadway debut of *Fiddler on the Roof*, Rabbi

Cashman modified the lyrics to tunes such as *Tradition; Sunrise, Sunset; If I Were a Rich Man; and Matchmaker, Matchmaker* to help tell the story of Purim. Supporting Rabbi Cashman was this year's Purim Spiel cast made up of Deb Adler, Liz Davis, Randy Davis, Ben Marvin, Susan Radosh, Carol Smith and Doug Smith. David Liebschutz had a cameo role, getting the scene set at the start of the show. And, to honor the passing of beloved Mr. Spock/Leonard Nimoy, the cast sported pointed ears for the opening number. Mazel Tov to the cast for a wonderful performance! Thanks as well to all those who took a turn at reading the Purim story from the Book of Esther.

The service provided an opportunity for many in attendance to meet our new office manager, Christine Blackman. She wanted to learn more about our congregation and Judaism and was promised it would be a fun evening. Fortunately for B'nai Sholom, even after this crazy introduction, her first Jewish service, Christine returned to work the next day. We were also happy to welcome many non-member friends from the community and one or more grown children of congregants, all of whom make it a point to try to come to B'nai Sholom for Purim.

As usual, Purim was also the occasion for every family to take home a yummy Mishloach Manot bag of hamantaschen and other treats, given by fellow congregants who supported in this fundraising activity. The Mishloach Manot fundraiser is a way for all of us to observe the Purim traditions of tzedakah and the giving of treats to friends and family. Assembling the Mishloach Manot bags begins typically in January with the annual hamantaschen baking day hosted by Fundraising Committee member Sheila Schwartz. Sheila welcomes a whole group of bakers to her home and starts off by feeding them a wonderful and delicious meal after which they all start baking hamantaschen. Along with the baking, it's an afternoon of good conversation and enjoying one another's company. Right before Purim, the Fundraising committee gets together and packs the bags, this year with the help of Deb Adler and Judy Fruiterman. Thanks to Deb and to Judy for their help and to all of the Fundraising committee: Ellie Davis, Maxine Goldberg, Lois Gordon, Barb Nussbaum, Margie Pass, Sheila Schwartz and Carol Smith.

Thanks to Rabbi Cashman for putting together a most entertaining Purim Shpiel. Once again B'nai Sholom did not disappoint in rising to the occasion of a raucous Purim celebration!

Note from the Hospitality Committee

There are serving dishes and plates that congregants have left in the kitchen following potlucks. Please check the kitchen island because they would like to go home!

B'nai Sholom is holding a Red Cross blood drive on Sunday, May 3

We need donors and non-donors to make our drive a success!!!

The Blood Drive will be held in the temple social hall on Sunday, **May 3** from 9 AM to 2 PM.

If you are a regular donor, please note that March 8 is the last day you can donate prior to our drive. If you can't donate blood, there are many ways you can help, either before or during the drive. Please call the temple office any time for an appointment or to volunteer.

NEW: You may also schedule your appointment by calling 1-800-Red Cross, or by using online scheduling at redcross.org (our drive won't be available online until closer to the event).

***** REMEMBER !!! 16 YEAR-OLDS ARE ELIGIBLE TO DONATE!!! *****

B'nai Sholom Congregants "Progress" Through Dinner

Thirty-two BSRC congregants enjoyed a delightful evening of food and fellowship on Saturday night, March 14 at B'nai Sholom's first Biannual Progressive Dinner. The evening began in the candlelit temple social hall with an amazing array of appetizers brought by all those not otherwise hosting part of the meal. Participants then went to one of four homes for dinner, and continued on to another set of homes for dessert, to round out the meal and the evening. The event provided a great opportunity for congregants to get to know a different group of people or to get to know people in a different way, and many were able to forge new points of connection through the stimulating discussions that marked the evening.

Special thanks to the Membership Committee, especially Jodi Kerper, who did much of the organizing, assisted by Art Alowitz, a veteran coordinator of the progressive dinners held years ago by BSRC's Adult Social Group. Thanks also go out to Mark and Pam Brody, Anne Hausgaard, Jodi Kerper and Karl Rethemeyer, and Mark and Cheryl Reeder, who hosted dinner; Dayle Zatlin and Joel Blumenthal, Liz and Lorn Gingrich, Hal Rosenthal and Mari Vosburgh, and Howie and Bettina Stoller, who hosted dessert, and to all the other participants who contributed to the great success of the evening.

