

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

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JUNE 2014

SIVAN/TAMMUZ 5774

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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.

Perspectives

Our Bar Mitzvah Miracle

By "M. I.'s" Parents

This is the story of our son, "M. I." In this story, the identities have been disguised to protect the innocent. All of the facts are absolutely true.

First, some things about our family.

- We are longtime members of the B'nai Sholom community.
- One parent is Jewish, the other is not.
- We have a daughter who has always been an academic star; our son (the infamous M.I.), not so much.
- M.I. had always taken sports, especially soccer, very seriously, but gave scant attention to anything else.

We are a small family that does not usually host large social events. It occurred to us that planning an event to celebrate a life passage might be an expensive and meaningless exercise if M.I. displayed his usual lack of effort for this non-sport endeavor. So, we gave him "The Talk." We told him that if this wasn't going to be approached differently, as something truly important, it wouldn't be supported by us at all.

It was at this point that something unnerving occurred; M.I. started to cry! He said that being a Bar Mitzvah was truly important to him and that it was something that he really wanted in his life. Relying on blind faith, we proceeded with Bar Mitzvah preparations. What followed will never cease to amaze us.

For the entire school year leading up to the Bar Mitzvah, M.I. didn't turn the TV on a single time; the only sounds in the house were the chanting on the Rabbi's training CDs (we called them *Rabbi Cashman's Greatest Hits*) and the sounds of an electric bass guitar for which M.I. took lessons and played to relax.

Since that formative year, things have snowballed into a virtual avalanche of "amazing!" At the Bar Mitzvah, after M.I. chanted the Haftarah, Rabbi Cashman actually high-fived him and told the congregation that "you may not realize it, but M.I. just aced the most difficult section of the Haftarah." His Torah reading was equally excellent.

At the candle lighting ceremony at the reception, M.I. made fourteen people (or groups of people) cry while eloquently speaking of about how they had touched his life. Did all this eloquence and sensitivity mean we were seeing a brand new M.I.? Indeed. Yet this was only the beginning of the "miracle" of M.I.

Continued on page 7

JOIN US FOR THESE SERVICES AND STUDY SESSIONS

Friday, May 23	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, May 24	TORAH STUDY: <i>Bamidbar</i> Num. 1.1-4.20	9:30 AM
Friday, May 30	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, May 31	TORAH STUDY: <i>Nasso</i> Num. 4.21-7.89	9:30 AM
Tuesday, June 3	EREV SHAVUOT SERVICE WITH YIZKOR	7:30 PM
Friday, June 6	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, June 7	TEXT STUDY: <i>Starting Psalms</i> Extended study with coffee and bagels	9:30 AM
Friday, June 13	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, June 14	TORAH STUDY: <i>Sh'lach</i> Num. 13.1-15.41	9:30 AM
	SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE	10:30 AM
	Bat Mitzvah of Rose Pass	
Friday, June 20	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
	High School Graduation Shabbat	
Saturday, June 21	TORAH STUDY: <i>Korach</i> Num. 16.1-18.32	9:30 AM
Friday, June 27	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, June 28	TORAH STUDY: <i>Chukat</i> Num. 19.1-22.1	9:30 AM
Friday, July 4	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE	6:00 PM
Saturday, July 5	TEXT STUDY Extended study with coffee and bagels	9:30 AM

Please make it a priority to attend the

ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 2014

10:30 AM Breakfast by the Board
11:00 AM Business Meeting

From our Rabbi

The D train from Brooklyn to Manhattan in the early 1980's—since reclassified as the B—was a microcosm of the city that was itself a microcosm of the world. People from all over the planet rode that subway (and elevated train over the Manhattan Bridge) together, sometimes pressed closer together than any of us wanted. During non-rush hours when seats were available, people would doze, stare, or read their way peacefully to their destinations, or non-peacefully with a SONY Walkman.

One of the intriguing things I noticed was the purse-sized Bibles the women from Brighton Beach, the Orthodox Jewish women from Boro Park and Midwood, the African-American, Hispanic, East Asian and Creole women: they all read the Bible on the train. What's more, they all were reading Psalms.

Psalms: one hundred fifty ancient poems which express joy, sorrow, anxiousness, praise, and wonder. Over time some of them came into liturgical use, but mostly they are a source for private devotional reading such as I saw on the New York City subway.

