

B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation

420 Whitehall Rd., Albany, NY 12208

Phone: 518-482-5283

E-mail: office@bnaisholom.albany.ny.us

visit us at: www.bnaisholomalbany.org

March 2014

Adar I/Adar II 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 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.

From our Rabbi...

Why Purim Still Matters



Purim is a raucous holiday. That's been the dominant mood for this festival since rabbinic times. In fact, Purim probably made it into the Jewish calendar *because* it was a raucous late winter holiday. The origin of Purim is obscure; critical scholarship today discounts the historicity of almost every detail of the biblical book of Esther. The Megillah is fiction, not fact. Still, at the end of the winter - at least according to the Jewish calendar - people are eager to let loose, especially with the approaching spring harvest (remember, we're set in the agricultural calendar of the Middle East). Is it any wonder that the Christian religious calendar has the analogous Mardi Gras?

The "End of the Jews" is not only a Purim theme. It's there in Hanukkah, Passover, Tisha B'Av, and Yom HaShoah, too. You've heard that Jewish holidays can be condensed to "They tried to kill us; they failed. Now, let's eat." That jovial attitude works for Purim, Hanukkah, even Pesah. But Tish'a B'Av - for whoever observes it - is a fast day. And the Holocaust....well, they didn't fail. They killed one-third of world Jewry, extinguishing the thousand year old

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Founders' Day 2014

For all Capital District Reform Congregations

At Congregation Berith Sholom

167 Third Street, Troy

Friday, March 28

Services 7:30 pm

Featuring the Berith Sholom Choir

Rabbi Eleanor Pearlman will speak on

"Sacred Aging in Jewish Tradition"

Oneg Shabbat after Services

JOIN US IN MARCH FOR

Friday, Feb. 28	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, Mar. 1	TEXT STUDY: <i>Prophets</i> Extended study with coffee and bagels	9:30 AM
Friday, Mar. 7	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE Shabbat potluck dinner following services RSVP: joeldbloom@gmail.com	6:00 AM
Saturday, Mar. 8	TORAH STUDY: <i>Vayikra</i> Lev. 1.1-5.26	9:30 AM
Friday, Mar. 14	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, Mar. 15	TORAH STUDY: <i>Tsav</i> Lev. 6.1-8.36	9:30 AM
	EREV PURIM Hamantashan and deserts	8:00 PM 6:30 PM
Friday, Mar. 21	EREV SHABBAT SERVICE	8:00 PM
Saturday, Mar. 22	TORAH STUDY: <i>Shmini</i> Lev. 9.1-11.47	9:30 AM
Friday, Mar. 28	FOUNDERS' DAY SERVICE At Congregation Berith Sholom, 167 Third St., Troy (NO SERVICE AT B'NAI SHOLOM)	7:30 PM
Saturday, Mar. 29	TORAH STUDY: <i>Tazria</i> Lev. 12.1-13.59	9:30 AM
Friday, April 4	KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE ALL SCHOOL SHABBAT Friends and Family potluck dinner follows service	6:00 PM
Saturday, Apr. 5	TEXT STUDY: <i>Prophets</i> Extended study with coffee and bagels	9:00 AM

OFFICE HOURS-IMPORTANT NOTE!

PLEASE NOTE THAT DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF MARCH THE OFFICE MANAGER WILL BE IN ON MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. THE OFFICE MANAGER WILL NOT BE IN ON WEDNESDAY. BEGINNING THE WEEK OF MARCH

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.

PERSPECTIVES

Continued from page 1

"Perspectives," is 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? This month's columnist is Bettina Stoller.

On January 31st, we attended services for our older son Aaron's yahrzeit – the fifth anniversary of his untimely death. That service is never easy for us, but it is important to us, and we deeply appreciate any support that Rabbi Cashman and other congregants may offer. It might be a hug, or a few heartfelt words such as "how are you?" or "this must be difficult." People who have not lost children cannot be expected to understand the ongoing pain, but they can try to imagine it. On this particular evening, only one person reached out to comfort us; she knows how much her empathy and support meant. As we all know, it is a mitzvah to comfort the bereaved, and that need for solace – particularly with the loss of a child – never ends.