The Membership Committee looks forward to even greater participation for our next progressive dinner, likely to be held in March of 2017.

Israeli Election the Subject of Friday Night Forum

During the Oneg Shabbat following services on Friday evening, March 13, B'nai Sholom presented a forum on the then-upcoming elections in Israel, featuring the panel of Rabbi Cashman, Dr. Joel Bloom and Dr. Yossi Koren-Roth. Each offered valuable information and insights into the party system of government in Israel and the Israeli electoral process. Joel Bloom provided an especially useful "cheat sheet" that listed the parties, where they fall on various issues, and possible combinations of parties that might succeed in forming a governing coalition.

Using a format that we last used sometime in the distant past, Rabbi Cashman conducted a shorter service, without a sermon, reserving the time instead for the post-service forum. Following a chance to sample the refreshments at the oneg, congregants then sat down to listen to brief presentations and ask plenty of questions. Overall, it worked well in allowing ample time to discuss the issues surrounding the election.

Thanks very much to Rabbi Cashman, Joel Bloom and Yossi Koren-Roth for helping us to understand some of the complexities of Israeli politics!

B'nai Sholom Board Sets New Open High Holy Day Ticket Policy for Non-Members

Synagogues throughout the United States are suffering losses in membership and are struggling to adapt to demographic changes, including lower rates of affiliation among younger Jews. We also know that unaffiliated Jews often want to participate in High Holy Day services and that a strong draw, especially for younger unaffiliated Jews, is the opportunity to engage in meaningful volunteer activities. Synagogues must think of new ways to be relevant in this changing world while being true to their core principles.

To this end, President Mimi Bruce tasked a group consisting of Board members Liz Davis and Deb Greenberg, as well as Becky Marvin, to update B'nai Sholom's High Holy Day ticket policy. The group came up with a proposal that was carefully reviewed and adopted with improvements by a unanimous vote of the Board.

The aim of the new policy is for our lovely High Holy Day services to be open to all, regardless of affiliation with B'nai Sholom or another URJ synagogue, whether longstanding residents, newcomers to the area, or guests of our members, and without limiting participation to only one year. This is consistent with our mission to be a truly warm and welcoming congregation. The Board believes strongly that opening our doors in this way will ultimately lead to a stronger and more vibrant congregation and that some people who get to know B'nai Sholom in this way will eventually become members. We recognize that younger Jews may want to connect with Judaism in less formal ways until a later point in their lives when temple membership becomes more important to them. We want these members of our community to be able to partner with our congregation and develop a connection that may lead to eventual membership.

Those interested in attending will still be asked to obtain tickets in advance. However, we will not "sell" tickets. Instead, we will ask non-members who request High Holy Day tickets for a wholly voluntary financial contribution and/or participation in our social action events. The Board expects that the contributions will result in similar revenue to "selling" High Holy Day tickets, while allowing for a more welcoming policy. Providing an option for non-members to partner with us in social action activities may strengthen this wonderful part of our congregation and give it more exposure in the community, while also attracting the participation of younger unaffiliated Jews looking social connection and volunteer *tikkun olam* activities.

We will move to a simpler High Holy Day ticket that can be presented for all services, with no perforations for different services. Times for all services will be prominently stated in the Bulletin, on the website, and in the weekly announcements, eliminating the need for attendees to rely on their tickets for information as to starting times. Non-members will have white tickets and members will have blue tickets. That way, non-members can be easily recognized to assure that they are given a good welcome. We also expect to allow for on-line registration for non-member High Holy Day tickets.

This new High Holy Day "open house" policy will be an experimental three-year program and we will review how the new system worked after each High Holy Day season. So, if you know people who might be interested in joining us for the High Holy Days but are not yet ready for membership, be sure to tell them that our services are open to the community and to visit our website for more information as the holidays approach.

**Longevity Shabbat and Potluck Dinner
Honoring "Chai-Plus" Members
Set for May 15th**

The Membership Committee invites you to join us for our biannual Longevity Shabbat service and potluck dinner on May 15, 2015, to honor those who have been members of B'nai Sholom for 18 years and beyond. We gratefully dedicate this Shabbat to our longstanding members, acknowledging their contributions of continuity to our synagogue family.

