

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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February 2013

Shevat/Adar 1 5774

PERSPECTIVES

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Perspectives | 1 |
| Schedule of Services | 2 |
| Adult Education | 4, 5 |
| Camp | 7 |
| Contributions | 8 |
| Yahrtzeits | 8 |

With this month's bulletin, we launch "Perspectives," a forum for congregants to talk about what's on their mind. It can be an article, a poem, or D'var Torah. Did you recently have a notable experience that you want to share? Tell Write it up, and send it in! Tell us how your family celebrates Shabbat or other holidays. What does "being Jewish" mean to you? How do you teach Judaism to your own children? How is your life different as an empty nester? What's it like being a grandparent?

In this first article a congregant talks about the B'nai Mitzvah process from the perspective of a parent watching a child go through Bar Mitzvah preparation. Another congregant will be talking about B'nai Mitzvah in a future bulletin, looking back on her son's Bar Mitzvah years ago, and the changes in his life since then.



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 level, 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.

What does a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah really mean? For many of us, it conjures up two images: a young man or woman called to the Torah for the first time, and all the headaches of planning a party. It is this first image I want to address. A Bar Mitzvah is part of a passage from childhood to becoming an adult, with all the privileges and responsibilities contained therein. It's not an instant passage, but part of a slow process that occurs over a number of years. I am confident that those of you who have already seen your children achieve B'nai Mitzvah will admit that they did not immediately become mature, responsible individuals upon conclusion of their Aliyah! But it might be interesting to reflect back to the events leading up to the ritual service, and recognize signs of growth and development; moments where you stopped and marveled at the changes occurring.

For me, one of the most noticeable signs is related to my son Ben's preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. In addition to practicing leading prayers and learning to chant his Torah and Haftarah portion, he has regular appointments with the Rabbi (and while the Rabbi is on sabbatical, our wonderful tutor—Lenora Pfeffer.) So far, the bulk of these appointments have been via phone.

Prior to Ben embarking on these calls, I dreaded them on his behalf. My son has always had many talents, but I will admit that prior to the Bar Mitzvah process, talking on the phone was not one of them. He never had much use for the phone, preferring (you guessed it) to send text messages or speak in person. Even these face-to-face conversations, outside of speaking to other kids, were composed of stilted, awkward answers or pauses.

Continued on page 3

JOIN US IN FEBRUARY FOR

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Friday, Jan. 31 Saturday, Feb. 1 | EREV SHABBAT SERVICE TEXT STUDY: Prophets Extended study with coffee and bagels | 8:00 PM 9:30 AM |
| Friday, Feb. 7 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE Shabbat potluck dinner following services RSVP: ghoffma1@nycap.rr.com | 6:00 PM |
| Saturday, Feb. 8 | TORAH STUDY: <i>Tetzaveh</i> Ex. 27.20-30.10 | 9:30 AM |
| Friday, Feb. 14 Saturday, Feb. 15 | EREV SHABBAT SERVICE TORAH STUDY: <i>Ki Tisa</i> Ex. 30.11-34.35 | 8:00 PM 9:30 AM |
| Friday, Feb. 21 | EREV SHABBAT SERVICE Synagogue Scholar Peter Golden: <i>Jews, the Cold War, and Do Facts Really Matter</i> | 8:00 PM |
| Saturday, Feb. 22 | TORAH STUDY: <i>Vayakhel</i> Ex. 35.1-38.20 | 9:30 AM |
| Friday, Feb. 28 Saturday, Mar. 1 | EREV SHABBAT SERVICE TEXT STUDY: <i>Prophets</i> Extended study with coffee and bagels | 8:00 PM 9:30 AM |
| Friday, Mar. 7 | KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE Shabbat potluck dinner following services RSVP: ghoffma1@nycap.rr.com | 6:00 AM |
| Saturday, Mar. 8 | TORAH STUDY: <i>Vayikra</i> Lev. 1.1-5.26 | 9:30 AM |

OFFICE HOURS-IMPORTANT NOTE!
PLEASE NOTE THAT DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, THE OFFICE MANAGER

IT'S SNOWING—Is school open? Meetings cancelled? Find out quickly by watching these television stations: WNYT, WRGB, WTEN, WXXA.



We also post cancellations for all scheduled events on our web site and change the telephone message. You may go to our website and subscribe to cancellation e-mails.

