Spring and early summer is a very special time in the Jewish calendar. The seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot are a sacred 50-day period, titled “Counting of the Omer.” For 50 days our ancestors brought forth an “omer,” which was a specific measurement of wheat as an offering to God. Traditionally it is a season of semi-mourning, reminding us that our redemption, as a people, was not complete until we received the Torah. However, I like to view these holy days in the positive. For me, this is a period of great thanksgiving. My narrative is that God loved the Jewish people so much that the Divine saved them from slavery and gave them Holy Scripture. Therefore, this is a period of awe. And in humility and appreciation for all that has been given to us, we symbolically offer an omer each day to God.

As I reflect on a personal level, the holiest experience I have been blessed with has been becoming a parent. Not only for the wonderful baby boys, Holden and Parker, but also for the love and support Rabbi Goodman and I have received. We were blessed to have an exceptional woman, Alison, carry our babies, nurturing them as they grew within her. We were fortunate to have a medical staff and technology to use IVF to make 2 healthy and beautiful lives. Most importantly we had the support of family and friends making it possible for us to be parents. At the Goodman-Gallop home, we recognize daily the blessing of having so much love and support, a village to help raise our babies. Our appreciation and thanks go beyond words. The generosity of Beth Ahabah members with presents, knitted clothing, and well wishes has been deeply touching.

I want to take time to recognize the most important gift for which I am grateful to our congregation and Rabbi Beifield. I was able to be at the birth of our sons and take time to care for them. Alison began to go into labor at the 30th week in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she lives with her husband and children, and Holden and Parker were born 8 weeks prematurely. As a result, during the busiest time of the year, right before the High Holy Days, I was able to be with my family. We did not know when the boys would be born because the doctors were trying to delay their birth as much as possible. Since both boys were breech, it was considered an emergency caesarian section. Rabbi Beifield and the officers of Beth Ahabah made it possible for me to join Andrew who was already in North Carolina. Holden and Parker were born September 16th, one week before Rosh Hashanah. Not only was I able to be present at their birth, but

I was also able to be with them as they gained strength and learned how to eat in Neonatal Intensive Care, and all the way up until they came home the day before Yom Kippur.

So just like our ancestors, I ask myself “how am I able to bring forth my ‘omer’ of thanks?” For my thanksgiving is more than joy. I will always be humbled and in appreciative of you, my congregation that I serve. For your

The Rabbi’s Article Continues on Page 2
Generations Capital and Endowment Campaign – Got Questions?

Get answers today by visiting the Beth Ahabah website at www.BethAhabah.org and click on the Generations video for a complete update on Beth Ahabah’s Capital and Endowment Campaign.

The Rabbi’s Article Continued from Page 1

love and support has brought great humility and awe into my life.

As we come to an end of this season, we, just like our ancestors, recognize that we are blessed with sacred moments. And it is that holiness of appreciation, where love and sacredness combine, which strengthens us in humility to serve God by truly appreciating the holy gifts within our lives. We celebrate Shavuot acknowledging the Divine gift of receiving Torah. In our world today, some might not find that to be the most relatable and meaningful gift. However, if we see Torah as the values of our people, then we may find a personal meaning to celebrate. For it is our Jewish values at Beth Ahabah that shine so bright and beautiful. May our eyes continue to be opened so that we are able to appreciate all the blessings in our lives and be reminded of the work that is still needed. May you and your family have a Shavuot filled with peace, appreciation and revelation.

MOTHER’S DAY: REMEMBERING HENRIETTA SZOLD

by Russel M. Finer, FSA

Since we will be celebrating Mother’s Day on May 10th, I thought it would be appropriate to once again share this letter, written by Henrietta Szold (1860-1945), a woman who made immense contributions to the Jewish people. She was an activist, an ardent Zionist, and educator, an essayist and the founder of Hadassah. Henrietta wrote this letter to a family friend who had offered to say Kaddish on her behalf following the death of her mother in 1916:

It is impossible for me to find words in which to tell you how deeply touched I was by your offer to act as “kaddisher” for my dear mother. I cannot even thank you – it is something that goes beyond thanks. It is beautiful, what you have offered to do – I shall never forget it.

You will wonder, then, that I cannot accept your offer...I know well, and appreciate what you say about the Jewish custom; and Jewish custom is very dear and sacred to me. And yet I cannot ask you to say Kaddish after my dear mother. The Kaddish means to me that the survivor publicly and markedly manifests his wish and intention to assume the relation to the Jewish community which his parent had, and that so the chain of tradition remains unbroken from generation to generation, each adding its own link. You can do that for the generations of your family, I must do that for the generation of my family.

I believe that the elimination of women from such duties was never intended by our law and custom – women were freed from positive duties when they could not perform them, but not when they could. It was never intended that, if they could perform them, their performance of them should not be considered as valuable and valid as when one of the male sex performed them. And of the Kaddish I feel this is particularly true.