Now that our monthly study of the Prophets is completed, we will turn on the first Shabbat morning



en

than two, but who knows? Psalms is not a simple book—few biblical books are—and the terminology is often elusive or obtuse. By tradition David was their author, but archeology and critical scholarship tells us that some are older and some younger. The older ones were originally Canaanite hymns to other local deities, and just had the god's name changed. The newer ones are detected through anachronism and historical allusions.

Beyond the time of their authorship, we find poets writing from the depths of their emotions and experiences. They reach into the margins of Hebrew vocabulary, and use wordplay that is usually lost in the English translations we shall use, which is why we Jews *study* text, as opposed to merely *reading* it. For example, the word *ro'eh* means "shepherd," while *rei-ah* means "friend." They are both spelled resh-'ayin. Now read Psalm 23. And what is the primary meaning today of the English verb "to want"? It is not the same as when the King James version was translated in 1611.



I am looking forward to wending our way through Psalms, and then through the remaining books of the Bible which are Proverbs, Job, the five megillot (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Kohelet [Ecclesiastes], and Esther), Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. I don't think it will take us al-

PRESIDENT'S POST

Thank you to the many congregants who attended the April 29 special congregational meeting regarding the religious school. The strong turnout by a wide variety of congregants was an overwhelming show of support and interest in providing a quality Jewish education for our synagogue's youth. The vote resulted in congregational approval of the recommendation to provide religious education through the B'Yachad program. Parents of religious school-aged children will be receiving registration materials shortly.



The word "family" is often used to describe the relationships and feelings fostered by our close-knit congregation and religious school. Offering Jewish religious education through B'Yachad may be a change for B'nai Sholom, but it is one that offers us the opportunity to extend our family, cultivating relationships for ourselves and for the congregation's youth with other members of the larger Albany-area Jewish community. These relationships will benefit our congregation, our congregation's children, as well as the congregations and families of B'Yachad, by allowing us to celebrate our similarities and learn more about our differences, all while furthering our commitment to Judaism and Jewish values. Our children will ultimately be better equipped to take their place as adults in a diverse Jewish world.

Thanks are owed to the members of the ad hoc committee, the religious school committee, the Board of Trustees, and the many congregants who have contributed their time and insight into researching and approving this change. Regardless of individual feelings regarding the various options considered for the religious school, we can be proud of our shared recognition of the importance in providing a meaningful, quality Jewish education for our youth.

Jodi

Social Action

Tikkun olam is a Hebrew phrase that means “repairing the world” which suggests shared responsibility to heal, repair and transform the world. In Judaism, the concept of *tikkun olam* originated in the early rabbinic period. The concept was given new meanings in the kabbalah of the medieval period and further connotations in modern Judaism.

The expression *tikkun olam* is used in the Mishnah in the phrase *mip'nei tikkun ha-olam* (“for the sake of *tikkun* of the world”) to indicate that a practice should be followed not because it is required by biblical law, but because it helps avoid social disharmony.

The phrase *tikkun olam* is included in the “Aleinu”, the Jewish prayer that is traditionally recited three times daily and may have been written as early as the second century. The phrase is used in the longer expression *l'takken olam b'malkhut Shaddai*, “to perfect the world under God’s sovereignty.”

The first use of the phrase *tikkun olam* in modern Jewish history in the United States is believed to be by Shlomo Bardin the founder of the Brandeis-Bardin Camp Institute in the 1950s. Bardin interpreted the “Aleinu,” specifically the expression *l'-taken olam b'-malchut Shaddai*, as a responsibility for Jewish people to work towards a better world.

As left-leaning progressive Jewish organizations started entering the mainstream in the 1970s and 1980s, the phrase *tikkun olam* began to gain more traction. It has since been adopted by a variety of Jewish organizations to mean anything from direct service to general philanthropy.

Kabbalists hold that the very creation of the universe by God was unstable, and that the early universe could not hold the holy light of God. In this view, the original form of the universe shattered in shards; the universe that we see today is literally broken, and in need of repair.

Many religiously liberal Jews, who generally do not accept Kabbalah as literally true, believe that the world we live in is imperfect, but that everyone can make things better (“repair it” by doing good deeds. In the Reform and Conservative movements the use of the phrase *tikkun olam* refers to the Jewish obligation to transform the world through social action.

Whether you are a kabbalist who believes that this world is literally broken and in need of repair, or you are a liberal Jew who believes that our world, our society, is figuratively broken and imperfect, we as Jews and as human beings have the moral obligation to engage in **Tikkun Olam**, in repairing our society. The Social Action Committee is committed to doing just that through our various projects.