From page 1 (cont.) ·

While preparing a kugel during the course of one of these Bar Mitzvah phone calls, I could not help but be amazed at the changes I've seen in him along the way. His voice is loud and clear when speaking on the phone. He recites or chants the assignment at a measured pace. He even (gasp) introduces himself when he initiates the phone call!

Yes, there are times when we have to remind him that it's time to practice. But by and large, he remembers on his own. And even when we do remind him, it's met with an "OK", as opposed to the complaints I might have expected a few years ago.

And we're finding more opportunities to talk to him about Judaism, and his connection to it. One day, after Religious School, we sat down for lunch. We talked about the Mitzvah Goreret Mitvah project he and his classmates are doing, as part of a program with the Federation. Somehow, the conversation turned to keeping kosher. Now, we don't keep kosher, but we certainly have friends who do. This has always been a source of consternation for Ben. "I get why keeping kosher made sense thousands or hundreds of years ago," he said. "But we have refrigerators today. You don't get sick from eating certain foods together today the way people did then."

I asked him to think about other reasons why people might observe kashrut today. After a few moments, he told me that maybe it helps them feel connected to Judaism, and to their ancestors. I can't remember his exact words, because I was too overcome with pride at this thoughtful answer. We then talked about how keeping kosher might also help you to slow down from the stress of a hectic modern life and plan ahead for your meals. In a way, it's how I like to think of Shabbat—a time and a space away from your

everyday life, when you can focus on relationships—your relationship with God, other people, and yourself.

I can't say that all of his growing maturity is due to the Bar Mitzvah process. And I know that most of the time the way he behaves will be age appropriate—a teenager, rather than an adult. But I have to credit the Bar Mitzvah process for helping him grow. It's forcing Ben to take more responsibility for his own behavior, and forcing us, as parents, to cede this responsibility to him.

3rd Annual Wine and Cheese Tasting



Saturday, February 8

7:00 pm

Food and cheese selections provided by Honest Weight Food Coop

Wine selections provided by Upstate Wine and Liquors

Cost: Free for members/\$5 for non-members

RSVP to Ron Royne 439-7780 or rroyne42@g;mail.com

JSTREET Albany Capital District discusses:

The 2-State Solution: What Does Security Mean for Israelis and Palestinians?

Sunday, February 9 3:00—5:00 pm

Home of Gerry and Irit Magnes

3 Linda Lane, Niskayuna

RSVP Dan Bernstein 482-6221 or Barbara Dworkin 526-0618

Adult Education Events – Up Ahead:

Synagogue Scholars 2013-14 Series

Many thanks to Paul Finkelman and Martha Rozett, who delivered the first two talks in our annual series featuring distinguished members of the congregation speaking during regular Friday night worship services. We look forward to the third and final talk by Peter Golden:

Peter Golden – Friday, February 21, 2014
Jews, the Cold War, and Do Facts Really Matter?

Author Golden will discuss some of the favorite political stories American Jewry has been telling itself since the end of World War II, a number of which lead to the question: Do facts really matter?

Peter Golden is an award-winning journalist and author of six full-length works of non-fiction and fiction. In 2012, he published [O Powerful Western Star](#), a history of the Cold War.

Movie Nights

All film events start at **7:30 p.m.**, with a few minutes for refreshments before the film begins. Suggested donation \$3. Films provided by the National Center for Jewish Film

February 1, 2014 – “Love at Second Sight” (Israel, 1999)

Renowned Israeli filmmaker and actress Michal Bat-Adam produced, wrote, and directed this intriguing tale of romantic obsession set in Tel Aviv. The beautiful Michal Zuaratz stars as a young photographer infatuated with a stranger whose image she accidentally captures on film. Hebrew w/ English subtitles. See enclosed flier.

Social Action

Mark Your Calendars: Our next blood drive will be held on Sunday, April 27, 2014 from 8 am to 1 pm in the social hall. March 2 is the cutoff date for donating prior to that drive. Many thanks to those who already signed up to volunteer or to donate - we will call to remind you in the spring.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in our blood drives, please call the temple office. We are always in need of volunteers to help recruit donors and to help run the drives. It's a good way to get to know your fellow congregants! Blood drives are held twice yearly, in the spring and late fall.

Save the Date!