My mother had eight daughters and no son; and yet never did I hear a word of regret pass the lips of either my mother or my father that one of us was not a son. When my father died, my mother would not permit others to take her daughters’ place in saying the Kaddish, and so I am moved to decline your offer. But beautiful your offer remains, and I repeat, I know full well that it is much more in consonance with the generally accepted Jewish tradition than is my or my family’s conception. You understand me, don’t you? (End of letter)

May the spirit and ethos of this letter inspire each of us to a renewed appreciation of our individual responsibilities to each other and to the Jewish people. And, shouldn’t we be thankful that the Reform movement recognizes women and all they do for our congregations.

Happy Mother’s Day!
VOTE
May 8!

At the request of Chuck Rothenberg, President of Congregation Beth Ahabah, the Leadership Development Committee has met and developed a slate of nominees for our Officers, Board of Managers and Trustees for the 2015-16 year. We are pleased to submit these names to you for consideration at our Annual Meeting on Friday, May 8, 2015.

TEMPLE
For a One-Year Term Ending in 2016
President
Katie Roeper

First Vice President
Lawrence (Larry) Salzman

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Charley Scher

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Mackenna Kerwood

9th Grade Representatives
Elizabeth Cheeley
Hannah Levy
Jenna Woodburn

10th Grade Representative
Morgan Ackley

11th Grade Representative
Ricky Williams

12th Grade Representative
Evan Leibowitz

Gifts That Make A Difference...Simchah or Remembrance
Charitable Giving in honor of or in memory of a loved one is an important tradition for the Beth Ahabah congregation. Making a gift to the temple offers a positive way to affirm your values and priorities and protect our future Jewish way of life. Honoring a friend or loved one through charitable gifts is often an especially meaningful act of paying tribute to someone special, while assuring that worthwhile giving continues to influence our children, grandchildren and the world around us.

Beth Ahabah has a wide range of donation opportunities available. The list can be viewed on the Temple website or you can call the Temple office at 804.358.6757.
WHAT A BUSY YEAR IT HAS BEEN!

I can hardly believe that our Sunday School year is coming to a close. This has been a busy year that has included expanded experiential programming, field trips and guest presenters for our students. Our year began by celebrating the Fall Holidays with the beautiful weather in our Sukkah and with our new and old Beth Ahabah friends.

Our students took many exciting and varied field trips this year including:
• Synagogue tour for grades 1-2
• Kroger Jewish foods scavenger hunt for grades 4 and 6
• Holocaust Museum for grades 6 and 7
• Monticello, Jewish Richmond Walking Tour and Jewish Art tour at the VMFA for 7th graders

Additionally, special speakers, Authors and Artists in Residence enriched our students learning through presentation and hands-on projects. These included:
• Mac Pyle – SPARC experiential artist: Passover Journeys project for Prachim and 3rd grade
• Jennifer Elvgren – Charlottesville author of The Whispering Town – presentation for 6th - 7th grade
• Jay Ipson came and spoke about being a Holocaust survivor to grade 7

Midrasha has had numerous electives such as Jewish Photojournaling, Jewish Humor, Ethical Decision Making, Jews and Chocolate, Drama and Creating a Teen Service which took place in March with our teens ably leading the service!

Grades 4-5 had a 3 week intensive in January and February during which they built a classroom garden box and learned about Israeli irrigation systems: so far the plants are still thriving! Other students designed beautiful Life Cycle Tapestries which are on display in the Goldburg, along with the teen’s photos.

I hope you didn’t miss our well attended Hanukkah party with the Oil tasting, edible dreidels, Lego contests, menorah making and a music concert by Ruach Chadash! Tu B’shevat and Purim were celebrated in class with activities, taste testing, baking, dress-ups and parades.

Our 2nd Annual Interactive Haggadah Passover activity for First Steps through 2nd grade took place on March 29th. Primary students had Seder in their classrooms after making nut-free charoset and decorating “Kosher for Passover” lunch boxes. Each family received an Interactive Haggadah to treasure at home.

Grades 3-7 had a lively school wide Seder in the Goldburg led by Hannah Piracha. We traveled the road to freedom with all the tastes and sounds of Passover. Thanks to the many parents who made this a successful and fun morning!

On April 19th, students participated in Mitzvah Day activities and study learning about Mitzvot and Tikkun Olam. We put our Jewish Values to action. There has been great learning, friendship making, and Jewish growth this year. Please say thank you to our tireless teachers who perform a labor of love on Sundays in order to bring our children closer to their Judaism.

Next year we can be sure to have more exciting and thoughtful programs as we hope to educate our students and create life-long Jewish learners. We hope that as parents you will involve yourself in the school as much as possible. There are many opportunities to volunteer and become invested in the Sunday School.