Potluck dinner at 6:30, followed by 8 p.m. service. RSVP for the potluck by May 8th to Liz Gingrich at 456-3366 or fiddlinliz7@gmail.com and please include your meal contribution with your RSVP. You'll need to supply beverages and place settings for your family.

While this event specifically honors longtime members, all are welcome to attend the dinner and, of course, the service.

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

In honor of **her wonderful experience at Purim** by Nancy Goody
In memory of **Lazar Kleinfeld and Sylvia Lande** by Howard, Bettina & Jeremy Stoller
In memory of **Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard** by Richard Propp
In memory of **Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard** by Julius Frankel
In memory of **Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard** by Jack and Barbara Devore
In memory of **Theron Vosburgh, Jacques Gilly, Gerald Gene Davis and Olaf "Sonny" Hausgaard** by Benjamin and Rebecca Marvin
In memory of **Rebecca Miller Shultz** by Ben, Becky, Elizabeth and Johanna Marvin
In memory of **Paul Rosenthal** by Hal Rosenthal and Mari Vosburgh

YAHRTZEITS

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in April.

- 4/3 Aaron Friedman, Milton Farkas, Harold Lazoroff, Caleb Reeder, Judy Reeder, Lillian Schwadron*, Irma Schwartzman, Elizabeth Stedman Tuck
(The 4/3 Yahrzeits will be announced on 3/27 and 4/10.)
- 4/10 Sheldon Bosin, Goldie Goldstein, Rebecca Miller Shultz, Hazel Propp Sohmer, Mota Teumim, Morris Weiss, Jacob Hammer*, Rachel Abrams*, Fanny Engler*, Dorothy Hess*, Muriel Cohen*
- 4/17 David Fiks, Rhoda Green, Anna Raderman*
- 4/24 Lena Wolf*, Manuel Aronson*, Sara Propp*, J. Milton Steinhardt*, Sidney Devore, Simon Finkelman, Betty Atschuler Gottlieb, William Lacov, Joseph Ottenheimer, Bernard Earl Shanks

**denotes that a Perpetual Memorial has been established*

TAX SERVICES BEING OFFERED AT BSRC:

AARP, working with BSRC's neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community, is offering tax assistance for seniors every Tuesday until April 14 from 9 to 4 at B'nai Sholom. Because we are hosting, BSRC congregants are eligible to see this service for free.

Mazal Tov!

to Julie Novkov, for a 2015 Excellence in Teaching Award from the University at Albany. Julie is Chair of the Department of Political Science and Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Jewish Family Services

JFS of Northeastern New York is a non-profit, non-sectarian social service organization. Guided by Jewish values, our mission is to strengthen individuals and families by offering social services that address difficult life transitions and help people in our region through times of personal crisis.

We are seeking a visionary leader to position this historic agency for future growth and to develop a forward-thinking plan that enhances revenues and increases the number of people served. We need an individual who has a keen sense of successful delivery of high quality and meaningful social services. You will work with a highly skilled and committed staff to maintain and expand the agency's services. You will have experience with boards and in administration in the for-profit and/or the non-profit sector. An affinity for and familiarity with the workings within the Jewish community is preferred.

Bachelor's degree required, advanced degree preferred. 5-7 years management experience. Demonstrated excellence in fundraising leadership; strong written/oral communication skills; ability to work with Boards. Talent for building strong relationships with government/partnering agencies, donors, board & staff.

Please send cover letter and resume to Scott Hollander at shollander@jfsnyny.org. View full job posting at jfsnyny.org/ed



THANK YOU

to the following congregants who recently hosted an Oneg Shabbat: Susan Libby, Ritual Committee, Religious School Committee, Paula Philo, Mary Black and the Board of Trustees.

to the Bulletin Brigade who helped fold, insert and stuff envelopes to get the March Bulletin out: Anne Hausgaard, Cheryl and Mark Reeder, Jeanette Gottlieb, Rema Goldstein and Libby Liebschutz.

- RABBI:** Donald P. Cashman
- PRESIDENT:** Melody Bruce
- OFFICE MANAGER:** Christine Blackman
- BOOKKEEPER:** Lisa Allendorph
- OFFICE HOURS:** MON/WED/THURS/FRI 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

As a rule, the BULLETIN DEADLINE is the second Wednesday of each month.

Period Covered	Deadline
May	April 15
June	May 13

Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.