Thursday, May 1, 2014, at 7:30 P.M.

Free & open to the public

American-Jewish Music & African-American Music: Shared Visions & Dreams

Lecture by Robert L. Cohen

"America is not made up of separate, free-floating cultures, but rather of a constant interplay and exchange" (Ralph Ellison). American-Jewish music has incorporated African & African-American musical idioms — blues & jazz, reggae & world music, even gospel & rap — to express the exuberance & vitality of contemporary Jewish life, while Jewish texts & Jewish musical themes have spoken to Africans & African-Americans alike, who have enriched them musically & enhanced their message. Listen in on the ongoing musical conversation between African-Americans & Jews.



Come listen as Robert Cohen, an acclaimed music historian, discusses African-American and Jewish-American music and plays selections from the music itself.

Sponsored by the New York Council for the Humanities, Speakers in the Humanities Program



Prep chefs Hal Rosenthal, Deb Adler, David Liebschutz and Maxine Goldberg show off their slicing and dicing skills.



B'nai Sholom families and friends celebrated Tu B'Shvat at the congregation on Wednesday night, January 15. The seder featured a variety of fruits, nuts, wheat and barley, as well as homemade soup and kugel. Tu B'Shvat is the New Year of the Trees, but this year we noted that the holiday has become a festival for the trees, as we think about treating the earth and its resources responsibly. How fitting that this year we were able to eat from the congregation's new supply of re-usable plates, rather than disposable paper or plastic ones! As always, the seder included four types of wine (and juice), and the various fruits of the vine, tree, and earth. Before eating more exotic fruits such as the pomelo, we said the Shehechyanu in appreciation of such rare and wonderful flavors. And of course, no Tu B'Shvat seder would be complete without songs such as Eitz Chayim Hi, Tzadik Katamar, and, of course, a B'nai Sholom favorite, Lemon Tree!

Thanks go to the Ritual Committee as well as our volunteers who helped slice and dice the fruit, prepared soup and kugel, and cleaned up after the event.

From the Fundraising committee:

Mark your calendars for our Goods and Services Auction to be held on Saturday, March 1, 2014 at 7pm.



Join us and bid on a variety of goods and services offered by our congregants and area merchants. Doors will open starting at 6:30pm for a preview of items up for auction. Live auction will begin at 7pm. This is a lively and entertaining evening and a wonderful way to raise funds to support programming at our synagogue.



Admission is \$5 per person (maximum of \$10 per family). Refreshments will be served.

Look for your Mishloach Manot order form in this bulletin.

This is a wonderful and easy way to spread joy and warm wishes during Purim. Purim bags will be available for pickup on Erev Purim, March 15, 2014.



Do you know about our Hannaford and ShopRite grocery card program?

It couldn't be simpler: you can raise money for B'nai Sholom by doing your weekly grocery shopping. Hannaford and ShopRite pledge 5% back on pre-loaded shopping cards you can purchase through the Synagogue. That's right: without spending an extra cent, you can donate to B'nai Sholom. Just purchase the cards through the Fundraising committee, and then use your card like cash at Hannaford and ShopRite. The cards – available in multiples of \$25, \$50 or \$100 – can be purchased during office hours or on Sundays during religious school from 9:30-10:30am. They make terrific gifts, too. The sooner you start using the cards, the more you'll be helping B'nai Sholom.

Each summer, children and teens from our congregation attend Jewish summer camps and tour Israel, strengthening their ties to Judaism and to the land of Israel.

Camp Essay Summer 2013 Rose Pass



My second year at Surprise Lake Camp (SLC) was so fun. I was in Highland 19 with two of my best friends. My Jewish experience was so much fun. They made the services a blast every week. We even got to do Israeli dance which I enjoyed. We also got to see some Bar and Bat Mitzvah's. I would really recommend Surprise Lake Camp to Jewish kids who are looking for a Jewish camp.

The first week after we unpacked we got to know each other and played games. We swam every day and had hikes, crafts and sports. The second week was probably the best because it was the week of visiting day!! I was so excited to see my Mom. After we got settled we hung out with my friends parents. When we got done eating we went to Teva to see the animals. I got to have a Ball Python around my neck. It was so cool. Then I took my Mom up to my cabin to show her my bed. We had to clean our bunks before visiting day so it would be clean for our parents. The third week we had a carnival on Teen Side of the camp. It was super fun.