We can’t do it without you!! Likha’ot – have a wonderful summer and see you in September.

Ramona
SUMMERTIME FUN IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER...Registration for Camp NOAR and Camp Sababa is now open!

CAMP NOAR
Monday, June 22 - Friday, June 26th
A Teen Travel Camp for rising 6th - 9th graders

This exciting new teen camp includes 3 days in Charlottesville and 3 days in Richmond. Beth Ahabah is partnering with Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville to give rising 6th - 9th graders the exciting opportunity to participate in a one-week travel camp.

Planned activities include: Massanutten Waterpark, High Ropes Course and UVA, Busch Gardens, Jumplology, Exploring Richmond, Exploring Williamsburg, hiking, shul-in, and Mitzvah projects.

Students will participate in home hospitality. This is a great way for the teens from each congregation to bond together while spending the evenings in each other’s homes. The parents of students participating will serve as hosts.

Cost: $350 all inclusive

CAMP SABABA
for all rising Kindergarten - 6th grade Jewish students
Monday, August 10 - Friday, August 14th
9:00 am to 2:00 pm
at Congregation Or Ami, 9400 Huguenot Road

Looking for a fun way for your kids to explore their Jewish roots this summer? Come to Camp Sababa! For the last three years, kids from all over Richmond have enjoyed the fun way of getting better at Hebrew through singing, dancing, nature, crafts, drama and special events like Israel Day, Mayim (Water) Day, and sports, lake activities and more! Make sure your child is in on the action! Sababa is Hebrew slang for “cool,” and Camp Sababa is the coolest way for your children to make new friends over the summer while learning Hebrew!

Camp Goals:
• To have fun through outdoor activities, music, crafts, games, etc.
• To meet Jewish students from around Richmond
• To review and refresh Hebrew language skills

Camp Staff:
Education directors and teachers from the participating schools and teen madrichim

Cost: $100 for all 5 days
Registration deadline is July 17, 2015

For more information or to obtain an application, contact Ramona Brand at r.brand@bethahabah.org or Sara Rosenbaum at the Federation office at 545.8629 or srosenbaum@jewishrichmond.org.

Jewish camping builds a foundation for Jewish living. Children who participate in Jewish camps create a positive Jewish self-identity, feel more engaged in community and retain connection to the Jewish community into adulthood. There are many choices for Jewish camping from day camps to overnight camps geared toward a great many interests. Check out our camp board in the lobby of the Religious School to see where your children’s friends will be this summer!

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
CLOSING PROGRAM & AWARDS PRESENTATIONS
SUNDAY, MAY 17

9:15 AM
STUDENTS TO CLASS AS USUAL

11:00 AM
CLOSING PROGRAM WITH AWARD PRESENTATIONS IN THE GOLDBURG AUDITORIUM

PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND
Alice Mendelson will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on May 30, 2015. She is the daughter of Shannon Kelley and Michael Mendelson, and has two older sisters, Claire and Emily.

Alice is a 6th grade honor roll student at Collegiate School where her favorite subjects are English and reading. She enjoys playing basketball, soccer and field hockey. She plays piano and enjoys reading in her spare time. She also enjoys time at the beach and on the ski slopes with her family.

When Alice was six years old, she had a catheterization procedure to close a hole in her heart. She was hospitalized for 36 hours and has made a full recovery. For her Mitzvah Project, she is baking cookies at the Ronald McDonald house for the children and their families who stay there during illness or medical treatments.

Alice’s Torah portion (Naso) is, in part, about how ceremonies and rituals bring meaning to life. Alice looks forward to a meaningful Bat Mitzvah, and she invites all members of the congregation to join her for Shabbat services on Friday evening and Saturday morning to share her simcha.

Lily Kerwood will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on May 30, 2015. She is the daughter of Naomi Evans, and younger sister of Josh Evans and Mackenna Kerwood.

Lily is a 7th grade honor student at Falling Creek Middle School. For her Mitzvah Project she is collecting supplies for BarkVA, a local canine adoption and rescue organization. Lily enjoys swimming, playing with her pets and spending time with her family and friends. We are so proud of her and look forward to sharing this special occasion with friends, family and the congregation.

Zack Kirsner will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on June 6, 2015. Zack is the son of Sharon Lamb Kirsner and Matthew Kirsner, and the big brother of Zoe and Ali. He is the grandson of Grada and Larry Lamb and Phyllis and Jon Jacobson.

Zack is a 7th grade student at Richmond Montessori School. He plays travel baseball for the Powhatan Bucks and swims for the NOVA Team. Zack also enjoys playing the guitar and Madden NFL on Xbox. For his Mitzvah Project, Zack is competing in the Power Kids Triathlon and seeking donations to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project (https://support.woundedwarrior-project.org/individual-fundraising/zkirsner/).