MAKE TIKKUN OLAM AND SOCIAL ACTION A PART OF YOUR LIFE! JOIN THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE AND HELP TO HEAL THE WORLD. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHILE WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SERVE OTHERS, THE ACT OF PROVIDING THAT SERVICE FEEDS OUR OWN SOULS. THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE USUALLY MEETS ON THE 1ST

HUNGER One of the main areas of concern over the years has been food insecurity in our community.

In NYS, nearly one quarter of all households with children experience some level of food insecurity. Hunger is a reality for over 900,000 children in our state...seriously impacting their health, their education and, ultimately, their chances of success in life. Children who arrive hungry at school are at physical, academic and social disadvantage compared to their well-nourished peers.

To help with this problem, the Social Action Committee is looking into volunteering with and possibly helping fund a local backpack program that tries alleviate childhood hunger by discretely sending backpacks home with low-income kids on Friday after school. These backpacks are loaded with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food for the weekend. Once we have determined the best way for the congregation to help in this important area, we will be coming back to you with more information.

SAC has also partnered with other social justice groups such as the Hunger Action Network for NYS and the Focus Churches of Albany to raise public awareness on these issues. It is through this grass roots strategy that we believe lasting and substantial change may be affected. Last fall B'nai Sholom co-sponsored an Empty Bowls fundraiser. Congregants donated bowls, baked desserts and helped to serve soup.

We also provide volunteers to the Congregation Beth Emeth at the soup kitchen it runs every Sunday afternoon in Arbor Hill. As many of the congregants who have volunteered there can tell you, working at the soup kitchen is an enlightening and interesting experience. The clients are appreciative and friendly.

Please remember that we are always collecting food for the Regional Food Bank. We encourage everyone to bring in items for the blue collection bins.

Social Action cont. from p.

LONG TERM PROJECTS In our community, there are many, many opportunities to engage in acts that improve the world, in *tikkun olam*. Our Social Action Committee engages in efforts that involve working with groups to change policies and attitudes, to work to improve the future of healthcare and education and many other significant issues. These are important long term problems for our society. But it's important to be able to improve the present while working to improve the future. Our two longest ongoing projects which, by focusing on improving the here and now, complement our larger high-level efforts.

For almost fifteen years, we have been hosting **BLOOD DRIVES** and have collected 885 units of blood. That's an amazing number—over a hundred gallons! If you have never donated, please consider participating if you can.

We wish we could declare that we no longer need to run our **CLOTHING DRIVES**, that there is no longer a need for good used clothes in the Capital District because everyone has all they need. But you know that's not true. Over the past ten years, our congregation has donated countless carloads of clothing that has helped local people stay warm in the winter and comfortable in the summer. Remember, if it hasn't left your closet or your drawers for over a year, you probably don't need it and it should be donated. Free up that space in your home and make a difference.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE B'nai Sholom supports the nine year old Capital District Alliance for Universal Healthcare

known as CDAUH. In 2004, B'nai Sholom held a Shabbaton at which we concluded that there was a need to reach out to the community to form an interfaith organization to promote healthcare for all as a right and CDAUH was formed.

Over the ensuing years CDAUH has held public fora, rallies, Medicare anniversary parties, press conferences and marches. These activities emphasize the need for a single payer system as in HR676, Representative John Conyers' improved Medicare for all bill.

B'nai Sholom has provided space, supplies and copying services for CDAUH. Members of the Social Action Committee been involved with some of the twenty-one screenings of "The Healthcare Movie" to over 750 people.

CDAUH played a key role in the planning and implementation of a successful lobby day in May, advocating for a single payer system in New York state. Several B'nai Sholom congregants participated in different roles — doctors, nurses, social justice advocates.

B'nai Sholom continues to support ongoing efforts to achieve healthcare for all.

BOOKS FOR BABIES was launched at our Social Action Shabbat a year ago. Inspired by the work of B'nai Sholom founding member Vera Propp and supported with the generosity of our congregants, the project promotes the importance of reading to a baby even before he/she is born. The first 300 baby board books have been delivered to the ob/gyn offices of Community Care Physi-

*No, this is the fast I desire:
To unlock fetters of wickedness,
And untie the cords of the yoke;
To let the oppressed go free, To
break off every yoke.
It is to share your bread with the
hungry,
And take the wretched poor into
your home;
When you see the naked, to
clothe him,
And not to ignore your own kin.
Isaiah 58:6-7*

congregant, Dr. Mimi Bruce, has reported that the presentation of the gift bag with its book and literature is a great way to start a conversation with expectant parents about early exposure to reading and talking to your baby. Spanish language books will soon be added to the supply.