The second best part of camp was making new friends. I love SLC I hope when I get older I can work there because it is such a good camp because it is a blast the whole time.

The Jewish Federation again will offer scholarships to area children and college students to attend overnight Jewish camps, Jewish summer travel experiences and summer or year-long Israel experience programs. Funding is also available for any program that provides Jewish enrichment and inspires Jewish continuity. Decisions are based on financial need. Applications may be downloaded from the Federation website, www.jewishfedny.org. Deadline is March 7, 2014. For more information call Deborah Goldstein at

Mazel Tov!



To **Matt Rockefeller** who was named to President's List at SUNY Brockport with a 4.0 GPA.

To **Mami Libby** who has been selected to be a Rotary Exchange Student and will spend the 2014-15 school year in the Czech Republic/Slovakia.

THANK YOU



–to the paper-cut brigade who prepared the January Bulletin: **Anne and Sonny Hausgaard, Paula Philo, Marty Teumim, Martha Rozett and Nancy Newman**

–to the following congregants who provided us with a sweet Shabbat: **Susan and David Weiss, Fran and Steve Berg, Mary Alice and Scott Wexler, Becky and Ben Marvin, Carol and Doug Smith**



**I am Clara.
I am...**

- Isolated
- Living on a pension
- Hungry
- A widow
- Jewish
- Concerned about my health

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Supported by Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York.

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

General Fund

- In memory of **Michael Kramer** by Mindy Kramer
- In memory of **Aaron Stoller** by Howard, Bettina and Jeremy Stoller
- In memory of **Benjamin Sacks** by Paula Philo
- In memory of **Rick Friedman** by Herb and Ruth Swift
- In memory of **Eleanor Marvin** by Ben and Becky Marvin
- In memory of **Avraham Koren** and **Jack Jarret** by Yossi and Amy Koren-Roth
- In memory of **Bernard Fleischer** by Mark and Jasmine Fleischer
- In memory of **Hyman Moskowitz** by Gail Volk
- In memory of **Leo Cabelly** by Robin Seguine and family
- In memory of **Jessie Flax** by Jerry Flax
- In honor of the bat mitzvah of their daughter, **Daphne Fleischer** by Mark and Jasmine Fleischer
- In appreciation by Candy Raderman and Carey Hatch

Endowment Fund
 The contribution made by Richard Propp was in memory of his wife,
Vera W. Propp

Caring Community Fund

In appreciation by Jim and Joan Savitt

Vera Propp Social Action Fund

In memory of **Vera Propp** by Sheila Tobias

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of the birth of granddaughter, **Sidney Rose Selsky**, daughter of Alison Selsky and Emily Russell by Linda Karlson-Selsky and Don Selsky

YAHRTZEITS

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in February:

- 7 Sylvia Schwartz, Irving Schwartz, Esther Rosenberg*, Jessie Amanda Flax, Milton Kesler, Eleanor Newman Blum, Sarah Pock*, Hortense Stone Heart*, Philip Green, Helen Rehr
- 14 Alfred Cohen*, Elsie Meer, Julie Lawrence*, Rose Goldberg, Ida Goldstein, Chay Soon Boon, Benjamin L. Dubb*, Irma Bruce, George Rifkin, Frederic Neuburger, Leah Altmayer, Augusta Lichetenfels*, Joyce Epstein*
- 21 Evelyn Turoff*, Max Fiks*, Pearl Ronay, Esther Weiss, Samuel Strohl, Ruth Warshaw*, Morris Wagner*, Helen Goldfarb*, Frances K. Singer*
- 28 Eugene Tuck, Irwin Portnick, Paul Rosenthal, Avi Ezra, Jonas Bernstein*, Stanley Levy, Murray L. Maurer, Abe Rudman, Gertrude Fass

RABBI: **Donald P. Cashman**
 PRESIDENT: **Jodi Kerper**
 OFFICE MANAGER: **Rebecca S. Marvin**
 RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTOR: **Elizabeth Alowitz**
 OFFICE HOURS:
 MON/TUES/THU/FRI 9:15 AM – 3:00 PM

AS A RULE, THE BULLETIN DEADLINE IS THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

| <u>PERIOD COVERED</u> | <u>DEADLINE</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| March | February 8 |
| April | March 12 |

Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.