Zack is looking forward to sharing this special day with his family, friends and the rest of the Beth Ahabah community. Zack’s parents are so very proud of his achievements, and the wonderful son, brother, grandson and friend that he is.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT CONTACT INFORMATION?

If you’ve recently moved or changed your email address, please contact the Temple office at 804.358.6757 to make sure our records are up-to-date. Thank you.
The Confirmands of 2015 request the honor of your presence at their Confirmation Service Friday, the Fifteenth of May at 7:30 p.m.

Amanda Andersen
Mitchell Ashe
Coleman Cheeley
Liad Eynan
Mason Levy
Jessica Meyer
Elena Rogers
Kate Seltzer
Jason Skolnick
Ethan Stein
Molly Strauchler
Scott White
Richard Williams
Adam Wolfsheimer

Please join them for an Oneg Shabbat immediately following the service.

Hannah Nozomi Steincamp
June 13, 2015

Hannah Steincamp will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on June 13. She is the daughter of James and Tomomi Steincamp, and younger sister of Isaac Steincamp.

Hannah is an eighth-grade honor student at Swift Creek Middle School in Midlothian, and will attend the Mathematics & Science Center at Clover Hill High School in the fall. Hannah enjoys ballet and dance, as well as spending time with her family and friends.

We are so very proud of Hannah and look forward to sharing this milestone with friends, family and congregation members.
Shavuot is the Hebrew word for “weeks” and refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, which occurs seven weeks after Passover. Shavuot, like many other Jewish holidays, began as an ancient agricultural festival that marked the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. In ancient times, Shavuot was a pilgrimage festival during which Israelites brought crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem. Today, it is a celebration of Torah, education, and actively choosing to participate in Jewish life.

Customs & Rituals
In modern times, Jews can no longer bring the first fruits of their harvest to the Temple in Jerusalem, and thus there are no particular mitzvot, or commandments, associated with Shavuot. There are, however, several rituals that are traditional components of celebrating the holiday.

Many people stay up all night studying Torah. This custom evolved from the story that says that when the Israelites were at Sinai, they overslept and had to be awakened by Moses. As a result, many modern Jews stay up all night to study and celebrate receiving the Torah. These events, known as Tikkun Leil Shavuot, which literally means “Rectification for Shavuot Night,” are understood as the custom of studying with a community in order to re-experience standing at Mount Sinai, where the Jewish people received the Torah. The Tikkun Leil Shavuot was developed by 16th century mystics in Safed, who believed that by studying on Shavuot, they were symbolically preparing Israel to enter a sacred relationship with God. Modern interpretations and versions of this practice include study on a wide range of topics.

For early Zionists, who deemphasized the religious elements of Judaism to focus on its cultural aspects, the obvious direction for Shavuot in Israel was the restoration of its biblical format. For years, First Fruits Festivals were held on kibbutzim, featuring elaborate pageants and parades, displays of fruits, tractors and babies, and joyous singing and dancing. Urban dwellers also marked the holiday with first-fruit pageants and celebrations of second-graders receiving their first Bible text. Tikkun Leil Shavuot, however, was largely observed solely by Orthodox Jews.

Over time, the divide has blurred, and in recent years Tikkunim have become extremely popular for all Israeli Jews. In Jerusalem, one can spend the whole night wandering from tikkun to tikkun, which are held in homes, synagogues, community centers and educational institutions of every religious and ideological flavor. Most of these gatherings use the name, but ignore the traditional format. They simply are evenings of study for the sake of study and fellowship, and the various themes and topics they address are endless.

In the Congregation
Traditionally, the Book of Ruth, part of the section of the Bible known as Writings, is read during services on Shavuot. Ruth was a young Moabite woman who married an Israelite man. When her husband died, she followed her mother-in-law, Naomi, back to Israel and adopted the Jewish faith and people as her own. To feed herself and Naomi, she gleaned in the field of Boaz, a rich man. Boaz is taken with her, and eventually they marry. Among their descendants was the famed King David who built the first Temple.

The theme of Ruth’s conversion to Judaism is central to this story. In Ruth 1:16-17, she states: “Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following after you. For wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. Thus and more may God do to me if anything but death parts me from you.” Ruth is often considered to be the archetype of all who “choose” or convert to Judaism—accepting the Torah, just as Jews accepted the Torah at Mt. Sinai—and this passage traditionally has been understood as her conversion statement.

The ceremony of Confirmation—for high school students who have continued their studies and Jewish involvement beyond b’nei mitzvah—often is held on or near Shavuot. Just as the Jewish people accepted the Torah at Mt. Sinai—and this passage traditionally has been understood as her conversion statement.