David Liebschutz, who led the service that night in Rabbi Cashman's absence, spoke of our calling ourselves a "warm and welcoming congregation," but added that we must back up that claim – I could not agree more. We need to extend that warm welcome not only to visitors to our services, but to our own congregants in need, as well. I have a friend – a long-time congregant – who has often told me that she has never felt welcomed by our congregation, except by a few individuals who are now friends, and she is considering leaving B'nai Sholom. I am sad about her feeling this way and also for our synagogue, which would lose a supportive member.

We have been members of B'nai Sholom for over 25 years, and it has been a big part of our lives. I have served on four committees (each for a number of years), taught in the religious school, led cooking classes for students, and been temple historian for at least a decade. We both consider many congregants to be our friends. There have been issues over the years that have led us to consider resigning, but the good always outweighed the bad.

However, upon leaving the synagogue on January 31st, I felt hurt at the lack of comfort re: Aaron's yahrzeit, particularly from people to whom I've reached out in the past. When I discussed this with a friend, she posed a question to me which I will ask you: how do we create a sense of community? This is a crucial query to ask ourselves as our congregation strives not only to add members, but also to hold on to those we have. The next time you see an opportunity to reach out to someone at B'nai Sholom – whether stranger, acquaintance, or friend – please take it. It will be a mitzvah for you both.

Purim reminds us that attempts at genocide are old. The story of Esther in the Megillah is in 480 BCE. For two and a half millennia, individuals or groups have tried to eliminate completely other groups, and not because the intended victims have done anything, but merely because they are part of a group. The literature on genocide is vast, detailing just within the last 50 years –yes, since the Holocaust - attempts at genocide in Australia, Zanzibar, Guatemala, Pakistan, Burundi, North Korea, Equatorial Guinea, East Timor, Laos, Argentina Ethiopia, Iraqi Kurds, Tibet, Brazil, Congo, West New Guinea/ West Papua, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Srebrenica.

The core message of Torah, said Hillel the Elder, was "What is hateful to you, do not do to another. The rest is commentary; go and study." (Talmud, Shabbat 31a). What Jews have found hateful over the centuries is the failure of others to speak up in loud numbers. Thus, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Holocaust. Purim serves to remind us that when one group is in danger, everyone else is too. Purim reminds us that we must speak out when others are endangered.

PURIM 5774

1964 *I Want to Hold Your Hand* lands on American airwaves.

She Loves You follows and three new words enter the American ling: "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah."

A simple introduction rockets Ed Sullivan to the top of the TV ratings: "Ladies and gentlemen...THE BEATLES!"

2014 It's the 50th Anniversary of Beatlemania!

To mark that milestone, The Shushan National Touring Company once again presents:



"Whitehall Road: A Beat-

les Megillah"

An un-Orthodox (totally!) musical re-talented, award-shining

view written by B'nai Sholom's own pool of *Paperback Writers*.

Saturday, March 15

6:30 pm

Hamantashan and desserts (alas, no *Savoy Truffle*)

7:00 pm

Purim Celebration —

Family Fun Featuring a Fistful of your Favorite Folks Futilely Fishing For Fame and Ffortune!

Megillah Reading!

Costume Parade with prizes for all!

Continuous Revelry!



No shtick needed this year — we'll *Carry That Weight* for you.

HAVING BEEN SOME DAYS IN PREPARATION,

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.