In addition to this great project, B'nai Sholom social action supports two other **LITERACY PROGRAMS**. Each year the Social Action Committee makes a donation to the Capital Region Coalition for Literacy to purchase paperback books that are used by volunteer tutors for the reading program and given to children in inner city Albany and Schenectady.

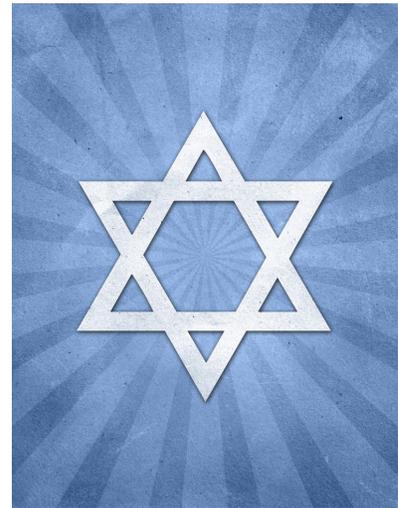
The Whitney Young Health Center also receives funds to purchase books. At their yearly physical, each and every child receives a new book to take home.

NORTH STAR PEACE WALK B'nai Sholom plans to again support this community – wide coalition for interfaith and cross-cultural understanding by participating in the 2nd Peace Walk which will be held on International Peace Day on Sunday, September 21.

THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

General Fund

- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Sue and Allen Holeman
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by James and Mary Anne Ammerall
- In memory of **Dorothy Lazoroff** and **Frances Dobris** by Jan Dobris
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Barney and Lynn Horowitz
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Nancy Conn-Levin
- In memory of **Glory Swartz** by Jack and Barbara Devore
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Mary Anne Pollack
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Judy Lee and Bill Herbert
- In memory of **William Lacov** by the Seguine Family
- In memory of **Renee Stoller** by Howard, Bettina and Jeremy Stoller



Caring Community AED Fund

- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Ben and Becky Marvin
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Herb and Ruth Swift
- In memory of **Lieselotte Weiner** by Herb and Ruth Swift

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Gary Hoffmann and Melissa Putterman Hoffmann

Technology Fund

- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Randy and Ellie Davis
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Marilyn and Kenneth Eisenberg
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Sonny and Anne Hausgaard

Prayer Book Fund

- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Hal Rosenthal and Mari Vosburgh
- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Rhonda Bosin
- In honor of **Richard Propp** by Hal Rosenthal and Mari Vosburgh

Books for Babies Fund

- In memory of **Sheldon Bosin** by Richard Propp





THANK YOU
 –to the paper-cut brigade who prepared the May Bulletin: **Sonny Hausgaard, Barbara Nussbaum, Marty Teumim, Mark and Cheryl Reeder**
 –to the following congregants who provided us with a sweet Shabbat: **Byrgen and Paul Finkelman, Sharona Wachs and Rabbi Cashman, Jodi Kerper and Karl Rethemeyer**, members of the Social Action, Membership and Religious School Committees and our religious school families.
 –to **Ellie Davis** who helped with the mailing for the Annual Meeting

Mazel Tov!

-to **Joel Zaidspiner Leibo** on completing his Ph.D. in brain and cognitive science at MIT.



-to **Naomi Lee Volk** who earned her B.A. magna cum laude from Brandeis University with a major in English and minors in social justice/social policy and in history. She was also admitted to Phi Beta Kappa.

-to **Barbara Zaidspiner Leibo** on her graduation from Boston University magna cum laude.

THE FRIGE IS ON THE FRITZ!
 We are in need of a “new” refrigerator and would be glad to give your old one a home and it’s tax deductible!

Perspectives continued from page 1

No less than the entire course of his academic life seems to have been reversed by the Bar Mitzvah year. For someone who always said that he wanted to be a teacher, this was a very big deal.