The ceremony of Confirmation—for high school students who have continued their studies and Jewish involvement beyond b’nei mitzvah—often is held on or near Shavuot. Just as the Jewish people accepted the Torah at Mt. Sinai—and this passage traditionally has been understood as her conversion statement.
Shavuot at Home Continued from Page 8

At Home

It is customary to decorate one’s home with greens and fresh flowers on Shavuot as a reminder of the spring harvest and the ancient ritual of bringing the first fruits to the Temple. Many Jews prepare dairy foods—often cheesecake or blintzes—on Shavuot as a reminder of the sweetness of the Torah. Often families get together on the holiday to enjoy a meal that features such dishes.

Shavuot: Preparing for the Holiday

The Bible teaches that the Israelites had three days to prepare to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. To ready themselves for the momentous occasion, they were instructed to wash their clothes and stay ritually pure. By recalling those three days, Jews today can use the three days before Shavuot to prepare personally, as a family, and as a community to re-experience this life-changing event.

http://www.reformjudaism.org/shavuotcustomsandrituals

PARENTS

CELEBRATE Shavuot WITH SHALOM SESAME

Shavuot, which in Hebrew means “weeks”, is celebrated seven weeks after Passover. Each day between the two holidays is counted. On Shavuot the Jewish people received the gift of the Torah and the wheat harvest begins in Israel. Both events play a part in the rituals and customs of the holiday.

Together with your children, watch the Shalom Sesame videos on youtube.com to learn about Shavuot and celebrating the Torah. Then try some of the discussion ideas and activities below recommended by Reform Jewish educators to further extend the lessons learned in the videos. If you wish, share your experiences and ideas in the comments sections below!

DISCUSS

A springtime celebration of stories. The Jewish people are sometimes referred to as “the people of the book” because storytelling, through the Torah and other Jewish texts, has shaped Jewish values and life. Storytelling is also one of the best ways to share Jewish traditions with children. Your family can start by telling and retelling stories of your family’s customs and celebrations, and by collecting and reading Jewish storybooks.

The importance of rules. At Mount Sinai, the Jewish people received the Ten Commandments, ten important rules to help them live together. What is a rule? Why are rules important? Why do you think the Jewish people needed rules after they left Egypt? Do you have family or class rules? What do you think life would be like if there were no rules? Why is it sometimes hard to stick to the rules?

Harvesting wheat. Do you know how bread is made? Have you ever seen wheat growing in a field? Can you describe it? In ancient times, Jewish people in Israel used to bring the very first sheaves of wheat to the Temple as a way of saying thank you for the good crops. What are some different ways to say “thank you”? Can you make up a special thank you to the farmer, the baker and the storekeeper who all help so that we can eat bread and other food?

ACTIVITIES

Decorate for Shavuot. A Jewish legend teaches that at the moment the Torah was given, Mount Sinai bloomed with flowers. This legend is the reason that on Shavuot, greenery and flowers are used to decorate the home and the synagogue. Make or collect flowers and branches and decorate your space in honor of Shavuot.

Telling stories all through the year. Sharing classic Torah stories with kids can also be a great way to communicate Jewish values. After you watch the animated version of Moses on Mount Sinai below, your kids can draw their version of Mount Sinai, or together you can create your family’s very own Ten Commandments. While you’re at it, the biblical story associated with Shavuot is the Book of Ruth, which is a goldmine of values to teach your kids, like the importance of charity, friendship, kindness, and compassion.

Making our own Jewish stories. Many good stories are the result of collaborations between different people, even throughout Jewish history. Have your children work together to make
books illustrating their favorite Jewish story—maybe even ask them to put a twist on the story (try setting the story in modern times). Maybe one child can be the illustrator and the other can be the writer, or have each child complete her own page. Working together to tell stories is not only fun, but also a great way to participate in this ancient Jewish tradition.

**Up all night.** The holiday of Shavuot celebrates the gift of the Torah to the Jewish people, and is a great time to think about how to incorporate Jewish storytelling into your family’s life. The most common Shavuot custom is to stay up all night and study the Torah. Kids love late-night festivities, and you can celebrate the spirit of this tradition on Shavuot or anytime by designating a special “night of storytelling,” when you stay up late reading your favorite books together.

**The Staff of Life.** Wheat is often called the “staff of life” and almost every culture has its own special kind of bread. You can learn about different kinds of bread and the people who eat them. As part of a Shavuot study you can find recipes, bake different kinds of bread and eat them at your Shavuot celebration. Some different breads include: challah, pita, chapati, and tortillas.