**B'NAI SHOLOM OFFERS SO MUCH TO ALL OF US.
MORE THAN JUST SHABBAT SERVICES, OUR COMMUNITY HAS A VARIETY OF OFFERINGS
FROM ADULT EDUCATION SEMINARS TO CHILIPALOOZA; FROM SOCIAL ACTION TO
CARING COMMUNITY.**

**BUT THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE WANTS TO KNOW:
WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT TO SEE OUT OF YOUR B'NAI SHOLOM
MEMBERSHIP?**

**IS IT MORE OFFSITE EVENTS? MAYBE SOME TRIPS - FAR & NEAR? MAYBE MORE SOCIAL
ACTIVITIES? IS IT A CHANCE IN OUR WEEKLY SERVICES? IS IT A CHANCE IN HOW WE
COMMUNICATE WITH YOU?**

WE WANT TO KNOW!

**ON SUNDAY, MARCH 30 WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A MEMBERSHIP FORUM TO FIND OUT
WHAT MORE OUR SYNAGOGUE AND OUR COMMUNITY CAN DO FOR YOU, HOW YOU
CAN HELP, AND HOW TO INCLUDE MORE PEOPLE IN OUR WARM AND WELCOMING
COMMUNITY.**

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.

Come and bid on ...

Photography, Gift Baskets, Dining Cards, Baked Goods, Gardening Services, College Essay Expertise ...and lots more!

Look for your Mishloach Manot order form in this bulletin.

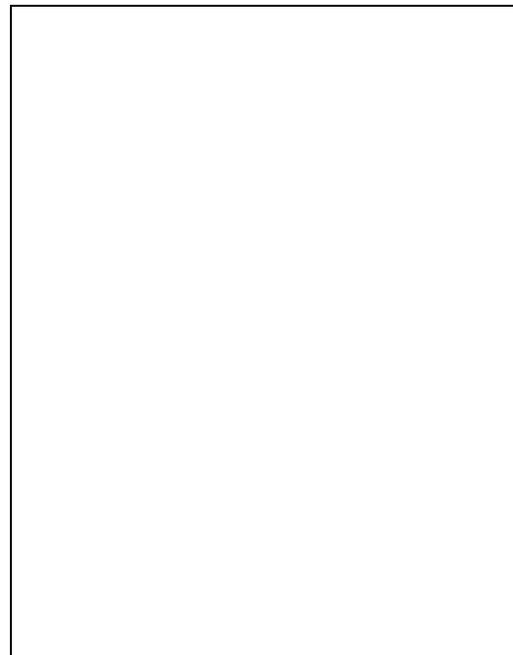
This is a wonderful and easy way to spread joy and warm wishes during Purim. Purim bags will be available for pickup on Erev Purim, March 15, 2014.



Be sure to return your form by the **March 5 Deadline.**

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.



Not Sweating the Oneg by Carol Smith



Being responsible for the oneg used to bring up all sorts of worrisome questions with me. What if I don't have enough food? What if I don't bring the right kind of food? What if I mess up making the coffee?

I no longer tax myself with these questions because I no longer sweat the oneg. It's just not that difficult.

But in case you still are plagued with these kinds of questions, these are my responses:

What if I don't have enough food? Well, in late January I had signed up to do the oneg after a Friday night Shabbat service. It was a synagogue scholar night and Martha Rozett was talking about Nemesis by Philip Roth. Martha always brings in a good crowd and this was no different. But, as I was looking around the sanctuary at the start of services, it seemed to me that there were even more people than I had expected and that perhaps I didn't bring enough food for the oneg??? I did a head count and was all set to worry about it and then I thought, "I'm not going out to buy more food at this point so whatever I have is just going to have to do." And sure enough, it worked out fine. I was short on cookies but there were other things to eat. It wasn't a feast but, then again, no one was looking for a feast! People just wanted a snack and there was plenty there for a snack. It was fine.

What if I don't bring the right kind of food? Well, short of bringing pork or shellfish, I'm not sure it's possible.

What if I mess up making the coffee? Well, the directions for making the coffee are on the door to one of the cabinets in the kitchen. It's very straightforward and even if, for some reason, the coffee still doesn't turn out right, people just won't have coffee that night!