- Before his Bar Mitzvah, M.I. began every school year with mediocre grades and proceeded to go downhill each quarter. During his Bar Mitzvah year, he started the fall in the same manner, but then his grades improved each quarter. Following his April Bar Mitzvah, M.I. made the honor roll for the first time that June.
- Never again, did M.I. fail to make the honor roll in any quarter (while also playing junior varsity, varsity and club soccer, and running track) and graduated high school with honors.
- Every semester in college he has been on the Dean's List and in several recent semesters has been named to the President's List, with a 4.0 GPA. The one-time slacker has miraculously changed his ways.
- By sophomore year, M.I. had been invited to join an academic honor society, asked to tutor classmates, and become a peer mentor to incoming freshmen.
- During junior year, he was asked to present a paper at Scholar Day and has been inducted into two more national academic honor societies.
- As his third year ends, he has been presented with the Arthur M. Lee Award and scholarship as outstanding history department senior (he qualifies as a senior due to AP credits and several 18-credit semesters). In the presentation speech, his professor said "Today I was grading exams and purposefully saved M.I.'s for last. There were 95s and a 96 among the exams, but when I computed M.I.'s score, it came to 105! I wasn't surprised, because M.I. is a student who always applies that extra intellectual reach." After the ceremony, another faculty member told us "M.I. brings out the best in his professors."

Years ago, would we ever have believed anything like this could happen? Would he ever have believed it? The answer is that no one would have believed it.

We are all certain of one thing, that if not for his Bar Mitzvah, none of this would have ever occurred. It was that early experience of striving for something truly important, when he needed to stand on his own, to be responsible, where failure wasn't an option, that changed M.I. Accomplishing this difficult intellectual and spiritual task forged his confidence to successfully handle all that would follow.

For all of this we will always be grateful. We are grateful to Rabbi Cashman for both his strictness and patient guidance. We are grateful to the congregation for all their love and support. We are most grateful that modern Judaism includes a ritual that provides our children a taste of the sweetness of rising to responsibility at just the right time in their lives.

This article was submitted by Nancy and Larry Rockefeller. We welcome congregants submissions for the "Perspectives" column.

THANKS FOR OUR 27TH BLOOD DRIVE! Due to the efforts of everyone who supported our drive the Red Cross collected 24 units which will help save as many as 72 lives. Many thanks to those who volunteered at the registration or canteen, made phone calls and of course to the donors. A special thanks to Hal Rosenthal for rising early to open the building.

Special congratulations to congregant Stan Bergman who gave his 200th donation to the Red Cross at our drive. Do the math: he has saved as many as 600 lives (and more as he also donated blood regularly prior to the involvement of the Red Cross)! Stan, one of B'nai Sholom's founders, first donated blood as a 16 year-old during World War II. He has been a regular supporter of our blood drives, and as a volunteer at the canteen where his conversation provides a welcome diversion for those Recovering from donating. **THANK YOU, STAN!**

BULLETIN SCHEDULE

Please note the deadlines for this SPECIAL PUBLICATION SCHEDULE:

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>DEADLINE</u>
JULY-AUGUST	June 11
SEPTEMBER THROUGH Mid-OCTOBER	August 13
Mid-OCTOBER THROUGH NOVEMBER	October 1

YAHRTZEITS

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in June

- 6 Jack Raderman, Dorothy Raderman, Sam Rauch, Lena enblatt*, Ernst Swiwcz, Werner P. Frankel, Julius man, Louis H. Sobell* Ros-Golder-
- 13 Leo Levin, Jerome Hoffmann*, Marion Goldstein, Babette Singer Samuels, Jacob Aronson*, trude Einstein*, Edward Shapiro, Nathan Hess*, Sol don Ger-Gor-
- 20 Robert Greenbaum, ,Lorena Abrams, Mildy Fischel, Gerry Green, Isadore T. Jaffe*, Selma Jarett, Martin Neuburger
- 27 Jeanette Katz, Mary Finnan Blakeslee, Jennie Dubb*, Bernard Herbert, Goldie Fisher, Minerva Knee, Rubin Feigelson*

We note with sorrow the death of **ANNE SMUCKLER PAKTOR** Grandmother of Jonathan Riven

**denotes that a Perpetual Memorial has been established*

Ne'imah



**I am Miriam.
I am...**

- Jewish
- No longer able to drive
- Over 60 years old
- Using a walker
- Isolated
- In need of an occasional ride

JFS helps people like Miriam.

Our **Project 5** program enriches lives by providing trained volunteers who drive Jewish seniors where they want to go: social outings, errands, luncheons and more.

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OFFICE HOURS
THE OFFICE MANAGER IS IN ON:
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY
AND FRIDAY.
THE OFFICE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAY.

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

AS A RULE, THE BULLETIN DEADLINE IS THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

PERIOD COVERED	DEADLINE
July — August	June 11
September — mid-October	August 13

Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.