**First Fruits.** Shavuot is also called chag habikurrim – the festival of the first fruits. The first fruit of the wheat harvest in Israel was brought to the Temple on Shavuot. During the months following the holiday and all the way until Sukkot, the first fruits of the other Seven Species (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates) were brought when they ripened. The bikkurim (first fruits) were placed in baskets and brought to Jerusalem in a festive parade with music and dancing. You can re-enact the pilgrimage complete with costumes and music. **Watch Videos.** Grover and his friends share a story about Moses on Mount Sinai. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG4-CE2np8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG4-CE2np8)

Harvesting Wheat
A young boy in Russia helps to harvest wheat on his uncle’s farm. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDf8oYJjc0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDf8oYJjc0)

Staying Up All Night
Avigail and Brosh study, sing, and stay up while celebrating Shavuot! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrpM1K3eJ0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrpM1K3eJ0k)

Countdown to Shavuot
Savta Shoshana is so excited for Shavuot that she uses her calendar to count down the days! [http://www.shalomsesame.org/videos#subcatshavuot/1/f562d211-e681-4c92-81f2-2382592eab66](http://www.shalomsesame.org/videos#subcatshavuot/1/f562d211-e681-4c92-81f2-2382592eab66)

http://www.reformjudaism.org

**Beth Ahabah Teens**

by Rachel Wolman, Teen Engagement Specialist

This May we have two fantastic events coming up. The first one will be May 2-3 which will be our sleepover in the synagogue. We are going to watch movies, have cookie decorating, play flashlight tag, and more. Come hang out with all your friends and sleep over at the synagogue.

The second event is our annual trip to Kings Dominion! It’s always fun to ride the roller coasters and hang out with your friends at an amusement park. This event will take place Saturday May 16. We can’t wait to see you all there!

---

**Mazal Tov!**

Katie Atwood
Shelly Berger
Deborah Greenberg
Laura Savage
Adria Scharf
Christina Ramirez

will be called to the Torah as B’not Mitzvah on Friday, May 22nd
DONATIONS

TEMPLE FUND
IN HONOR OF:
Purim Shpiel
  V.W. & J.B. Miller
  Ginna Dalton
Ken Roepers speedy recovery
  Kim & Martin Miller
Alan Corbets Sam Troy Award
  Kim & Martin Miller
The birth of Russ Finers first grandson, Dean Solomon Levy
  Cynthia Levitt
The birth of Allen Finers first great-grandson, Dean Solomon Levy
  Cynthia Levitt
IN MEMORY OF:
Minnie Rankin
  Ken & Karen Olshansky
Samuel Goldstein & Paul Corbett
  Ira & Maureen Goldstein
Rosalie Koslow
  Kathy Moran & Woody Beach
  Janice & Robert Freed
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Herman Lerner
  Ellen & Brian Glass
Carol Davidson
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  Jack Thalhimer
Nathan Zell, my father
  Myrna Norman
Katherine Cohn
  Harry L. Cohn

Dr. Gerald Leinwand, my father
  Roberta & Peter Oppen
Arthur V. Adams
  Ronnie Goldman & Marty Bond
Selma Dascher
  Jeanette Lipman
Mendel Schreiber
  David Leslie Schreiber
Simon Komins
  Allen Finer
Bill Ballance
  Babs & Larry Jackson

BETH AHABAH
MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
IN HONOR OF:
The Speedy Recovery of Jesse Ferguson
  Carol & Michael Sesnowitz
The 50th Wedding Anniversary of Genie & George Crawford
  Flo & Tony Guzman
  Anne & David Long
IN APPRECIATION:
For Research Assistance
  Emma C. Moore-Kochlacs

BETH AHABAH COMMUNITY
IN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF:
Rosalie Koslow
  mother of Mark (Susan Gaible) Koslow
Jeff Skolnick
  brother of Curtis (Marie) Skolnick
Max Mutchnick
  father of Sheldon (Phyllis) Mutchnick
Jerry Jacobs
  brother of Marc (Carla) Jacobs
Leonard Sidenberg
  husband of Lois Sidenberg
  brother of Jeanette Lipman
Allan Mullian
  father of Arthur (Julie) Mullian
Bruce Reiss

CONGRATULATIONS TO.....
Janice & Robert Freed on the birth of their grandson, James Cassius Freed, born January 29, 2015. Also to parents, Daniel Freed & Sihler Branch.


An armed security guard is on duty at Hebrew Cemetery on the first and third Sundays of the month from Noon to 3:00 p.m.

Thinking of Buying or Selling? Call me 1st!

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REMEMBER CONGREGATION BETH AHAHAB IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

If Congregation Beth Ahabah makes a difference in your life, we graciously ask that you think of Beth Ahabah when deciding your estate plans. A bequest or legacy in your will is a wonderful way to express your appreciation to the temple.

Thank you for thinking of Congregation Beth Ahabah. To discuss your plans, please contact Executive Director, Russell M. Finer, at 804.358.6757 ext. 302 or r.finer@bethahabah.org.

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CSJ)
By Deborah K. Greenburg

The CSJ continues to re-examine its mission, from its name, to its place in the life of Congregation Beth Ahabah. We want to raise the awareness of ourselves and our fellow congregants of the importance of social justice/ Tikkun Olam/repairing the world as a basic tenet of Reform Judaism universally and locally at Congregation Beth Ahabah.