Grumbling, complaining, offhand criticisms of the fare – I've never heard any of these at any oneg I've attended. People just appreciate having a bite to eat and catching up with one another after the service. There's really no reason to sweat the oneg!

Mazel Tov!

To **Harvey and Marcia Tress** on the engagement of their son, Daniel to Liz Paushter.



THANK YOU

--to the paper-cut brigade who prepared the February Bulletin: **Cheryl Reeder, Nancy Rockefeller, Sheila Schwartz, Brian Countryman** and a special thank you to **Anne and Sonny Hausgaard** who also took the Bulletin to the post office.

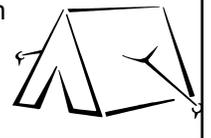


--to the following congregants who provided us with a sweet Shabbat: **Marcia and Harvey Tress, Maxine and Eric Goldberg, Marty and Phil Teumim**

On Saturday, February 8th the Membership Committee was proud to host the Third Annual Wine & Cheese Tasting. With around 50 members and non-members, we were supplied with delicious wine from Upstate Wine & Spirits (located in Delmar's Delaware Plaza) and delicious local cheeses from the Honest Weight Food Co-op (located on Watervliet Ave in Albany). We are very grateful for our two vendors to again participate in our event and provide us with expert knowledge on the wines and cheeses we tasted. It was a great adult night out! If you weren't able to join us this year we hope to see you next winter for our Fourth Annual event!



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 783-7800 ext. 230.



THE CONGREGATION NOTES WITH THANKS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS...

General Fund

- In memory of **Sylvia Brownstein** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz
- In memory of **Hortense Stone Heart** by Stan Bergman
- In memory of **Morris Alowitz** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz
- In memory of **Jerome Ruzow** by Susan Libby
- In memory of **Bernard Smith** by Arthur and Rita Alowitz
- In memory of **Max Fiks** by Bettina and Howard Stoller

Vera Propp Social Action Fund—Books for Babies

In memory of **Lillian Dinkin** by Richard Propp

YAHRTZEITS

The following Yahrzeits will be observed in March

- 7 Johanna Bergman Larson, Samuel Caplan*, Harold Nozik, Harold Strassberg, Mitchell Burkowsky, Barry Brody
- 14 Edith Watnick, Herman Reichbach*, Adele C. Blumenthal, Tessie Rose Limmer Bergman*, Susan Luntz, Albert Blakeslee*, Lazar Kleinfeld, Sylvia Lande, Izadore Pollack, Loretta Weinstein, Roz Spitzberg, Leo Nahmias, Louis Schaffer
- 21 Penny Wheeler-Hatch, George Kurak, Lillian Ruzow, Doris Stephany, Samuel Berman*
- 28 Helga Bessac, Samuel Adels*, Harry C. Katzin*, Lilyan Oblas*, Joseph Caplan*

**denotes that a Perpetual Memorial has been established*

TOBEY KATZ
Sister of Lois Gordon

We note with sorrow the deaths of

LILLIAN DINKIN
Mother of Jesse Dinkin

RONALD WEISDORFFER
Uncle of Mimi Bruce

LEONARD SAMUELS
Father of Sharon Sklar

RICHARD ENGLANDER
Founder of B'nai Sholom

PASSOVER WINE SALE TO BENEFIT MIFGASH JEWISH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

The Mifgash Jewish Community High School is having a kosher for Passover wine sale. All purchases will receive a 15% discount. Proceeds will benefit Mifgash High School, which supports academic & social programming to Jewish students throughout the Capital Region.

There is an extensive selection of kosher wines which you can order by contacting mifgashpassover-wine@gmail.com and find the specific ordering instructions and timing details. We are offering the option of receiving your wine in time for Purim - if you return your order in time and desire to receive your wine for the Purim Holiday. Wine list and order forms are also available at B'nai Sholom.

Pick up will be a University Wine in Liquor located at 1225 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203.

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	
PERIOD COVERED	DEADLINE
April	March 12
May	April 9
<i>Articles and news received after deadline are subject to omission.</i>	