To that end, we have two new projects to describe:

Our Mitzvah Day project consisted of collecting gently-used clothing from congregants and transporting them to Mount Moriah Baptist Church on April 15, when CSJ provided and served its monthly lunch at the church. Volunteers had noticed that clothes were collected sporadically and received eagerly.

In June on a Friday night TBD we will have as a speaker during a Shabbat service, professor Thad Williamson. Thad, his wife Adria Scharf and daughter Sahara, are members of our congregation. Thad is serving for a year as the first director for the City of Richmond’s Office of Community Wealth Building. He is an Associate Professor of leadership studies, philosophy, politics, economics and law at the University of Richmond. He will highlight problems in Richmond that can be addressed by CSI. He has also agreed to speak more informally in a Q&A format TBD.

DELUXE NOODLE KUGEL FOR SHAVUOT
by Tina Wasserman

Eating dairy foods instead of meat to celebrate the holiday is the most prevalent Shavuot food association. My friends call this “killer kugel.” Joan Nathan ran this recipe in her New York Times column one year, and, as a result, I received many e-mails thanking me for sharing this recipe. I joke that this is a poor excuse for a cheesecake. Rich, creamy, and utterly delicious, a kugel in a 13 x 9-inch baking pan should serve 25 people. However, one reader said she made two kugels for 15 people and almost all of it was gone!

Makes 15 or More Servings

Ingredients:
- 1/2 pound medium or extra-wide noodles
- 1 pound cream cheese
- 1/2 pound unsalted butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 pint sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 8 eggs
- 1 small can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 small can crushed pineapple, drained
- 4 ounces walnuts
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons butter

Directions:
1. Cook the noodles according to package directions. Drain and place in a 4-quart bowl.
2. Combine the cream cheese and butter in a processor work bowl and blend until smooth. Scrape down the sides of the work bowl. Add the sugar and process until well combined. Add the sour cream, vanilla, and eggs, and process until well mixed. Pour into the 4-quart bowl with the noodles.
3. Stir in the fruits by hand, and pour the mixture into a buttered 13 x 9-inch baking dish. The mixture will almost overflow. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
4. When ready to bake, uncover and place in a preheated 350°F oven and bake for 50 minutes.
5. Combine the walnuts with the sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle on top of the kugel. Dot with the 2 tablespoons of butter and bake for 15 minutes more. Serve warm or at room temperature. This can be made totally in advance but it won’t be as light.

http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-life/food-recipes/deluxe-noodle-kugel
BROTHERHOOD
by John Marshak, president

A MAN’S WORK AND SHABBAT

As much as my fellow Brotherhood members differ, we all share the common activities of work and Shabbat. I was struck by the following quote from Rabbi Irving Greenberg which provides a unique perspective on their contrast.

Shabbat is the temporary anti-reality of perfection. For approximately twenty-five hours (Jewish tradition adds some extra time to expand the realm of the good), all things are seen through the eyes of love, as if all of nature were perfect, in harmony with itself and with humanity. Normally, all the world conspires to persuade people that business cannot function without their personal presence, that great opportunities are being missed, that catastrophe looms, that crisis has struck and demands immediate attentiveness. For a day, Jews, dreaming, hear none of this. On Shabbat it is not really that one is forbidden to work, it is that all is perfect - there is nothing to do.

I never considered the perfection in the world in contrast with the perceived demands of the world of work before. The thought processes for the two are clearly different. While I am not moved to the Shabbat prohibitions of our more observant bretheren, this contrast adds greater meaning of Shabbat to me. Although I have observed the ceremony associated with Havdalah it now makes more sense.

TREASURES FROM THE MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTION

As the Sabbath draws to an end, the sweet smells from spices provide a means of comfort. The smells emanating at the traditional Havdalah service are meant to help make a transition from a day of rest to the work week ahead. Boxes specifically made to hold the spices, or Besamin, come in a variety of shapes and are made from various materials.

This egg shaped spice box, which unscrews to separate in the middle, is decorated with geometrically carved bands. Each half is decorated identically with patterned concentric circles that are pierced completely through in their centers. It is the size of a chicken egg, made of molded gutta-percha and of German origin, from the mid-19th century.

Gutta-percha appears to be wood, but is actually a rigid natural latex produced from the sap of trees. It is easily molded and carved, but fell out of use when its trees were over-harvested and plastics became readily available.

This object was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Greentree II to the Museum & Archives in 1993.

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Susan and I just returned from a trip to San Francisco and Austin, and in both cities saw the synagogues of our children’s present and our own past. Our daughter and her husband in San Francisco have affiliated with Congregation Emanu-el, which dates back to 1850 (new by our standards). The building itself is impressive, and is patterned after the famous Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, initially a church and later a mosque, and presently a museum. Emanu-el is definitely impressive, with magnificent stained glass windows representing fire and water, and a stand-alone ark that is a work of art in itself. Much of the funding came from the family that owns Levi Strauss, and from all appearances they were very generous. It has five rabbis (two of whom are husband and wife), two cantors, and even an official scholar, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, no less! These are the things about Emanu-el that can be seen. It would take some time to get a feel for the spirit of the place and gauge its value to the community and to its members.

Back in Austin, we were able to visit Temple Beth Israel for a service and an Oneg. Beth Israel’s sanctuary is built in the Spanish style, and looks like it would fit nicely almost anywhere in modern Spain. The Bimah is on one wall, like ours, in a subtle departure from the pure Sephardic style which would have placed it in the center of the room. At services we sat in our usual location, and the Associate Rabbi (who has family in Richmond) invited us to introduce ourselves. We saw old friends and made a few new ones, and it was good to remember and to be remembered.

Coming home to Beth Ahabah was the best experience of all. Our sanctuary is large without being intimidating, small enough to be enveloping in a comforting way, and beautiful in a way that eludes the other two we had just seen. We are truly fortunate to be able to enjoy this architectural treasure, which is transformed into a spiritual home by the words and music we hear there. We have no need to envy any other congregation. We have bloomed where we were planted.

Learn more about our synagogue at the Museum & Archives. We are open from 10-3, every day except Friday and Saturday. Call us at 353-2668 if you would like to arrange a special tour or visit at other times.

Richmond Jewish Trivia

Few people know that the famous Isaac Leeser, founder of the Jewish press of America and the outstanding Jewish leader in America prior to the Civil War, began his illustrious career in Richmond. Leeser, age 18, arrived in Richmond in 1824. He went to work in the dry goods store of his uncle, Zalma Rehine. After working all day, he spent his evenings writing. In response to negative articles about Jews, he wrote articles defending Jewish honor, history and accomplishments which were published by the Richmond Constitutional Whig in January of 1829. These articles were noticed by Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia, which hired Leeser as their hazzan (cantor) within the year. Leeser’s book *The Jews and the Mosaic Law*, based on his original articles, was published in 1833.

Get to know your RVA Jewish History Volunteer at BAM&A Today!
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MAY/JUNE 2015
Schedule of Shabbat & Holiday Worship

Friday, May 1  Shabbat Service  7:30 PM
Saturday, May 2  Bat Mitzvah  10:30 AM
KATHERINE SCHER

Sunday, May 3  Religious School  9:15 AM

Monday, May 4  Midrasha  6:30 PM

Friday, May 8  Congregational Annual Meeting Shabbat Dinner  6:00 PM
Installation Shabbat Service w/Adult Choir  7:30 PM

Friday, May 15  Confirmation Shabbat Service  7:30 PM

Sunday, May 17  Last Day of Religious School  9:15 AM

Friday, May 22  Congregational Shabbat Dinner  6:00 PM
Adult B’not Mitzvah Shabbat Service  7:30 PM

Saturday, May 23  Erev Shavuot Study Session at Congregation Or Ami  7:00 PM

Friday, May 29  Shabbat Service  7:30 PM

Saturday, May 30  B’not Mitzvah  10:30 AM
ALICE MENDELSON
LILY KERWOOD

Friday, June 5  Shabbat Service  7:30 PM

Saturday, June 6  Bar Mitzvah  10:30 AM
ZACHARY KIRSNER

Friday, June 12  Shabbat Service  7:30 PM

Saturday, June 13  Bat Mitzvah  10:30 AM
HANNAH STEINCAMP

Friday, June 19  Oneg Shabbat  6:00 PM
Shabbat Service in the Gumenick Chapel  6:30 PM

Friday, June 26  Oneg Shabbat  6:00 PM
Shabbat Service in the Gumenick Chapel  6:30 PM

It’s never too early to be prepared.
For more information please call Russell Finer
or Bill Thalhimer, III at 358.6757.

B’Yachad
DEADLINES For EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING

July/August: due Friday, May 22
September: due Friday, July 24

For more information about advertising in the bulletin, contact
Russ Finer in the Temple office, 804.358.6757. Please submit
editorial and camera ready ads to
Susan Morgan, smorganpr@comcast.net

CALENDAR INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE,
please check the calendar online at bethahabah.org
You are Invited to
Beth Ahabah’s Annual
Congregational Dinner and Annual Meeting

Friday, May 8, 2015
beginning at 6:00pm

A Delicious Dinner will be served during the Meeting
You do not need to attend the dinner to participate in the meeting.

Installation of Officers, Board of Managers and Trustees, and presentation of the Lewis I. Held Award will take place during the Shabbat Service.

The cost of the dinner is $5 per person with a family maximum of $20 (children 4 and under are free). Payment must be received with reservation. You may RSVP by calling the Temple office at 358-6757 with credit card information or make your reservation online at www.bethahabah.org.